

# Beauty without beginning or end



Susan with Echoes of Yesterday



Echoes of Yesterday

By Hannah Keys

Susan Harrison-Tustain recreates the painting over again in her mind as she speaks, designating meaning to each touch of the brush.

Her hands move gracefully, side to side, imitating the streaming light captured in time on the canvas before us.

She recurrently speaks of timelessness, a kind of beauty without beginning or end.

I'm unsure whether Susan knows she is the manifestation of her own words as she guides me through her latest collection. Feminine, warm, natural, ageless; and yet well-lived, she exudes the very essence she paints.

In 'Echoes of Yesterday', Susan depicts a derelict cottage, the model; her daughter, whom she uses in many of her works. She draws my attention to the native fern that unfolds from beneath the structure, symbolising new growth and new promise as the cottage becomes of the earth again.

'Enchanté par la Provence' exerts timelessness once more. Her daughter, again, wandering through a vibrant poppy field doused in sunshine. Behind her, a vineyard, and further, deeper into the painting, a 16th Century village, overlooking the field.

"I've got a thing about time, enduring thoughts and emotions, making things last, so what we've all created can be enjoyed long after we've gone. That's such a lovely notion," says Susan.





Windfall.



Susan with Time for Reflection.

"This piece, (*Enchanté par la Provence*) could have been painted one hundred years ago, or one hundred years hence."

Susan is stimulated by all that is natural, and says each painting must have a story; providing a reason for its own existence. She mentions her travels: a hotel in Southwest France, New York City, Maine - where she teaches art, and closer to home, Akaroa, her birthplace in the Wairarapa, and the drama of Mount Maunganui beach.

Her inspiration comes unannounced; from a mannequin's hands, the heady sweet scent of fermenting apples, a lone Kingfisher, a church door or a good red wine.

"I want people to feel they can connect with the painting, and feel some of the emotion I felt when I was first driven to paint it. I want them to become lost inside the frame."

Susan's passion for her work is palpable, but the significance and sentiment conveyed in her paintings is considered and deliberate. She knows how to get her point across. Like she says, everything is in existence for a reason.

"Sometimes paintings can be years in the making. I'll store something intriguing in my mind, until something snaps and I'll know exactly how to use it. I'm not into painting a picture because it's pretty. It's got to have substance and a purpose.

"Freedom to paint what moves me is imperative. Trends and fads do not hold any interest for me. I use intelligent composition

to engage the viewers of my work and invite them to step inside the frame. I want those who stand in front of my work to feel the presence of my subjects."

The self-taught artist says she often lies awake at night with the combined analysis of her works in progress and the excitement for her art form. She works hard, and says the life of a 21st Century artist is much more than sitting in front of an easel.

She believes good art is not measured by the fanfare it creates; the silence it instigates is of far greater note. She wants her paintings to speak for themselves.

With original works that sell from \$2500 up to \$45,000, Susan acknowledges the expectation of the art community, but says it's her own expectations that she thrives upon.

"There are many doors that have opened and continue to open for me. Many of which would involve moving overseas, but I couldn't imagine living anywhere else. So I travel and paint and am inspired by all that is around me. I know where I feel I want to be, and it's here."

Susan will personally present her latest collection, *Silent Poetry*, at Mills Reef Winery on October 27-28, and with a four-year wait between exhibitions, it is expected to draw more than 5000 people over the two days.

For a sneak preview, visit <http://www.susanart.com/exhibition/index.html>

Photo by Ross Brown, Vision Media.

## EXHIBITION

of original artworks  
by  
Susan Harrison-Tustain



Internationally acclaimed Tauranga artist Susan Harrison-Tustain has great pleasure in inviting you to an exhibition of her latest paintings in oil & watercolour.

Venue:  
Mills Reef Winery  
Moffat Rd  
Bethlehem  
Tauranga

Open to Public:  
Sat 27 & Sun 28 Oct 2007  
10am to 5pm  
No admission charge

Further information:  
(07) 5433933

Sneak preview:

[www.susanart.com/exhibition/index.html](http://www.susanart.com/exhibition/index.html)