



**"Village Scene, Austria"**

*This is a very charming street scene. What I liked about it was the light streaming through the dark shadows. If you get the tones right that is more than half the battle.*



**"Boats, Copenhagen"**

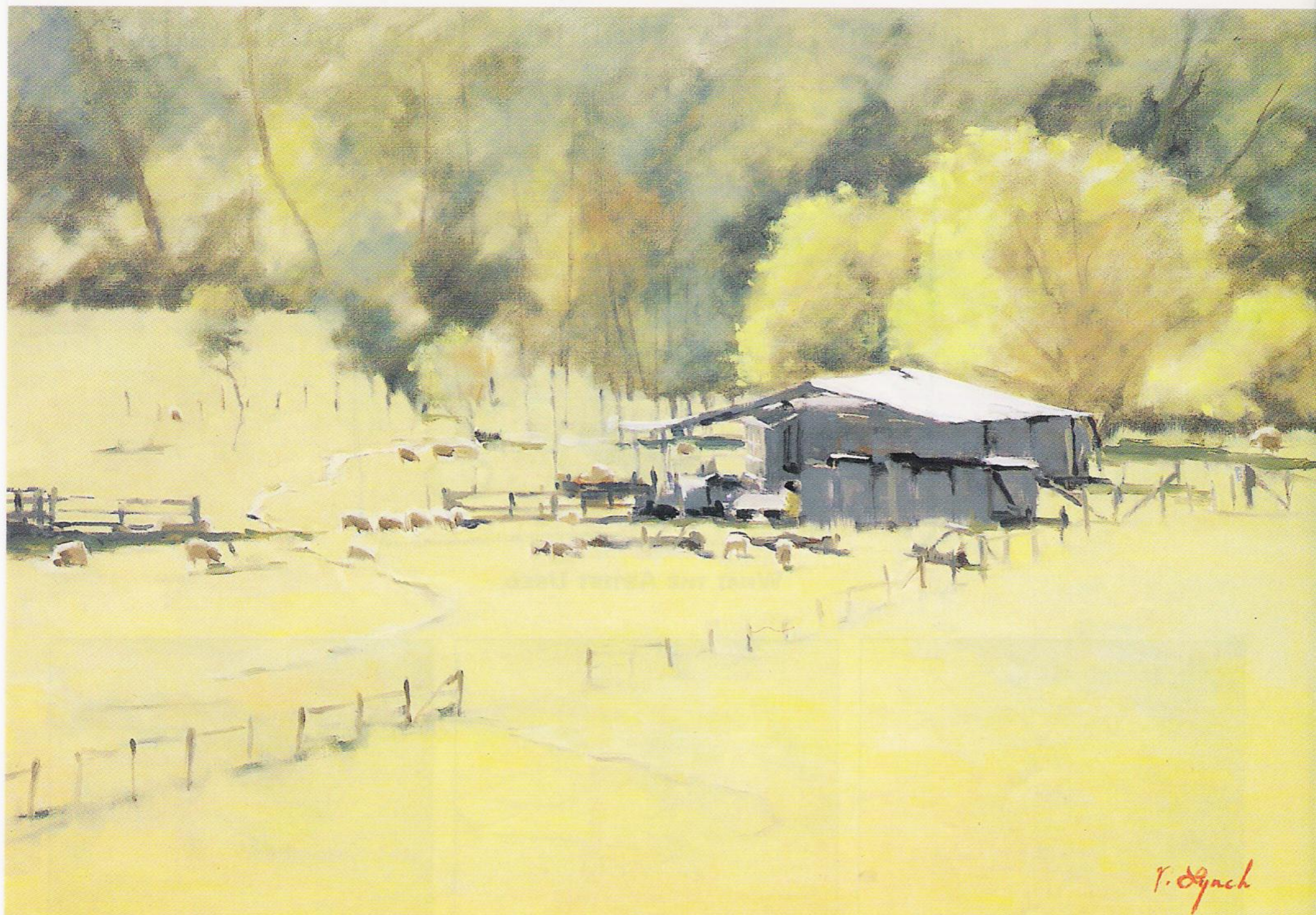
*Boats are one of my favourite painting subjects and the boats in Copenhagen were a painter's paradise. When I am looking for the best subject I walk a lot and view every possible angle.*

