



ARTIST OF THE WEEK

Marin Loo

[@marinloo](#)

Oil Painting

Hey Marin, so first thing - tell me a bit about yourself as an artist! How did you get started?

I've been interested in art since I was a kid. I was quite a nerd! I spent a lot of time immersed in drawing & sketching (and reading fantasy books & comics!). Drawing was just something I did for hours. This must have alarmed my well-meaning parents as they diffused my creative activities overtime. Once I graduated from high school, I was strongly encouraged by my parents to focus on other areas that were considered more financially stable (like I.T.!).

For a while, my passion was (sadly) pushed aside and even forgotten about. It was probably in my late 20s, I noticed an ad for a life-drawing class at a fine arts school (Julian Ashton Art School). This brought up all kinds of fond memories and re-ignited my passion to pursue a more

creative life. I enrolled on a part time basis and overtime I was trained in fine arts in drawing and painting in figures/nudes and still life. It was some of my best times! I had a great support system and fantastic mentors who I still connect with.

It was only a few years ago, I decided to stop going as I wanted to focus on my own personal journey. It was time to brave it out and explore what it means to be an artist and pave my own path.

You've got a very nice painting style, which reminds me of Impressionist works but in a pastel and colourful palette. How did you style come about? Has it changed over time?

My style has definitely change overtime. I would say I have leveraged what I learnt from school and spent a lot of solo time in exploring different ways of painting to ultimately reach a stage that would be visually appealing and exciting for me. Over time I've developed a style which some people would describe as vibrant, colourful and somewhat impressionistic.

I'm also interested to hear about your creative process as well. It's really inspiring to see you post your raw sketches on your Instagram!

I normally start with a sketch on a piece of paper to see if the painting will work compositionally. Some of my paintings are done initially on-site from life, from photos or from my imagination with combination of references. The initial time is spent reflecting on the feelings and emotions I feel and what I want to convey through the picture.

Once I'm happy with the sketch compositionally, I would paint and block in all the major components of the painting. This is then refined through multiple layers and transformed over time to something that I find visually appealing. I would enhance the painting by adding atmosphere, colour, visual brush strokes and sometimes changing elements of the piece. Sometimes the transformation is major and sometimes not. The process is quite visceral and intuitive, so I don't consider the painting as complete until I feel the transformation is complete.

It looks like you paint a lot of still life shots of nature and small room decor. What inspires you to focus on these?

I'm primarily inspired by elements of nature. I love exploring the natural landscapes, going on hikes and simply being aware of some of the nature that surrounds us. These are the times when I feel a sense of peace, and I would find myself thinking (or rather day-dreaming) about the next piece of painting. So alot of my ideas and inspiration come from nature itself.

I also have a strong curiosity and propensity to learn and try different techniques and subjects, so from time to time I may paint different mediums or various subjects ranging from still life decor, portraiture & figurative.

You've also participated in your fair share of exhibitions in the past - do you have a favourite one?

Yes! My favourite one would be my most recent group exhibition - 'Womankind'. The theme of the exhibition was about exploring femininity and what it means to be a woman in our time. I really enjoyed working on the artwork leading up to it and I had a great time collaborating with the other female artists. In fact, we are already planning for another exhibition! Stay tuned!

Artist Instagram accounts are becoming more common for emerging artists like yourself - what are your thoughts on this? Do you think it's vital for artist to be on social media now?

I feel quite a duality with social media platforms like Instagram. On a positive note I think Instagram has been quite valuable in making connections and being more visible – yes - even though I hear that Instagram have changed their algorithm to make it harder for emerging artists and newbies in general. I still find it quite useful to showcase any work in progress, finished work or upcoming events. I've also made new connections with a lot of people who I wouldn't normally. As an artist its important to be visible and accessible in different ways and I think Instagram is one of them.

On the negative side, there can be a psychological effect of content overload, comparing yourself with others and developing a status anxiety if a post is not perfect. It can be tricky and something to always keep in check. Instagram is simply a platform and we shouldn't lose sight of the bigger things that are important in developing as an artist.

Final question - do you have any advice for students who aren't sure about how to get started in painting?

Do it and don't wait too long. Trust me!

Find a teacher/school that interest you. You may find a great network of friends or mentor that could help you along the journey. Learning something new takes time, so it's more motivating and enjoyable when you have an environment which is conducive to learning.

For people who have just started and are early in the journey - Be patient and don't seek perfection. I often hear people get deflated or beat themselves if they're not seeing results instantly. Just be diligent and keep practicing. You are always growing with each step. And remember to have fun along the way!

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