

## FEATURED ARTIST

### ANA PEREIRA DE VLIEG



*Life is art*

*Ana Pereira de Vlieg believes that artists should not work in isolation and that while art is a means of self discovery it also keeps her connected to her community and provides a way of serving the community.*



After completing her Higher National Diploma in Fine Arts at the Natal Technikon (now Durban University of Technology), her passion for teaching led her to complete a postgraduate Higher Diploma in Education administered by the University of Natal in 1997. Ana served as vice principal and art teacher at the Inthuthuko School before deciding to leave formal education and teach privately from her studio.

She is a keen blogger and a visit to her blog (see contact details) gives readers a sample of her enthusiastic approach to art and art making.

"Painting has therapeutic benefits for me and those that I teach. I have documented the reactions of my students before and after class to confirm this phenomenon. One may face the canvas or drawing pad in turmoil and then leave the studio a little later feeling a more self assured person."

She says confidence is important: "Don't fear mistakes, there are no mistakes in creativity but rather see every mark you make as a process and a part of who you are, a wonderfully formed human being."

Ana's confidence got a boost when she tackled a massive mural as a solo project. She had worked on a number of murals before, but in the role of teacher and coordinator. She was then commissioned by Kamel Kilns, a ceramic supply shop

*Left:  
Luisa  
100 x 70 cm  
oil on canvas*

in Durban, to decorate the façade of their building. It was a daunting task and physically tough. "I spent the whole of February – Durban's hottest month – painting the mural outside. It taught me to persevere and made me realise that I could take on big projects."

Most of Ana's paintings begin in her sketchbook which travels with her, along with a simple set of watercolours and her camera. The sketches develop into drawings which may, or may not, become paintings. She works in several mediums choosing the one that best suits the subject and her reaction to it. She is however pedantic about using good quality materials so that the works may last long after it has been purchased.

An interest in psychology led her to Jung's notion of the shadow being: 'gold in the psyche' – the hidden gifts and talents, symbolising the attainment of full potential, and negative if not revealed and utilised.

This idea of "The Shadow" fascinates her and led her to fully explore Jung's ideas in the context of art and creativity. The paper she prepared as part of the KZNSA Professional Practice Course can be downloaded from her website, it gives a historical context to the idea and explains it more fully.

She was able to explore these ideas in her own art making, producing a body of work for the exhibition marking the end of the course. "I was able to investigate the concept of

'shadow' – using art as a means to confront the 'negative' in one's life and use it as a healing tool. I now use this therapeutic aspect of art in the private art lessons that I offer in my studio."

Ana takes author Malcolm Gladwell's premise - that one needs to have collected 10 000 hours to become an expert in anything – to heart, keeping herself busy, accepting challenges and collaborating with fellow artists whenever possible. "Life and art are symbiotic and if you are serious about art then take yourself seriously, don't procrastinate but get going."

At the moment her studio is full of works in progress, her contribution to a group exhibition which will show at Fat Tuesday Gallery in June this year.

**Below:**  
*Sifting Shadow*  
100 x 100 cm  
oil on canvas

**Below right:**  
*Red Bilene Boat*  
15 x 21 cm  
oil on board

**Right top:**  
*Young Girl Walking in Water*  
20 x 30 cm  
oil on canvas

**Right:**  
*Reflecting on Reflections*  
20 x 30 cm  
oil on canvas





She was one of the contributing artists to the everyONEcounts campaign in 2010 and this time around she has joined the team of volunteers who coordinate this charity event. Founded by artist and business women Lara Mellon, everyONEcounts is a non profit, public benefits organisation that aims to raise funds and awareness through art for social causes. This year's campaign focuses on the disturbing issue of human trafficking.

As if this is not enough, she has been asked to host - organise a tailor-made, biblical tour for artists wishing to visit Israel. (If any readers are interested please e-mail Ana directly)

Her enthusiasm is contagious and inspires her students. When asked why she pursues her chosen path she says, without hesitation: "Art builds one's immune system; it allows for original thought; it taps into the gift of imagination; it develops the right brain so that we become more balanced; it engages in the unconscious resulting in us learning more about who we are as individuals; leaving us feeling light hearted, embracing a spirit of joy."

To share her enthusiasm, visit her blog.



*Below:*  
**Clouds of Promise**  
140 x 120 cm  
oil and mixed media on canvas

*Below right:*  
**Open Oars in Bilene**  
15 x 21 cm  
oil on board

*Below:*  
**Coastal Forest**  
20 x 48 cm  
oil and tea leaves on canvas