TO RETAIN ITS PURITY, VALERIE LYNCH PREFERS TO PAINT THE SCENE JUST AS IT IS. THAT INVOLVES MUCH MORE MOVING AROUND WHEN COMPOSING, BUT THE RESULTS ARE AUTHENTIC AND, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, EASIER TO CAPTURE ON CANVAS.

# Landscape — the Way Nature Intended

BY VALERIE LYNCH





**W**hen I stop at a painting spot I walk around and view the area thoroughly, seeing, feeling and selecting. I am influenced by the effects of light, perhaps the extreme light on a sunny day or a very subtle distant view, especially when the sun is going down. I have a strong belief that a landscape should be painted just as I see it: the way nature arranged it. A landscape is easier to paint when it is all there to see in front of you. To “move” trees only creates more problems because then you are making things up

and making changes, I would rather move *myself* around. I have, on some occasions, tied a sapling back as I stood in the middle of a creek. I am capturing a small piece of time and to me this should be exactly as seen.

I like to paint a new challenge no matter how complicated. I like the busy subjects of many boats and their paraphernalia and interesting European buildings jammed together. I like to depict what I see and feel and paint subjects that have a bright sunny feel that emphasises the light.

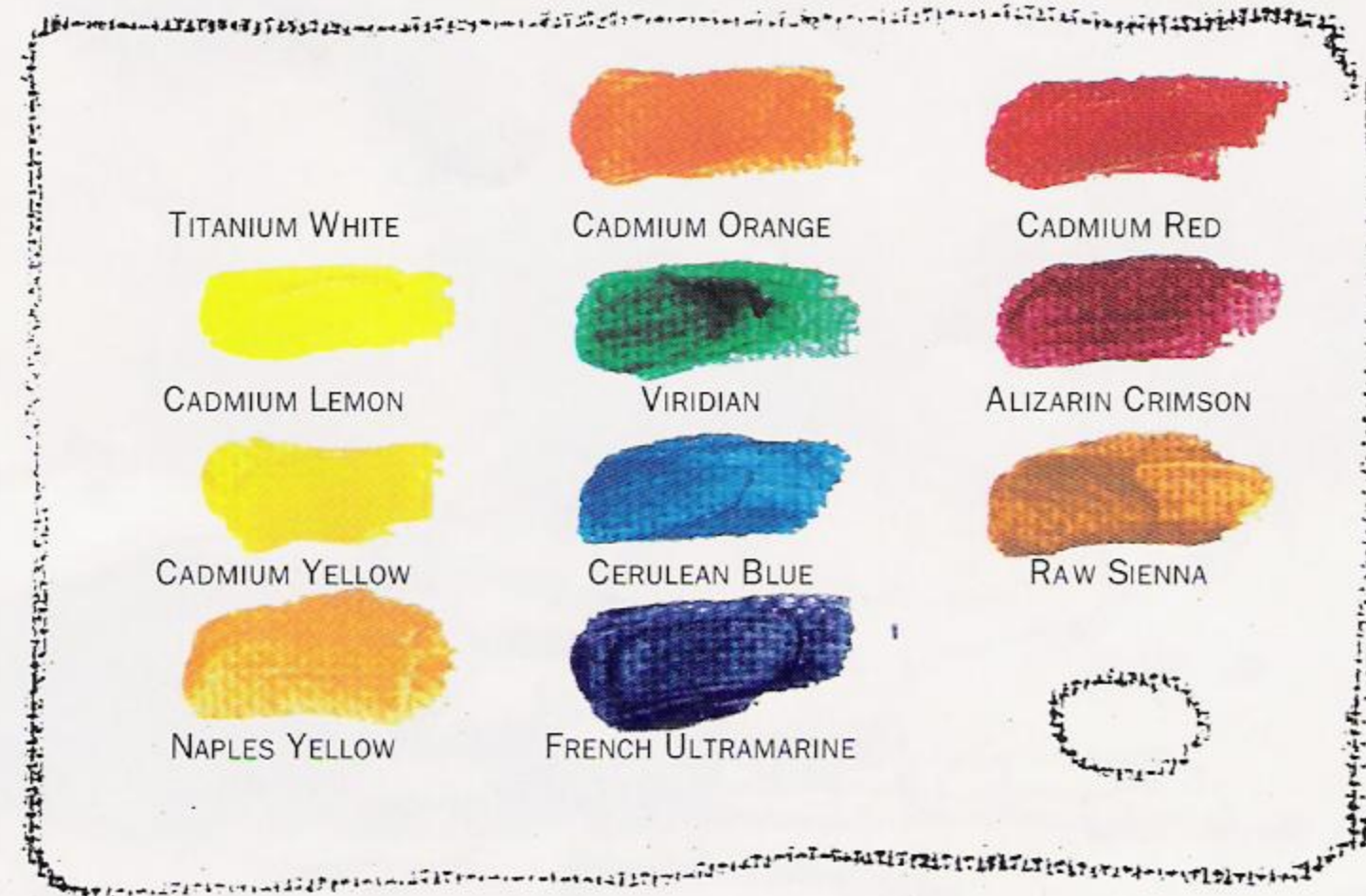
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#### **“The Sheep Farm, Yea, Victoria”**

