

Think big, map it out,
emphasise the focal point
and paint boldly!

How to Create Large Scale Panoramas

using
acrylics

by Georgia Mansur

Although a large part of my work is painting en plein air (on location, all in one go), and is done on relatively small canvas panels or paper to capture the essence of the place quickly, what I enjoy most is painting on a larger scale.

Big vistas are exciting and I love getting into it physically, using broad brushstrokes and large masses of shapes and colour to simplify and create the most impact.

I stand up to be free to use my whole arm/body and not get trapped into tightening up too much, especially in the beginning stages of development. I get back several paces as often as possible to remain in a loose and gestural mindset and get perspective on the picture holistically. In this case, for the demonstration, I have used two easels to support my 33 x 78" canvas in my limited studio space.

I start with an idea of what I want to convey about a scene. In this instance, I wanted to convey the vast space and the contrasts between the rugged cliff faces against the softness of the distant valley floor and hills in the Wolgan Valley of the Blue Mountains, NSW.

I map out a plan that lets me know whether my idea will work (or not), from a composition and design point of view. If adjustments need to be made it is in the initial stages of development that I want to get it right, not the latter stages. No amount of clever painting technique can save a bad design, so make sure the time you spend in the first 15 minutes of design is well spent.

Create an eye path that will lead the viewer in and through the painting by positioning points of interest that lead to the focal point, engaging them for more

than a cursory glance. I use design to simplify and create impact, adjusting shapes and patterns, editing out anything that takes the viewer away from my message, or does not support it.

Many artists believe you must paint everything in the landscape exactly as it is in front of you – I disagree. I believe that is the domain of photography and we are here to paint a picture, not take a photograph. Designing a landscape is just as important as it is in a still life or figurative work. Everything must support your statement or message you wish to convey about the scene. Strong design is imperative to communicating your message clearly. If anything draws the eye out of the picture plane, we need to offer a foil to kick the eye back into the painting to maintain our viewer's interest.

In panoramas, we need to convey a feeling of distance, so remember that the laws of aerial perspective apply - generally objects closer to you will be larger and warmer with crisp edges and things further away will be smaller, cooler and have softer edges.

Selecting a semi-limited palette of colours is the key to creating colour harmony. I like to use a warm and a cool of each primary plus White, Burnt Sienna and Yellow Ochre for earth tones and one or two darks like Dioxazine Purple or Raw Umber to deepen the range of darks. Using a limited palette is a great way to ensure that you are keeping in line with your colour theme/mood and the added benefit is learning how to mix paint quickly and beginning to understand which colours you need to mix to get the desired effects. From these colours I can mix just about any colour needed. □



What the Artist Used

Paint
Golden Fluid and Golden Open acrylic
Golden extra heavy gel matte

Colours
Golden Fluid
Quinacridone Nickel Azo Gold
Burnt Sienna
Phthalo Blue

Golden OPEN
Cadmium Yellow Medium
Indian Yellow
Yellow Ochre
Quinacridone Magenta
Cadmium Red Medium
Ultramarine Blue
Cobalt Blue
Dioxazine Purple

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my art in the making Two Wolgan Valley Panoramas

FINISHED PAINTING *Wolgan Valley Panorama I*, acrylic on stretched canvas



In the beginning there was a white canvas - all 33 x 78" of it!



I toned with a Burnt Sienna light wash, then drew with a Phthalo Blue and Burnt Sienna skeleton.



Mixing up a washy Quinacridone Nickel Azo Gold and Burnt Sienna to tone my canvas and give it some warm underglow.

STAGE 1 Starting with a washy mix

I begin with a washy mix of Golden Fluids for my underpainting as if I were painting a first wash in watercolour. The wash gets rid of the glaring white canvas and sets up a warm glow that will shine through later when I scrape back thicker paint or leave it as it is. Typically, I use Golden Fluids Burnt Sienna or Quinacridone Nickel Azo Gold as my base.



STAGE 2 Mapping it out

Next, I start mapping out with a washy mix of Golden Fluids in Phthalo Blue. The reason I use Fluids for these early stages is because it dries quickly and lets me lay down the bones and get on to the meat of the painting, without delay for drying time. The intensity of pure pigment and no added fillers ensures I only need to add a few drops to clean water to create a large pool of juicy paint.



