



Portchie

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‘Good art is not what it looks like but what it does to us.’



Portchie Viljoen
(1963–)



Portchie Viljoen was born in a small town called Tweeling in the Free State. He matriculated in 1981 at the Paul Roos Gymnasium in Stellenbosch and has a B.com degree from Stellenbosch. He only started painting as a hobby in 1991 after working as a Transport Economist for Spoornet. He now lives and paints full time in Stellenbosch. He paints, sculpts and designs jewellery and linen. Many of Portchie’s artworks are landscapes, portraits, still life and abstract art pictures. He works in a variety of mediums such as pastel, oil, watercolours, ink, pen and charcoal.

His painting style ranges from expressionistic to impressionistic.

One of the characteristics of Portchie’s paintings is that he paints ordinary people doing ordinary things. This is why he is such a successful artist because anybody can relate to his paintings.

Portchie paints between 800 - 900 paintings a year.

His paintings are not only popular in South Africa but also in Germany, America and the United Kingdom.

“My trees are always blue because the air filtrates through the trees. Trees are strong and blue is a very strong colour for me. I’m crazy about the feeling of washing: good, clean, fresh and free. In each painting I do I put a little bit of myself, and at the end of the day I really sell a bit of my love for life.”

Portchie’s artworks are always full of bright, happy colours such as warm yellows, vivid blues, bright reds and intense greens. Portchie sees the world as bright and cheerful.

Interview with...

Portchie



The white-steepled church is a characteristic image in many of your paintings. How far back does your connection with the church go?



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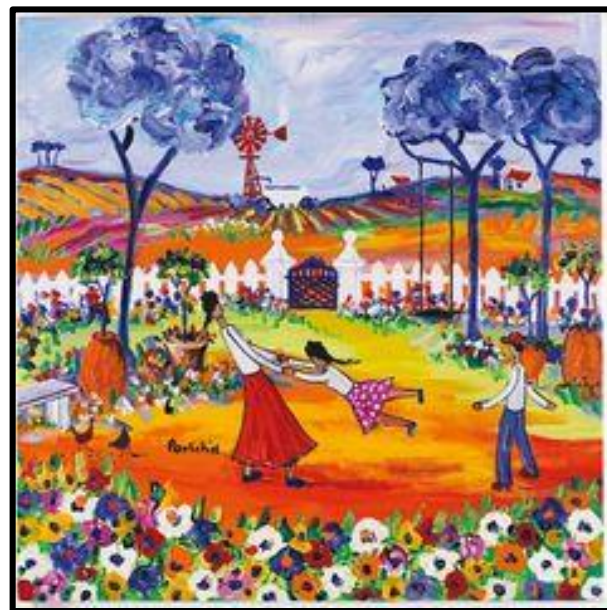
I was raised in the church but it was only when I was 16 that my faith became part of me. In university I went on missions trips to build churches in the Transkei that I now often depict in my paintings. The painting of people bringing their chickens to the church is my reflection on giving from the heart. Each day I reflect on its message as it speaks about how we must bring our gift to the church. It is more than bringing finances which is often a Western perception of giving. It is rather the gift that costs you personally.

Is your art a form of story telling?

Painting is a story without words – you create your own words and because of that everyone adds their words until the story becomes their own.

I find myself at different times in different roles in the painting – at times I am the person sitting in the church at other times I am the giver and also at times the receiver of the gift.

“There is no such thing as 'right' or 'wrong' art but the secret lies in its originality.”



Texture: Portchie uses thick and bold brushstrokes.

Shape : His flowers almost appear 3D . His nature elements are childlike and simple.

Line : Thick and bold lines emphasize the the outlines of objects and create movement in the painting causing your eye to move around the painting.

Tone : The sky is always light shades of blue and the trees are darker shades of blue in contrast.

Portchie paints between 800 – 900 paintings a year.



'In essence I'm just a small boy from a small town in the Free State, South Africa, where I grew up with good values and good creativity.'

I grew up with parents who were creative with what they did in their lives. That taught me to look out, not just for myself, but for the people around me.

To create work, to create interesting things and be creative in a lot of different ways. Not just one single aspect; not just painting, not just sculptures, not just cloth or jewellery.'

[<http://www.portchie.com>]

In 2015, I had the opportunity of meeting Portchie when he was up in Johannesburg for a weekend at Alice's Art Gallery in Ruimsig.

He engaged so comfortably with those interested in his art work and willingly shared about his passion for people and life and capturing the simplicity of that in his paintings. To Portchie, his paintings are stories, drawing from aspects of his childhood.



'I work with a concept of joy and joy can be best described with colour – therefore, my art is very colourful.'