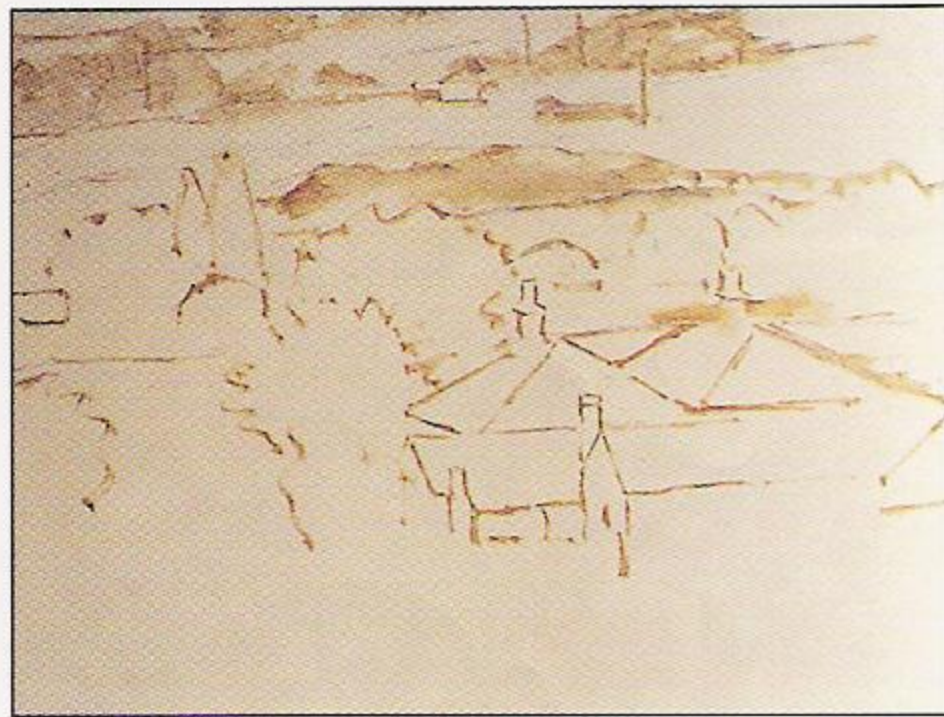
*This is a little, secluded farm in the Yea area. Because of the extreme light, the darks seem to become very dark. Squint and you’ll be able to see the tones easier.*



“At midday the sun is right above and it is important to know where it is going, so I carry a compass in my painting box.”



