

hidden talent

Award winning watercolourist and printmaker Belinda Perkin's life work has captured the scenes that depict her long association with life on the land and her love of nature and its untamed beauty.



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1. Watercolour palette 2. An iconic work by Belinda Perkins 3. At work in her outback studio. IMAGES BY AMANDA WATERMAN



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You might not expect to find a talented and award winning artist living 670 kilometres from Brisbane on a sheep, cattle and wheat property near Dirranbandi. Belinda Perkins calls Nelyambo home and when she is not busy working alongside her husband, Don, and their son, Tom, Belinda steals some time and retreats to her artwork. For 35 years, Belinda has painted with watercolour and in the last nine years she has ventured into solar plate intaglio etching. A thoughtful and gentle soul, Belinda finds great peace in her expression through art which can take her away from the sometimes challenging times on the land. When this story was written there was only a matter of days before the dam would be dry, meaning her beautiful cottage garden surrounds would soon suffer the consequences of bore water, and sheep were being handfed due to the ongoing very dry conditions. Despite this, Belinda still manages to find great beauty in her surrounding landscape, with her watercolours featuring iconic scenes that depict the district. Belinda's work is also symbolic of her great love of horses and bird species.

"I had a very creative aunt who would take me sketching as a teenager."

"She gave me a lot of her treasured materials and shared her love of watercolour," says Belinda who then went on to study modern art in Toowoomba.

Growing up on Alum Rock in Stanthorpe's Traprock district, Belinda launched herself into the art world at an early age, painting the scenes

that encapsulated her life and living on the land. Belinda went on to exhibit in galleries in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Dubbo and country New South Wales, as well as holding her own solo exhibitions. Many of these works featured wildlife that frequented the watercourses and scrublands on the property. When Belinda met her husband, Don, they moved to Dirranbandi, raised their three sons, Tom (26), Lachlan (24) and Nick (22), and Belinda continued with her artwork. "I love to paint skies, the eastern sky at dusk in particular," says Belinda of her style that captures the beautiful afternoon skies in hues of magenta, indigo and orange.

Etching has become a recent addition to Belinda's portfolio of works, a process that uses a light sensitive coated plate to reproduce a chosen design which can originate from a drawing, painting or the artist's own photographs, and sometimes a combination of all three mediums. This style requires much skill and often it may take several attempts to get a print that can be mounted for exhibition. "There is an element of surprise in the etching work, and I guess you could say patience is needed," Belinda says modestly. Belinda's etchings feature ochre, burnt sienna, raw sienna, yellow ochre and French ultramarine blue.

Belinda is commissioned to do artwork of special significance for friends and clients. For those who have left their beloved landscapes behind, Belinda's work, found hanging all around the world, keeps a little bit of rural Australia close to home.

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BY KERRY SUTTON