

Valerie Lynch

The approach to the Lynch household is covered deeply in autumn leaves. Varying shades of brown and yellow leaves crunched under my feet as I carefully made my way to the front door. That afternoon, Valerie, with excitement in her voice, explained that beauty was not merely 'pretty'; it could mean 'peace and seeing everything in balance'.

Painting is seen by Valerie as a type of healing process, an escape from the woes of life, as it temporarily absorbs your total attention, leaving everything standing still, and you 'half conscious' of surroundings and concerns. Valerie recalled that while painting in the bush on one occasion she was totally oblivious to the movement of animals, bird calls, and even people. "I suddenly noticed a small animal seated near me, looking at me from the corner of its eye. I looked at it too, from the corner of my eye, and I noticed that it went on eating."

The search for a subject bathed in natural light and possessing a sparkling brilliance is a continuous one. It is that 'shimmering' with its contrasting areas of dark and light that holds her interest. Valerie is drawn to 'collections of boats' lying in a harbour or small cove or to the reflected lights which emanate from closely linked rooftops. In Europe she worked hard to capture the tonal variations in her subjects. She states that lights and darks help to formulate shape, and tone adds a further dimension to the image. Examples of this are seen in her works entitled, *Street scene in Austria*, *Autumn in Copenhagen* and *A Touch of Paris*.

Valerie has painted boats and the activity surrounding them in locations varying from Oslo in Norway to Mordialloc Creek in Victoria. She said, "You get your cue from the prevailing condition and you run with it." Val is a true tonal realist, who has spent many years perfecting her art. She indicates that, "seeing is very important, and an artist must learn to see."

In Valerie's studio hangs a partially completed oil painted in France. Here all her skills with the brush are strongly in evidence as she manipulates colour and the application of thin and heavy paint in order to bring light and convey distance to the work. The carefully patterned, large square brush strokes, of dark and light green placed on a tree in the foreground, catch and reflect the light, in a similar way to that of the dark and light squares of a recently-prepared cricket outfield. A complicated statue of a king astride his horse, and



Valerie Lynch, 'Autumn in Copenhagen' oil

restrained by two powerful men shows the same essential concert with colour and form. Valerie is conscious of bringing light into her work and adds that her "eyes and intuition do this work."

Valerie has been invited to exhibit her overseas work in an exhibition called **World Through Australian Eyes**, at the Durning-Lawrence Gallery, Sydney, commencing 12 July. Between 1986 and 1996, Valerie has held nine solo exhibitions, and she has also contributed to several group exhibitions. She has been the recipient of 19 first prizes and numerous art awards, including the

1992 Alice Bale Award for Oils. She continues to attend several art and life workshops.

Valerie has travelled widely both in Australia and overseas. She has taught painting in oil, drawing and watercolour. Her work is represented in private, government and corporate collections. She is a member of several artist societies including the Sherbrooke Art Society. Val is a regular contributor to Sherbrooke's two major annual exhibitions and the Society is greatly indebted to her.

SHIRLEY CONWAY
Sherbrooke Art Gallery
(03) 9754 4264



Valerie Lynch, 'Street Scene Austria', oil