

# **PAINTING**

## **The contemporary realism of Angela Wakefield**

**Both impressionistic and expressive, Angela Wakefield's landscapes, mostly urban, transform into realistic paintings as one moves away. Tables where forms and colors but also shadows and lights distill a dynamic story.**

With a sense of storytelling and realism that is readily compared to that of Edward Hopper, Angela Wakefield delivers a work in which the narrative argues her sensations. On canvases usually large format, she draws urban landscapes and street scenes, willingly incorporating figurative elements. This girl from the countryside loves the dynamism of the big cities that she does with mastery by playing bold geometric shapes, light, shadows ... For this artist who works in acrylic, it is the colors that transform "a dull city by day into play areas at night". She has thus "sketched" the lighted streets of New York, Paris, Manchester ... on the canvas her particularly moving personal vision where flashes of dazzling colors challenge us. Pure representations in which architecture and the human figure cross each other in emotionally charged sets.

### **What is your artistic background?**

I studied at Central Lancashire University in Preston, where I obtained a degree in Fine Arts ... despite dyslexia problems throughout my studies.

### **How did you come to painting?**

When I was a child, I visited France and was fascinated by sunflowers. To see whole fields of flowers to follow the race of the sun really marked me! This vision is so powerful for a young mind that I fell in love with Vincent Van Gogh's work. I always drew but my first oil painting was sunflowers! And I even have a sunflower tattoo!

### **How do you approach a new work?**

I like to start from a sketch on the canvas and give free rein to my creativity as I progress. For me, painting is an instinctive process, as if I "dive" into painting. I am looking to capture the essence of all the artistic references I have.

### **What pleasure do you have to see your work?**

Seeing a finished painting in my studio or gallery is extremely satisfying. But I can not really appreciate my work until several weeks after completing it. I have to let a little time pass before I can watch it again.

### **Your style is described as being contemporary realistic. Is this definition right for you?**

Absolutely. I am pleased that my work is called "contemporary realism" because I seek to represent in a sustainable way the world as it is today. My style is partly impressionistic and expressive, but realism is accentuated when viewed from a distance.

## **Why this predilection for landscapes, especially urban landscapes?**

The urban landscape is a dynamic and dramatic environment that offers a range of inspiring ideas. I adore its liveliness, the shapes of buildings, the colors of lampposts, cars ..., as well as the reflections and shadows that result. I like to contemplate the larger story of the whole scene. I tend to create my own story by painting, and I like to see how this energy interacts. It's such a vast and changing subject, with fascinating architectural designs, combining the old and the new. And the way nature mixes with the urban landscape is a beautiful combination for me.

## **Do you work only from pictures?**

I tend to work from photos because they allow me to capture a moment or the essence of a place. However, if I work from several photographic reference points, I add a good dose of imagination! I modify elements, I remove them ... My goal is not to reproduce but to create an artistic interpretation of reality.

## **What gives such "power" to your paintings? The contrast of shadow and light? The colored keys?**

It's an amazing compliment, thanks! Cities are dynamic places with natural strength. Perhaps it is the scale of my paintings that makes this power. But it is also the strength of the composition that gives dynamism. I focus on bold geometric shapes, accentuating light and shadows to achieve a dramatic effect.

## **How do you get these motion effects?**

One way to capture the essence of a city's animation is to highlight the play of light according to the movement of traffic and the behavior of light in the urban environment. I sometimes use photos with a long exposure to create this effect.

## **How do you find inspiration?**

Everything starts from the discovery of a center of interest, which usually depends on the interaction of several factors. Composition is important, as is the meaning of narration, but I tend to focus on urban landscapes and street scenes, incorporating figurative elements of landscape, architecture, transport and the human figure. I am inspired by the wide range of colors that transforms cities from a dull environment during the day into animated play areas at night.

## **Why did you choose acrylic?**

Acrylic works very well for me because I work quickly, with multiple sessions on the same canvas in one day. I need to quickly build my painting by superimposing layers. As I can change my mind very quickly, I need the paint to dry quickly to allow me to add the next layer.

## **Some compare your paintings to those of Edward Hopper. What do you think ?**

I think it's because Edward Hopper has a sense of narration and realism that obviously resonates with my work. I think that's what critics and collectors feel. This is a great compliment because I am a great admirer of this artist, but I do not think I consciously seek to paint like him.

Gabrielle Gauthier

(Translated from French to English)