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Artist

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Your palette reflects your painting. Dried and fresh paint on a palette are also a part of the painting process. To me this is exciting, like a forgotten, mysterious abstract landscape.

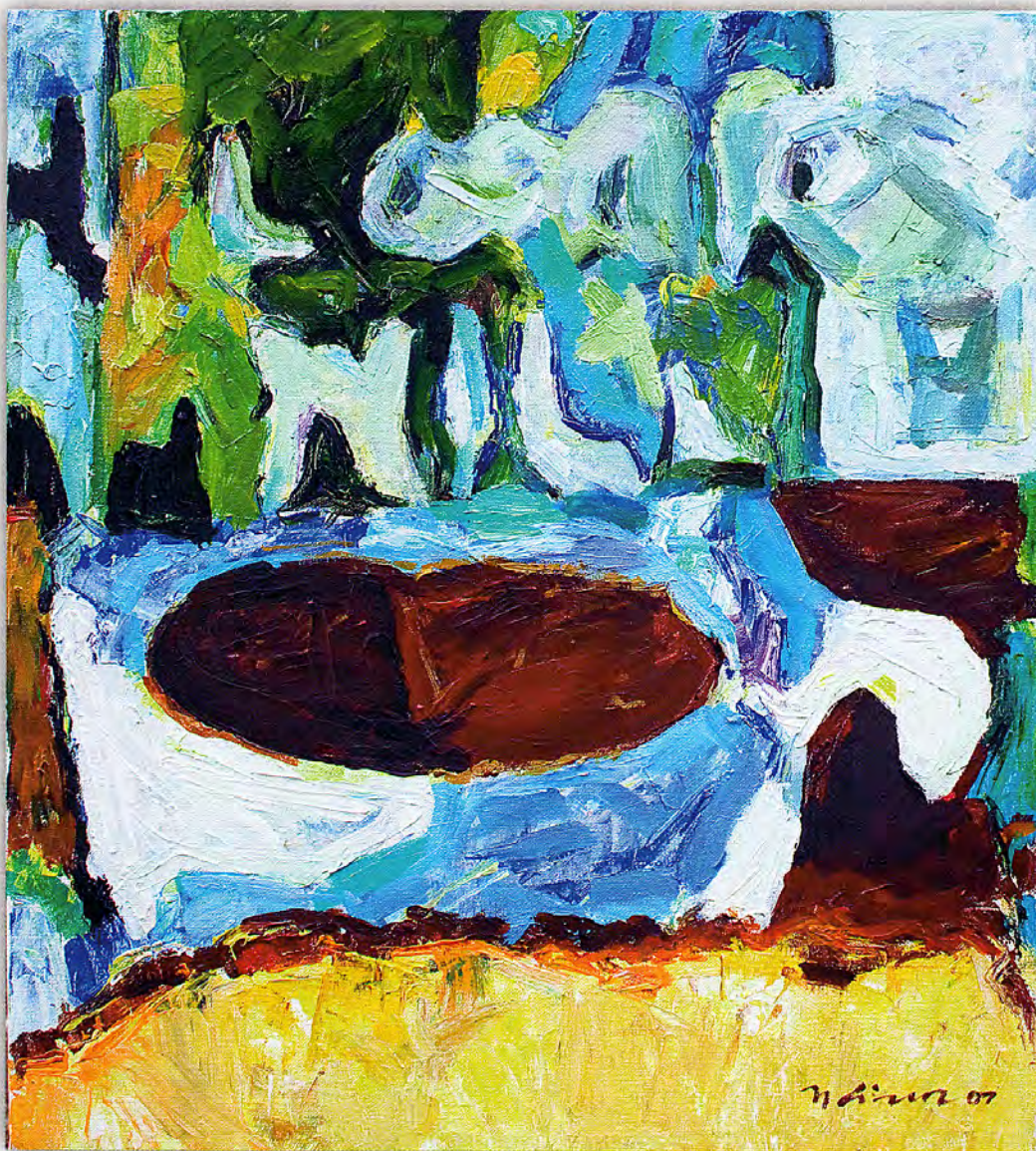


A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ACRYLICS AND SOME DETERMINED EXPERIMENTATION WILL HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF THIS SOMEWHAT TRICKY MEDIUM

## Plastic fantastic!

by Martin Kizur

*"Two seasons, or one summer with two faces. Long, hot and wet period sliding to warm and dry. Occasionally wild weather like an artist on his palette mixing all colours."*



**Coffee, (2007), acrylic on canvas, 40 x 44cm**

Imagine sitting in a restaurant on the beach, drinking morning coffee and reading your favourite newspaper.