### WHAT THE ARTIST USED



#### Deciding how much to include

*I selected this country scene in Taradale which I found almost hidden as I clambered through long grass to get an vantage point of the surrounding countryside. This area in central Victoria has some beautiful scenery and “old world charm” homes, and the grasses have a velvety shine, especially in the light of the afternoon sun.*

*I position my easel so that when I stand back I can see my board and the subject. I look through my viewfinder and decide how much of the scenery I will place on my canvas. I take my time studying the composition and I place the house to one side and below the halfway mark. I then paint a rough sketch on my canvas.*



#### Squint to see the tones

*By half closing my eyes I will only see the tones and I block in these tones with colour using a large brush. I then paint the dark trees, the grass areas and eliminate most of the white canvas. Paint at this stage should be thin because it can be wiped out and altered if necessary. I always stand about three to four steps back from my painting and observe my canvas and the subject at the same time.*



#### Well established now

*The foreground trees have been darkened and the dry grasses and bushes established. I am working all over the canvas making sure the darks are in the correct place. This is autumn time when the grass is dry and there is quite a lot of warm colours in the bushes.*



## ART WASN'T MEANT TO BE EASY

**A**lthough I was always interested in art, I was not able to pursue it properly until the children were older. I remember my first attempt to paint outside: I was on a trip to the Flinders Ranges with my husband and children, we had stopped at a secluded area and I walked through the bush and long grass, a fair distance from the road. My children were enjoying themselves playing hide-and-seek through the bush. I set up my easel and was still organising paints when one of my children rushed up and said "Have you finished yet?" A little time later a gust of wind came and blew my little easel over, I picked it up and was brushing off the sand when a four-wheel drive came along the road and stopped. The occupants all

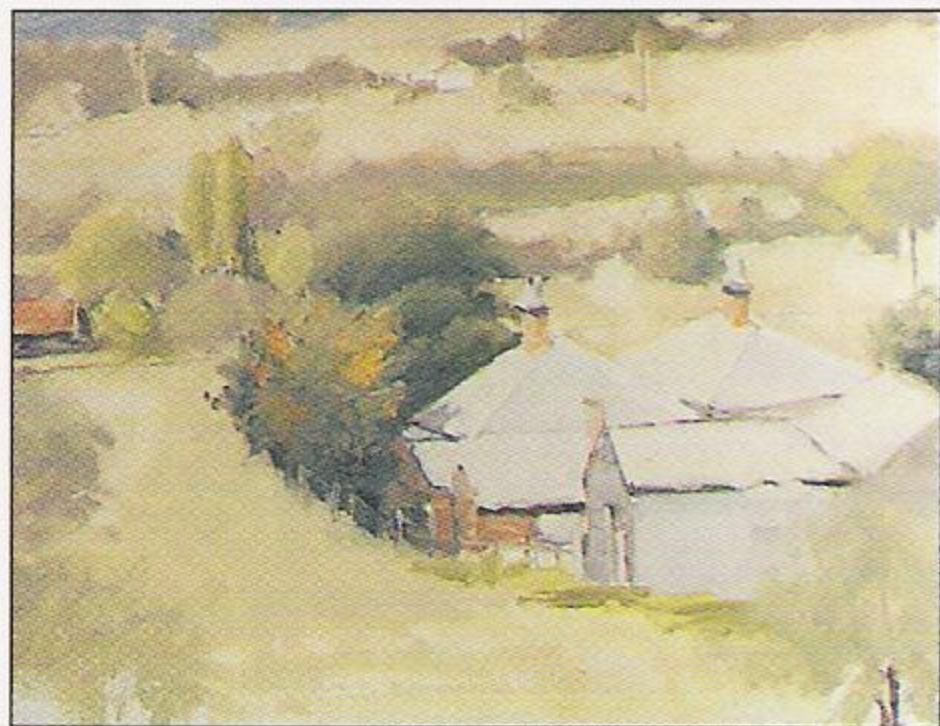
got out, and started to make their way to see what I was doing, and I decided this was the time to pack up.