Laying in the Darks



Putting in some more information



Working into the shadows



Working into the cliff area

STAGE 5

Finished Painting

STAGE 3 Blocking in the darks

Once I am satisfied with the placement of the design, I begin using thicker paint (Golden Opens) to block in the large masses of darks. I like using Golden Opens as their properties suit the 'open and workable' window of opportunity with acrylics. I can move, push and blend the paint similarly to oils, in both time frame and texture, without any of the drawbacks of using chemicals, turps or strong fumes (and no hassles with airport security!). All Golden products (Fluids, Heavy Body, Opens, as well as all Grounds, Gels and Pastes) are interchangeable and can be mixed across all boundaries together, giving freedom to create in whichever way I wish. For me, it has been a revolution in the way I work, particularly in the paddock, when normal acrylics dry in a matter of hours. I like the flexibility to stay wet and keep moving the paint for days. The biggest bonus I have found is that I don't waste any paint - I keep them in a rubber gasket sealed plastic palette container with a wet sponge. The paint I originally squeezed out last February (12 months ago!) is still going strong. I just keep adding to it as needed. Wasting paint has always bothered me and I never have to do that again with this system.

Thickening Up, Adding Body And Building Up The Panorama



Adding Golden Gel Matte to create more impasto effects in my work



STAGE 4

As I further develop my painting, I build up layers of thicker paint and often add some Golden gels or pastes to create more body and impasto layers. In this way, I can satisfy my need to work in the water media and have the best of both worlds - from glowing transparent washes to opaque and textural effects, to tell my painting 'story'.

...MY NEXT PANORAMA

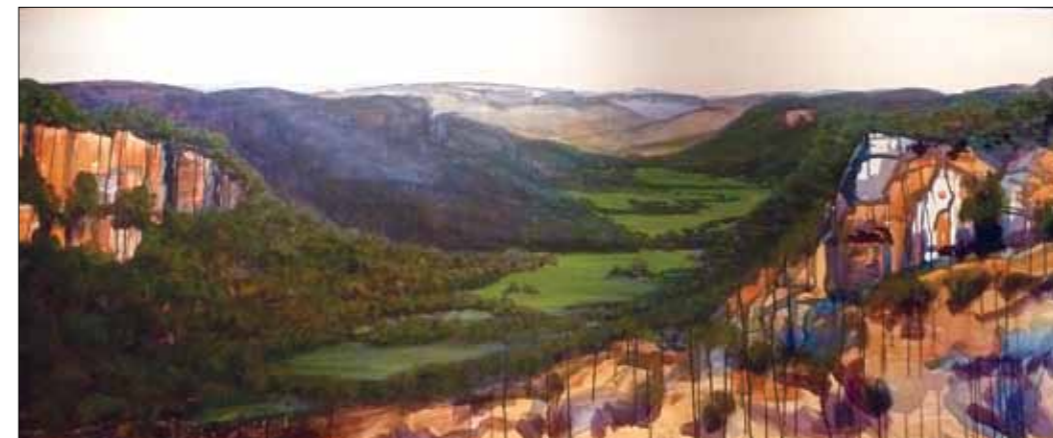


STAGE 1

Starting out with a Burnt Sienna wash and some "feeling around" to find what I want to express.

STAGE 2

Blocking in some major players to set the scene.



STAGE 3

Laying in some more information and colour notes.

STAGE 4

Turning the painting upside down to warm up the sky with more glowing washy tones to underpin the clouds I will put in later.





STAGE 5 Developing the rocky area on the left side, and on the right side.



STAGE 6
Getting the sharp light on the craggy rocks contrasting with the smooth valley and distant hills below, and adding the rest of the sky.



STAGE 7
Putting in some more detail in the foreground (using my credit card) to make it pop!



STAGE 8
Finished painting
Wolgan Valley Panorama II, acrylic on stretched canvas, 33 x 78"



Blue Mountains Rockface I, acrylic on watercolour paper, half sheet



Georgia's Wisteria, acrylic on canvas panel, 11 x 14"