The above is a short description of the environment where I live and from where I derive my artistic inspiration. "Two Seasons" is the title of my current major exhibition held at the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in Townsville. The painting, "Rocks on the Beach", was part of the exhibition; the process by which it was made is demonstrated step-by-step in this article. I will also explain some interesting moments in my life that influenced the choice of technique and process in my creative work.

### moving toward colour

Seventeen years ago, on my arrival in Victoria, the strong European approaches to abstract art I had long developed, began to soften. My artworks were always full of strong colours and shapes and some critics like Michel Sourgnès said, "You should go to Queensland" to find the true intensity of Australian colours. Finally it happened - twelve years ago I moved from Melbourne with my wife Miluska and son Karl, to tropical north Queensland. Townsville happened to be our choice.





***Fish on Bulletin, (2003), acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30cm***  
Today – news, tomorrow – wrapping paper!

“Instead of making corrections and adjustments on the canvas I spend more time planning and working on sketches.”





### from oils to acrylic

Before I came to live in the tropics I was a long-term user of oil technique in my daily painting. I had tried acrylics several times before, but I wasn't completely satisfied, mostly because I used acrylic in the same way as oil. The new environment, especially climatic factors and the old timber Queenslander house in which we were now living, suggested it wasn't a good idea to use flammable and easily evaporating materials, such as turpentine. In my work I started to apply the water based acrylic material and technique instead.

◀ **Corals, (2008), acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100cm**  
Corals and underwater tropical gardens are my constant obsession. I am captivated by the richness and variety of living forms in the ocean of Australia's tropical region.

**Turkey Fish, (2001), acrylic on canvas, ▶ 92 x 61cm**

Fish are amazing, especially the tropical variety. Their gliding through liquid environments full of sparkling reflection, fascinates me.

## art in the making rock on the beach

### what the artist used

#### Support

Double primed, medium texture.  
The wooden frame I made myself  
and stretched the canvas.

