

Residence: Tauranga, New Zealand

Style: Naturalistic realism, which allows the viewer to feel a part of the world inside the frame.

Favorite ethnic dish: Crayfish. There's no need for complicated preparation or treatment—it's best to allow the delicate, fresh sweetness of the crayfish to come to the fore, perhaps with a dash of fresh lemon or lime juice to give it a lift.

The best thing about New Zealand: It's a clean, green, nuclear-free country with a natural beauty that's breathtaking.

Working method: As my paintings can take up to three months to complete, I usually paint in my studio. Having said that, I also refresh my memory by revisiting the subject during the painting process. Reference photographs capture elusive light and shadows and are certainly a useful tool—but the best paintings come from a combination of reality, artistic license, reference photos and interpretation.

Palette: MaimeriBlu sap green, Linel bright red and from Schmincke: Indian yellow, aureolin, translucent orange, alizarin crimson, phthalo blue and phthalo green.

Favorite part of the process: Fine-tuning. This last step pulls all of the components together. Sometimes I'll lay in a wash of clear water over an entire rose once it's complete. Initially, a rose whose petals have been painted individually may look somewhat segmented. A careful wash over a bone-dry painting lifts just enough to unify the color and soften the demarcation lines.

Greatest asset: Being self-taught was a huge advantage for me. Without knowledge of the preconceived restrictions usually associated with watercolor, I was able to push the medium past those boundaries without ever knowing "it just isn't possible."

Humbling moment: A few years ago, as visitors were walking past me on their way out after viewing one of my exhibitions, a lady asked me if I would sign her catalog. Of course I was pleased to do so—quite honored in fact. So from then on, everyone handed me a catalog that I signed. Some time later a lady passed who seemed a little tentative—she held her catalog close to her chest. I felt she was a little shy to ask, so I offered "Would you like me to sign your catalog?" I was mistaken, she wasn't tentative—her reply was a definite "No!" I smiled and was firmly put in my place!

Web site: www.susanart.com.



Jonquilles pour ma Mère
(watercolor on paper, 14¼ x 7¼)

Susan Harrison-Tustain

New
Zealand