Many years have passed and I have painted on site and travelled with many painting groups and privately. Eight years ago I took my first overseas trip to view and study art in the major and regional galleries of Europe. Since then I have been overseas many times as well as travelling throughout Australia, painting in my style that has developed from my experimentation with colour and many mediums.

From my many painting trips I have memories of storms, fires, heat, cold, lost paintings, bull ants, snakes, flies and mosquitoes just to mention a few. I have also had the experience of continuing to

paint through adverse weather conditions to capture the storm before it hit me and tying my easel down to stop it from blowing away on windy days. Under these conditions the artist strives to capture the scene as well as you can. It is not always like this. The many special times when I have been painting in the bush on a beautiful sunny day near a river and I realise the birds are singing and can hear fish jumping out of the water.

The great thing about art is there is always more to be revealed. It opens your eyes to the world around you and you learn to appreciate the beautiful things many people miss in their busy lives.



**Relate tones and colours carefully**

*The buildings have some colour now and the brickwork and chimneys add a touch of warmth to the house. Some of the bushes in the background have a slight pinkish colour and the distance will be lighter in colour and tone. I will lighten or darken as the relating process continues. In landscape tones and colours can change so much: you must be prepared to alter many times. I am keeping the painting at the same stage all over and generally painting what I see, the blue distant hill, the soft distant bushes and stronger foreground. As soon as a tone and colour is put down it should be related to the tone and colour next to it.*



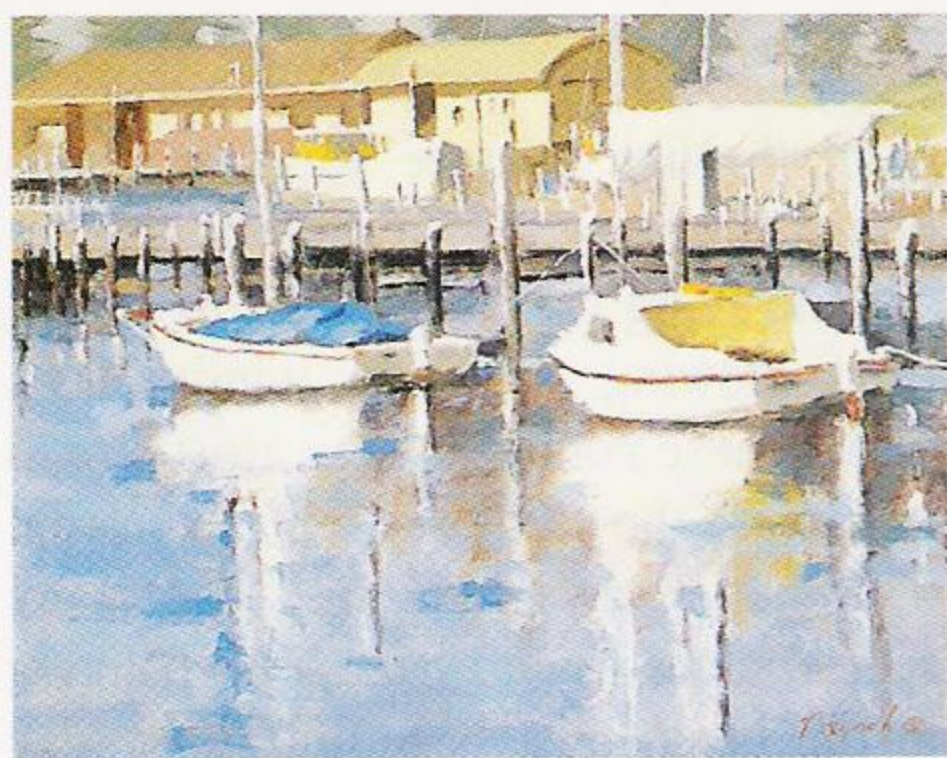
**Trial and error teaches colour mixing**