#### Other materials

AS Damar Varnish  
Acrylic Painting Medium  
Drying Retarder

#### Brushes

Various brushes 9-12+  
Palette knives, various sizes

### Artists' quality acrylics

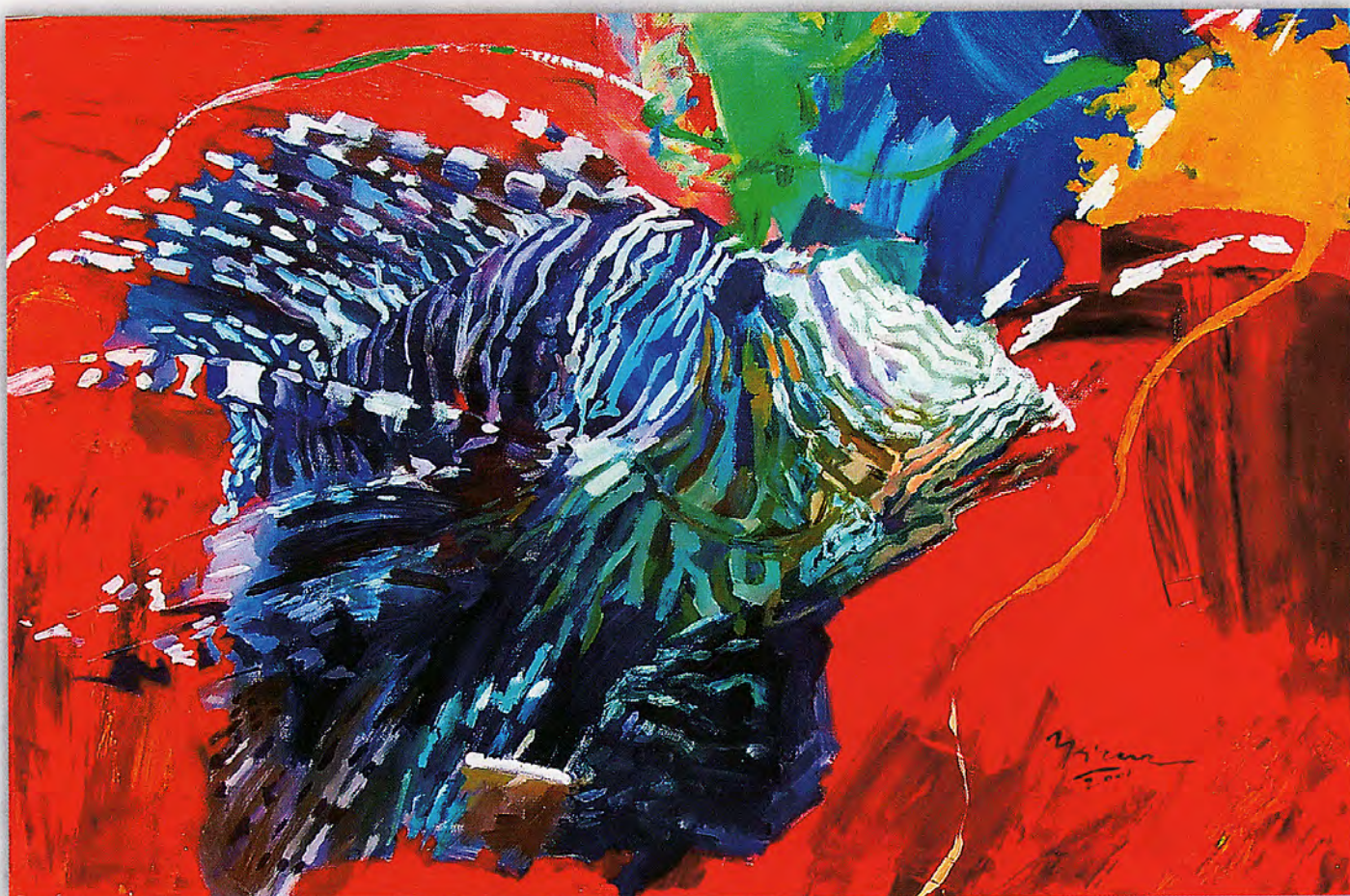
Phthalo Blue	Napthol Scarlet
Dioxazine Purple	Burnt Sienna
Ultramarine Blue	Raw Umber
Cobalt Blue	Chromium Green Oxide
Cerulean Blue	Hookers Green
Yellow Oxide	Titanium White
Cadmium Yellow	Carbon Black



### Reference photo

The photo of the beach that inspired me to create this painting. I had passed this constellation of rocks on The Strand beach in Townsville many times as many other people have before, but one morning the light was right and I was in the right place.





### Sketches and preparation for the start

I spent more time searching for the best scene, creating a starting sketch and planning the painting. I manually transferred the developed sketch and enlarged it to the canvas with a grid in an 'old fashioned' manner.



### Canvas and grids

The choice of canvas size is important. This one is 240 cm x 120cm. Carefully prepared grids can lead the first line. This can boost artist confidence and better provide orientation on a large canvas in the first step toward an unpredictable outcome.

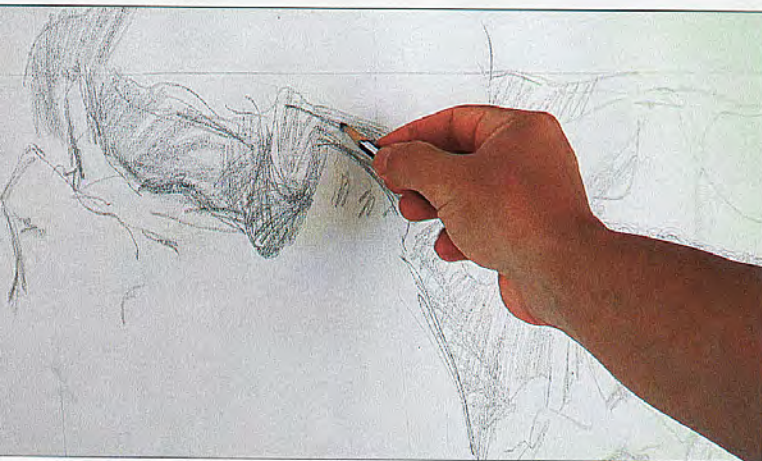




“I chose the large size of canvas to emphasize this ‘ordinary’ moment and give it a bit of a monumental look.”