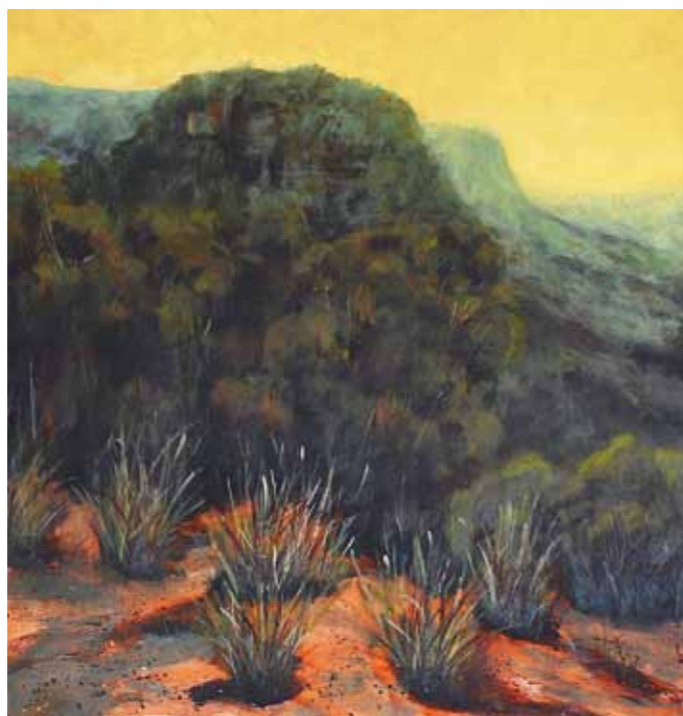
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The Reflecting Pond, acrylic on stretched canvas, 20 x 20"



Dam Reflections, acrylic on board, 6 x 6"



Blue Mountains Scrub, acrylic on cradled birch panel, 25 x 27"



Golden Trees, acrylic on watercolour paper, full sheet

Join Georgia's Painting Workshops in 2012

www.georgiamansur.com/workshops.html

MT BULLER, VIC, SUMMER SCHOOL, 24-26 February 2012

CORTONA, ITALY, 16-23 May 2012
www.toscanaamericana.com/georgiamansurpleinair.html

POSARA, ITALY
 26 May to 2 June 2012
 @ the Watermill
www.georgiamansur.com/uploads/6/6/5/4/6654486/2012_posara_italy_workshop.pdf

SUFFOLK, UK, 13/14 June 2012
MITCHELL COLLEGE OF ARTS WINTER SCHOOL, BATHURST
 1-7 July 2012

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, USA,
 15/16 September 2012

CYPRESS MILL, TEXAS, USA,
 3-6 October 2012

WHIDBEY ISLAND PACIFIC NORTHWEST ARTS SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, USA, July/Aug 2013

Georgia is attending the KAWA (Kick Ass Women Artists, Australian Rep) in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA, 19-23 September 2012 and is currently organizing the first annual Australian Plein Air Event in March 2013.

View Georgia's website for more detailed information, bookings and sales.

The Georgia Mansur Palette by Daniel Smith is also now available from Georgia's website www.georgiamansur.com

about the artist

Georgia had her first exhibition of paintings at the age of 16, but moved from California to Australia in 1984 to help her husband develop a cotton farm 72 kms west of Moree, in north-west NSW. Georgia painted as a creative outlet and a way to cope with the isolation and loneliness of a new lifestyle in a strange, but fascinating new country. She now resides in Mudgee, NSW.

Her work is a reflection of her emotional response to the world, painting subjects in an expressive manner. Whilst well-versed in all media, Georgia loves painting in water media (acrylic, watercolour, mixed media) to express herself.

Completing an Arts Degree in Communication at CSU Sacramento, USA, Georgia feels painting is an interesting way to communicate with others on many different levels. Her paintings are diverse in subject matter as well as technique.

Georgia has been Artist in Residence at Hamilton Island, QLD. In March 2012, she will be the Artist in Residence at Emirates Wolgan Valley Resort in the Blue Mountains. She also travels around Australia teaching workshops from Katherine, NT to Mt Buller, VIC. Georgia loves sharing her passion with others, helping them discover their own creativity. Georgia is a Certified Golden International Artist Educator and will also be teaching workshops in Europe and the USA in 2012/13.

www.georgiamansur.com

My Collection of Paintings by Artist Friends from Around the World



Bob Wade and Georgia Mansur in Melbourne

As well as being an artist/instructor, I have been a collector of Fine Art paintings for the past 25+ years. I appreciate the inspiration and value the skill and technique that these artists have shared with me, as much as the strong bonds of friendship that have developed over the years. There is no greater compliment than another artist desiring to purchase or trade work with you and I have been blessed to paint with many Australian and overseas renowned artists. Some of the pieces in my collection are by Joseph Zbukvic, Alvaro Castagnet, Patrick Carroll, Nic Canosa, Herman Pikel, Robert Wade, Barry McCann, Larissa Blake, Penelope Gilbert Ng, Les McDonough, Brian Allison, Angela Naef, Tom Schaller, Karl Dempwolf, Ignat Ignatov, Gil Dellinger, Lori Putnam, Terry Miura, Nancy Rhodes Harper, Frank Gardner, Sarah Jane Doberstein, Jelaine Faunce, and Avalon Parsons. I am very fortunate to have their work in my collection and count them as friends.