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December 2010/  
January 2011

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# Finalists

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**GINNY PAGE, Copenhagen, Denmark,**  
*Girl with Pearls, oil, 23 x 19" (58 x 48cm)*



## MY INSPIRATION

Since early childhood, (I was brought up in rural Lincolnshire, England), I have always been fascinated by nature, fine detail and beauty. The Old Masters such as Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci and the romantic and highly detailed paintings of the pre-Raphaelites, continue to be a great source of inspiration.

The delicacy of fine silk, intricate patterns in lace, and the sumptuous and silvery shine of old damasks, are without doubt, an endless challenge in my work as a realist painter. My passion lies in the combination of these different textures, the play of light on the human skin, and last but not least, the endless possibilities of paint itself and what it can create on canvas.

After living in Denmark for the last 24 years,

I've been inspired by Scandinavian art. The golden age painters from Denmark such as Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg and his students, Christen Kobke and Wilhelm Marstrand, are among my favourites, and last but not least, the earlier works of Gustav Klimt.

The combination of Klimt's incredible craftsmanship, his sensitive and delicate brushstrokes and his ability to create figures of women in glittering ball gowns and sparkling jewellery, are to me, the essence of true beauty.

## MY DESIGN STRATEGY

The design begins with a number of rough sketches, of a figure, almost always alone and caught in a moment of contemplation or in a private moment. The face is often turned away, so the person

becomes anonymous to the viewer. I make sketches with the model present and take numerous photographs of the model in different poses and with various clothing, jewellery and backgrounds. I may decide to place some objects on a table top, add a chair back or other form of furniture.

I love to paint the illusion of glass or a reflection, so there is often a glass of wine or a mirror somewhere in the painting. More often than not, I end up removing a lot of the objects I intended to paint, as they can clutter the composition. Needless to say, the famous phrase, "less is more", is correct. I work from a variety of photographs, for example "Girl with Pearls" had her 'head chopped off' and replaced by a different one, and so too the hands and the angle of the arms. Basically, I chop things about and piece them together again, like a jigsaw puzzle, until I can see that it all works as a painting. The computer is a great way to zoom into highly detailed areas, (such as folds and creases in the lace and silk chemise), and allows me freedom to paint at any time of day, without having to have the model present and getting arm ache holding the pose!

## MY WORKING PROCESS

I almost always work with a very limited palette - Red (Magenta and/or Cadmium), Ultramarine, Yellow (Naples and/or Cadmium), plus Kessler Brown and Titanium White. Sometimes, I may sneak in an earth colour, such as Burnt Sienna.

The painting takes shape as a rough 'cartoon' where I just cover the whole canvas in paint in flat sections. For example I do the body in dirty pink; hair in muddy light brown; chemise, tablecloth and pearls in off-white; chair in brown; and background in mid-grey.

On top of that come numerous layers of paint in thin 'dry' washes, which are re-worked repeatedly until the painting begins to come to life. The model in the painting "Girl with Pearls", (who I know personally), is a young, fresh and dainty girl, with an air of innocence, sweetness and purity - pearls are a symbol of purity. I wanted to capture these qualities and her turning point from youth to womanhood.

To be perfectly honest, my working process can best be described as total chaos. I have a random brush between every finger, some on my lap, a couple in my mouth and on the floor, and a variety of used paper palettes spread out all over the floor, which I have to tiptoe over to get to my easel. I often look in the mirror after a day's painting and find myself with Ultramarine Blue lips and white nostrils. It is only when I've finished the job, or when I have visitors in the house, that I decide to clear up the mess.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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# Finalist

in International Artist magazine's

**Art Prize Challenge No. 60**  
**Subject: People & Figures**

for a work entitled

Girl with Pearls

as published in  
Issue 76 December 2010/January 2011

Vincent Miller

Vincent W. Miller  
CEO/Publisher