◀ **Green Morning (2007),**  
acrylic on canvas, 70 x 74cm  
Morning in the tropics in wet season. Light is soft, warm and green because of higher humidity and palm trees in the garden.

**Purple Shadow (2008),**  
acrylic on canvas, 70 x 74cm  
Intensity of light differs depending on the time of the day and season. Shadows are not just lack of light, they also have their own colours which are valuable for paintings like this one. ▶



### Stage 1 initial mark-up

At the beginning I draw and mark up on the canvas before applying paint. I prefer to use soft pencils up to B6. Charcoal and some softer crayons may blend with paint and affect colours.



### Stage 2 underpainting

I start with underpaint colours, which are usually darker. This very moment can be reviewed again later only if photos or a video are taken during the process of painting. At this stage the painting looks like it is being created in a pure abstract expressionism style.



### using fresco

At first, I made the same mistake as everyone who tries to use old oil techniques with new acrylic materials and was frustrated as a result. Paint applied to the canvas was drying very quickly and thus presenting some limitations. Then I remembered an experience from my student days when I learned to paint fresco technique at art technology class at the Art Academy in Belgrade. Fresco involves quick and determined application of pigment on fresh mortar-plaster on a wall or ceiling. After relatively quick drying it is not possible to make additional corrections to the paint applied. I accepted the rule: "touch and leave", adding another stroke nearby and so on. Otherwise, I apply a new layer of acrylic once the first has dried.

Instead of making corrections and adjustments on the canvas I spend more time planning and working on sketches.



#### Stage 3 the second layer

Large brushes should be used for the first layer. The next layer will be determined by light and contrast on the original sketch. In this way, I build the painting from the shadow to the light.



#### Stage 4 keeping the topic in the 'frame'

Working on a large canvas is similar to working on a small one; the principles are the same, but you need more practice and hard work. Frequent stepping back and checking from a distance is important.





**“Fresco involves quick and determined application of pigment on fresh mortar-plaster on a wall or ceiling.”**

◀ **Composition Red (2007), acrylic on canvas, 74 x 70mm**

Poster-look painting consisting from typographic elements surrounded by simple effective space. In an abstract painting like this one it is always welcome to leave something recognisable for easier 'digesting' of the painting.

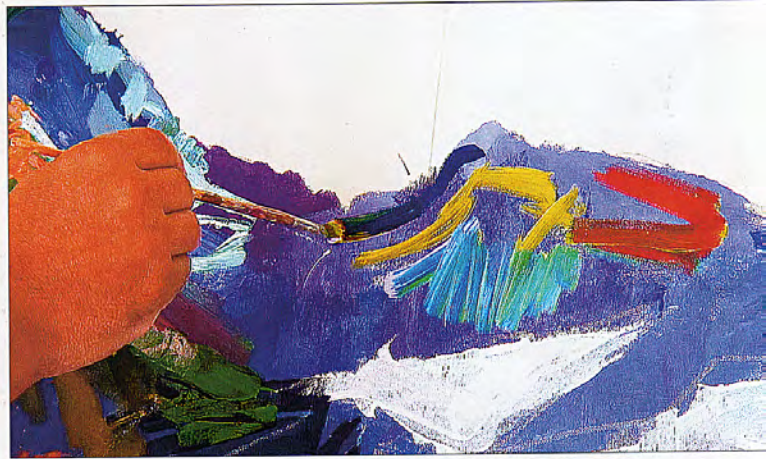
**Picnic (2008), acrylic on canvas, ▶ 74 x 70mm**

In this painting my intention was to paint such ordinary things in a different way. Cutting and dividing planes and elements avoids monotonous and stereotypical composition.



### **Stage 5 out comes the palette knife**

Using a palette knife can add dynamism in a painting. For the thinner layers water, acrylic painting medium or some drying retarder can be added to paint. The palette knife adds contrast and structure, especially on a large surface, and at the same time it accelerates the process of painting.