*The background hills and sky have been added. Similar colours to those used for the hills and grasses need to continue throughout the painting. A break from painting is necessary because this rests your eyes. When you start again your will discover any mistake. Take time to observe and relate again.*

*This is a very soft, high key subject and although there does not seem to be many*

*colours I actually used a lot. When mixing colours don't be discouraged by not being able to get the right colour, just persevere and you can teach yourself how to mix. The best way to learn is by practice. When there is a colour not quite right, wipe your brush, start afresh and try new colours. Keep repeating this process over and over until the colour is correct. You will discover something new every time you paint.*





**"Port Fairy Harbour, Victoria"**

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## **PORT FAIRY HARBOUR**

Standing on the Port Fairy pier looking at all the boats on a dazzling sunny day: the setting is tranquil. The afternoon sunlight is shining on the brightly painted boats and background buildings. The weather conditions are very important. I ask myself "Where will the sun be in a couple of hours?" At midday the sun is right above and it is important to know where it is going, so I carry a compass in my painting box. It is not good if the sun is shining straight into my face or the tree I am standing under becomes so dark I cannot see the canvas. There must be enough room to stand back and view the work and the subject together.

I look through the square opening of my cardboard viewfinder and the setting is perfect, it is hard to decide which scene I will do. I take my time studying the composition and the shapes of light and dark. I settle on the two small boats with the buildings in the background and the light hitting the side of the buildings and creating shadows.

I sketch roughly on the canvas where I will place the boats and balance the scene with a large span of water. The centre of interest is the boats, and these lead your eyes to follow the interesting buildings and then back to the cool water. I block in with colour and thin paint all over the painting. I then work on the biggest differences, checking that the boats and building are correct, relating all the time to tone and shape. As I am nearing the finish, I take a little time to observe and relate again, checking the hard and soft edges and removing any unrelated detail. This is the time to stop.



