

THE ARTIST'S DILEMMA: To Paint for Yourself or Your Audience?

By Brenda Innes

With falling sales for paintings and the need to generate income from our art this question arises in discussions between artists on a regular basis.

My recommendation is to research what is selling in art shows and commercial art galleries. The recent history of sales at Camberwell Art Show features most sales are for ***unframed Australian land & seascapes*** as well as ***European scenes*** that evoke holiday memories. Another aspect to consider is the most ***popular price point***. At Camberwell Art Show this is ***\$1,000 to \$2,000 bracket***. These sales would reflect popular subjects and price points at other shows too.

Why these subjects? Perhaps evoking positive memories is the emotional trigger that will continually please the viewer. These artworks also become part of a family's history and for this reason have sentimental value to be passed down the generations.

The dilemma for some artists is that these subjects may not speak from their heart and therefore the artistic process doesn't have the integrity that painting other subjects such as portrait or still life would have for the artist.

If this is the case, finding other artistic ways to generate income for eg. Portrait commissions, demonstrating, teaching, publishing for eg. Youtube, ebooks, art tours, and/or workshops while also pursuing personal creative time may be an alternative option to income from painting sales.