### **Stage 6 painting 'light'**

Various sizes of brushes and palette knife can be used here. This is the most creative and challenging part of painting. At this stage, imagination and creativity can be applied in full. Usually this step decides the final outcome of the painting.



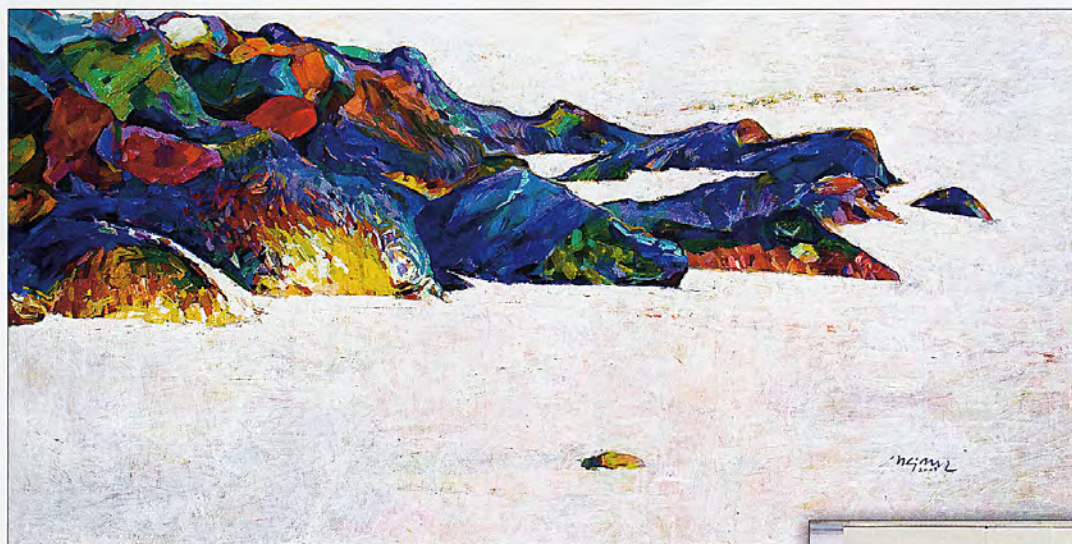
My process in painting involves a higher level of concentration and preparation, both mentally and technically. Finally, I learned to use acrylic as a unique and great technique and now enjoy many of its advantages.

### working big

My demonstration of acrylic technique will also show you how to work on a large canvas. If the canvas can't fit in your working space you can as I did, use a veranda or other larger space with suitable light. Because of canvas size, I use large brushes and palette knives for thicker textures. Choice of canvas or other surfaces to paint on is very personal; acrylics can be applied on virtually any surface. I still paint on double primed artist canvas which can be purchased at all good art stores. I am regularly buying larger jars of my favourite acrylic paint.

### a subject evolves

Subjects and themes for paintings are virtually everywhere to be found. There is no need to look in special places - some subjects will "find you" if you are a motivated observer. I arrived at the idea for painting