**"Nicholson Street, Melbourne, Victoria"**

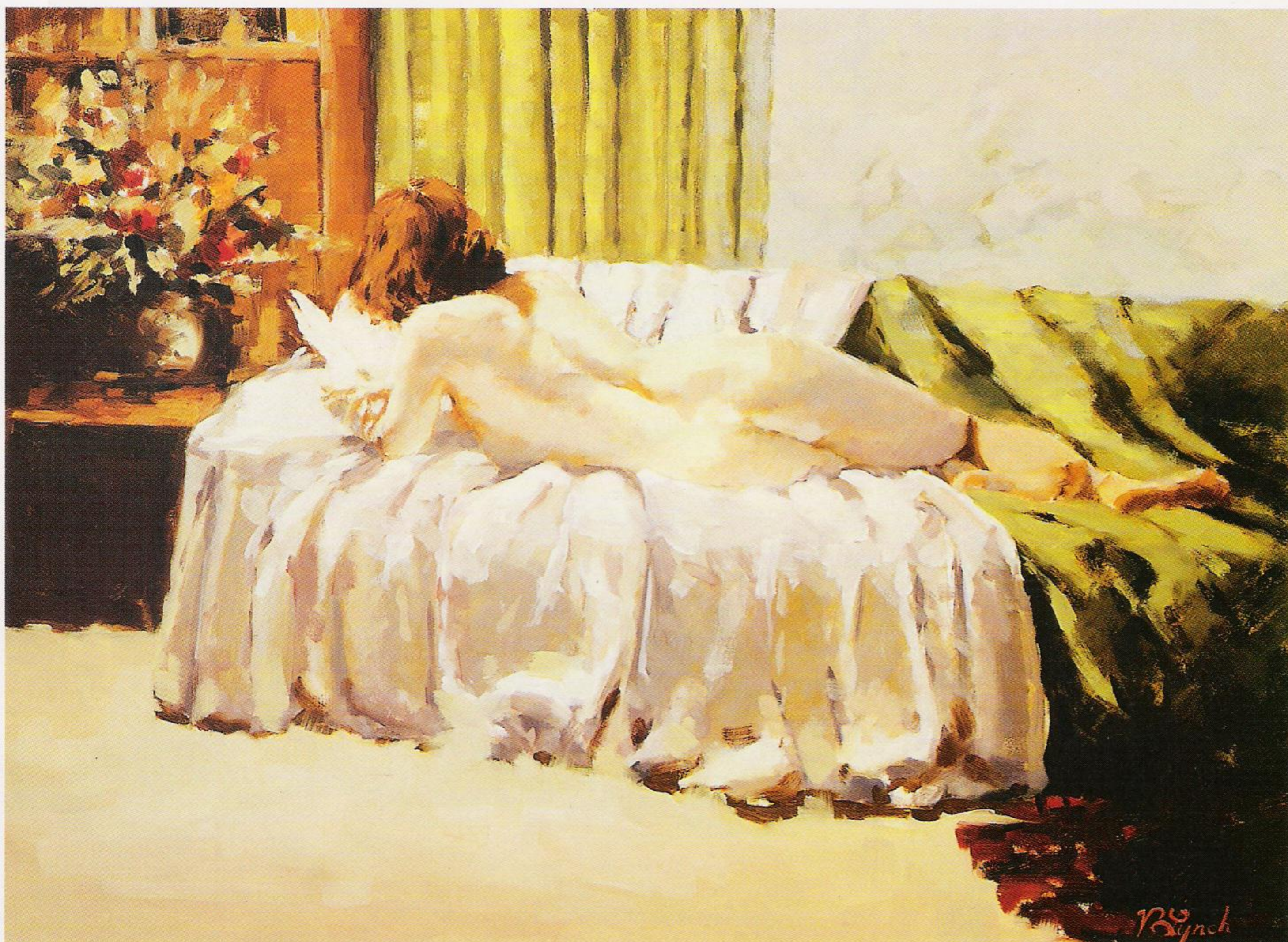
*A typical scene showing the new trams that travel along the city streets in Melbourne.*



**"The Spit, Sydney"**

*This scene shows the brightness and clear, bright colours that you get in this area. I like this busy life of boats and traffic. This painting also has a lot of drawing, and attention to the correct placement of buildings and angles is essential.*





**"Kate Reading"**

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Melbourne-born Valerie Lynch studied tonal impressionism under many well-known artists. This training, combined with her experimentation and experience in oil, watercolour, drawing and pastel, has helped to formulate her style of painting. Valerie is known for her diverse subjects including landscape, marine, complex buildings, dancers and nudes. She has travelled on many painting trips throughout Australia and overseas and has visited and studied art in the many galleries of Europe and Australia.

Valerie has held 20 solo and group exhibitions including the "Exhibition of Australian Paintings in London" and

she has won more than 70 prizes and awards including the Alice Bale Award for Oils in 1992 and the Tom Roberts Prize in 1993.

She teaches drawing, and painting in oil and watercolour, and is a member of the Victorian Artists' Society, the Australian Guild of Realist Artists and Sherbrooke Art Society.

Valerie's works are exhibited at Durning-Lawrence Gallery, Crows Nest NSW; Peninsula Galleries, Sorrento Victoria; Sherbrooke Art Gallery, Belgrave and her Studio Gallery in Bayswater Victoria. Her works are also represented in private, government and corporate collections.

#### **TRAVELLING AND PAINTING**

When travelling I take an easel box that holds my paints, brushes and medium. I also take a shoulder bag that holds kerosene, plastic bags, rags, pieces of cut canvas and boards. For outdoor work I take a few standard boards such as 10 x 12, 10 x 14, 12 x 16 and 16 x 20 inches. When travelling overseas or when space is limited I take one board and tape a piece of canvas to the board. When finished, I simply remove the painting and store. When it is touch dry a sheet of greaseproof paper is used to separate the paintings. I use stretched linen for my larger paintings.