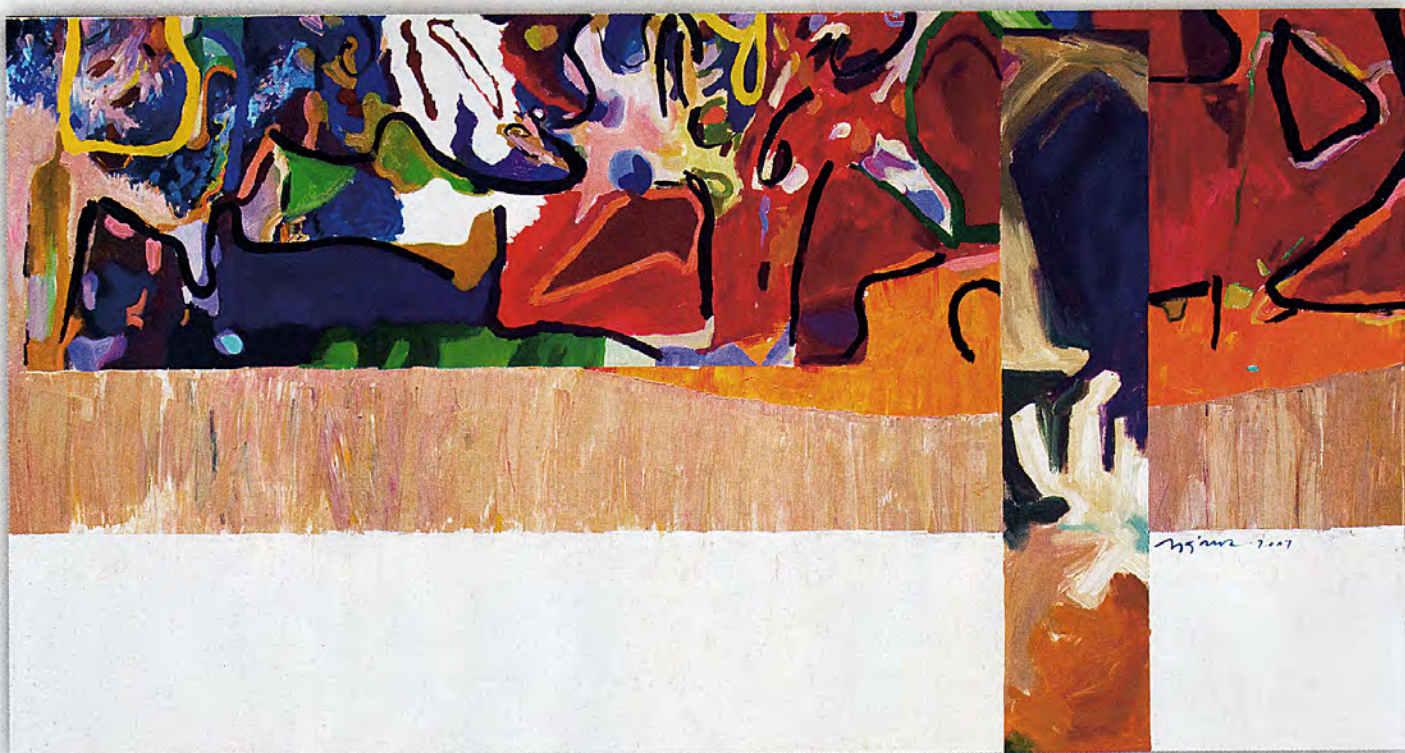
The painting pictured hanging in the gallery, shining in full intensity. The painting, "Rock on the Beach", was exhibited as an integral part of my recent exhibition, "Two Seasons", held at Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in Townsville.

### Stage 7 appearance of the completed painting

After drying, usually a week or two, a final cover of varnish is applied as protection for the painting, which will at the same time bring out the full intensity of acrylic colours.

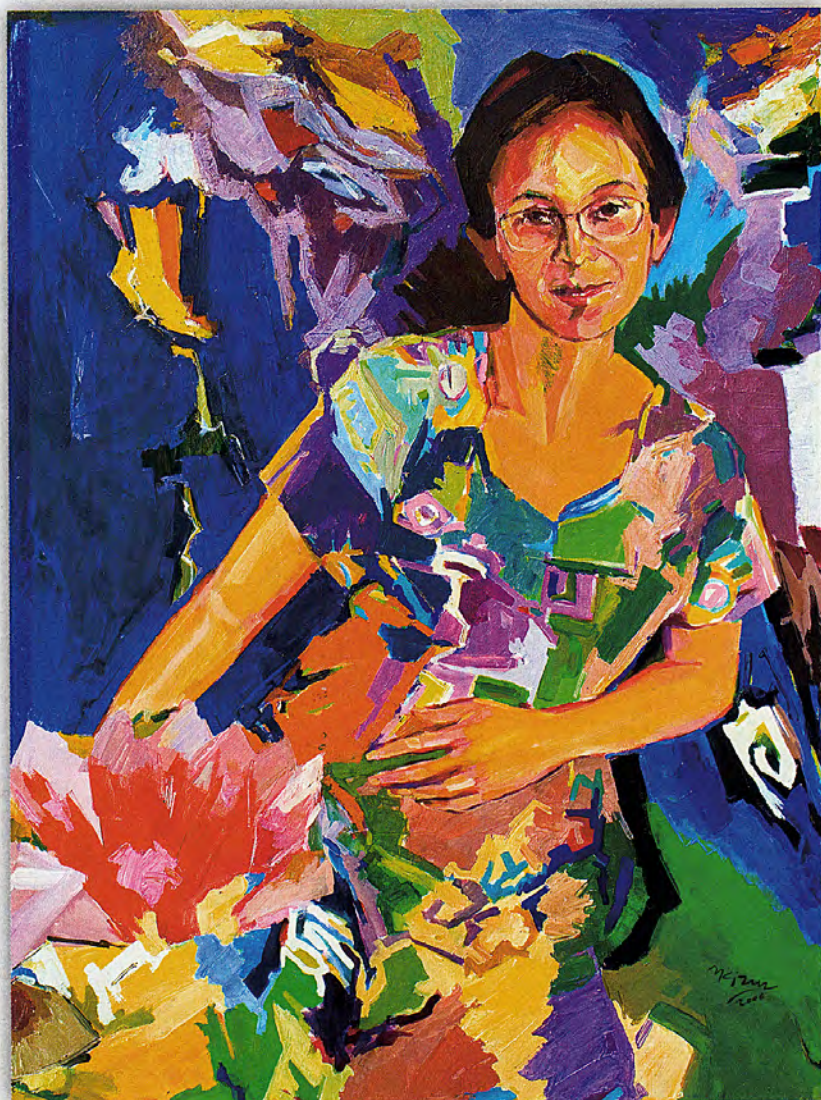






▲ **Crowd on the beach (2007), acrylic on canvas, 74 x 140cm**

Horizontals, verticals, diagonals and curves are basics for building every painting, especially an abstract one. Free shapes and lines in the horizontal top part in this painting represent a crowd on a beach.



◀ **Miluscka (2006), acrylic on canvas, 91 x 122cm**

Female figure in tropical environment. I tried to avoid deep space bringing elements to the first plane, creating dynamic arabesque half diagonals. Shadows are reduced to a minimum, intensity of colours and contrasts are enhanced.

“At first, I made the same mistake as everyone who tries to use old oil techniques with new acrylic materials and was frustrated as a result.”





**Light in my Studio (2006), acrylic on canvas, 60 x 52cm**

"Rocks on the Beach" after a morning walk on The Strand beach in Townsville. I had passed the constellation of rocks on the beach many times as many other people have before, but one morning the light was right and I was in the right place. I made some sketches and took photos, but the "real" impression of the moment stayed clear in my mind. I chose the large size of canvas to emphasize this "ordinary" moment and give it a bit of a monumental look. I started with underpaint colours, which are usually darker. Then I built the painting from the shadow to the light. Finishing touches were on the lightest details, and on some reflections on the rock.

#### **inside the frame**

I have another rule: "everything must be inside the frame". When the painting is showing good

progress and the composition and dominant colours are in balance, I give my imagination more flexibility and freedom to continue to completion. The final outcome should be a painting only, not a factual reproduction of an existing scene or objects.

#### **traditional and abstract**

I believe in painting in the 'traditional' way. I like to explore new approaches, fresh looks and excitement, with strong colours, modern composition and shapes. Inspiration and motivation to paint can come from everything which surrounds me as my selective aesthetic reaction. I always have two options: to follow visual information directly from the outside or to capture my reaction and feelings in that particular situation. As a result, some of my paintings have a 'realistic' approach, others are more 'abstract'. □



#### **about the artist**

Martin Kizur arrived in Townsville in the late 1990's with a rich history of European modernism, gathered though his Masters Degree at the Belgrade Academy of Fine Arts. Since moving from Melbourne with his family in 1998, Martin has openly celebrated the nature of the tropics, and encouraged others to do likewise. It has provided inspiration for three previous exhibitions held at the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery: "Fruit of the Tropics" (2003), "Jewels from the Sea" (2004), and paintings from the series "Corals" (2005). "Two Seasons" (2009), focuses less on any single element of the tropics - instead it celebrates this lifestyle in a broader sense, with Kizur drawing inspiration from every sight, sound or smell.

Martin's works have been exhibited and juried in more than seventy national and international exhibitions as well as fifteen solo exhibitions. He has won fifteen major prizes for his work in Europe and Australia.

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