



**JETTE VAN DER LENDE** USES HER THOUGHT PROVOKING MIRROR PAINTINGS TO SHOW HOW THE IDEAL IS VERY DIFFERENT TO THE REALITY

## THE MIRROR TELLS A DIFFERENT STORY

A DIFFERENT STORY  
THE MIRROR TELLS

To demonstrate the way I am thinking in the process of behind my mirror paintings, I will paint Don Quixote (see demonstration). He was known for fighting windmills. Therefore it is natural for me to replace "Don Quixote" with a windmill. The story is a contrast of ideal and reality, and therefore ideal for my mirror-painting. Who does he see in the mirror? He does not see who he is, but who he wants to be. I chose a children's windmill because children are so good at using their imagination.

Because artists also fight their own windmills every day I will replace the handle with a brush.

I show the windmill face down so you will see the "wish-face" as the head-motif in the mirror - this because a mirror has the ability to produce visions, and the wish is so strong that it is overshadowing the real self. The real face is painted in profile, so he does not show more than necessary, but the wish-face is in front because this is the face he wants to see, and the face he wants us to see.

It was easy to find my windmill - I borrowed one from my grandson. The brush was not a problem either.

I pick the best angle for the windmill visually, both on the glass-plate and in the mirror. →



**[Left] *Aut bibat aut abeat (You are either for us or against us), oil on canvas, 41 x 27" (104 x 70cm)***

The pacifier represents all children that are, and will be, killed by weapons. War, or no war, weapons are too easy to get to. None are saying they want to kill children – yet so many children are losing their lives every year. Remembering that everyone is someone's child, helps bring home the reality. The bullet is weighing down the pacifier. The bullet is heavier, the children have no say. But in the mirror, the pacifier is taking revenge – it is the one on top; someone who kills a child will, at some point, have problems. The plastic in the pacifier was a challenge. I tried to get it to look as plastic as possible, so the contrast with the metal of the bullet would be as big as possible.



**[Above] *Omnia mutantur, nihil interit (Everything changes, nothing perishes), oil on canvas, 41 x 41" (105 x 105cm)***

Three roses have a lot of symbolism. At the time my thoughts were that if I took the symbolism of the three roses and mirrored them at the same time as I made them wasted (dried) it would have another meaning. I arranged them so that together they became a circle. Then forever and death were up against each other.



## Art in the making **Painting a Portrait of Don Quixote**

Oil on Hybrid Canvas (Polyflax/Carbon Fiber Laminate), 24 x 36" (61 x 91cm)



### What the artist used

#### The palette

These are the colors I chose to use for this painting:

Cadmium Yellow Lemon

Cadmium Yellow Medium

Cadmium Red Light

Cadmium Red Medium

Cadmium Red Deep

Ochre

Burnt Sienna

Indigo

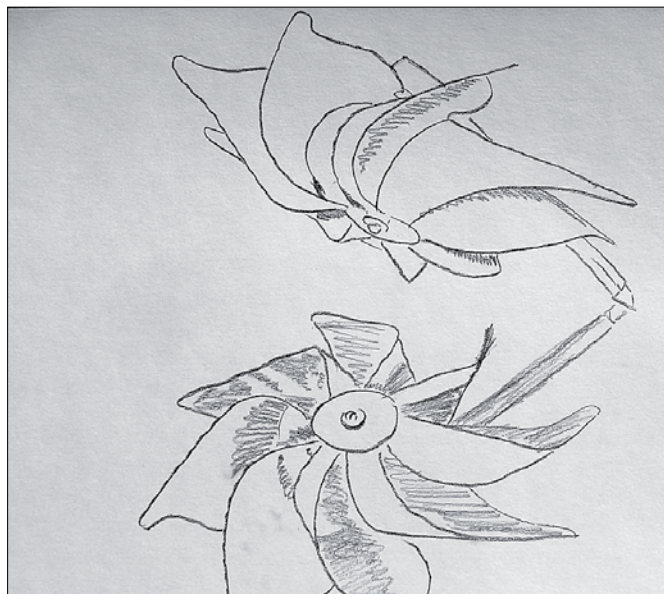
#### Brushes

Signet 40B bright nr.4

Rafael sepia nr2

Escoda nr.2 and 4

Cotman 00



### STAGE 1 The sketch

When I have placed the windmill on the glass plate, and am happy with its position, I make my sketch. Perhaps I have to reconsider some of my earlier decisions, but I am not the type to draw a lot of sketches to see which one works the best. Most of the work lies in the thought process and with the model.

### STAGE 2

I use the white painting to outline, for the camera to see. Usually I use the darkest color in the motif to make the outlines on the canvas.



### STAGE 3

I use a green underpainting on the upper windmill. (Cadmium yellow and indigo) And a red on the lower windmill (Cadmium Red Medium and Cadmium Red Deep and dark (red, blue and some yellow).



### STAGE 4

Once the underpainting is finished it needs to dry.



## My design and composition tactics

- 1 What do I want to express?
- 2 What item will express this and why?
- 3 How do I show what I want to express?
- 4 Where do I set the control points to find the same viewing point every time I look?
- 5 How do I show the item from the best angle?
- 6 If the item will change in time, how do I deal with that? Sketches, color-map and photos
- 7 Do I have to use a magnifier to check difficulties and details?
- 8 What will be the best size?
- 9 What color will express the idea and item?
- 10 What light will model the shape and still be good for the idea?

→ In finding the position I also have the canvas-size in mind. To show the windmill in the correct position in the mirror, I have to make a “crutch”. I am a slow painter and I have to let the oil-painting dry in between, so the “crutch” helps me by not having to move the painting until it’s dry.

Next I decide the size of the motif considering my canvas-size. Here I choose 42 x 42" (105 x 105cm), to get the feeling of a bigger windmill.

Then I look for colors. The red color will show him as a hero, so in the mirror he will be red. The reality is the opposite – complementary. The complementary to red is green. Green is also the color of envy, and since he envies the wish-face, this is a perfect color.

In the shadows I will add the complementary color, because, in reality it is never one answer, it is not either or, it’s a bit of truth in a fantasy, and often a bit of fantasy in truth.

This is how I think when I make my portraits. And I feel I am making portraits even if they are not human portraits. How often do small everyday things like a key, a cork or a windmill get their own scene? A scene to really show us who they are? What they can be – what they symbolize. I try to see the beauty in every item – because every item - like people – has its own beauty. Every item has something unique. Even the items we associate with negative thoughts, have a beauty. →

## Life is protected, oil on canvas, 41 x 27" (104 x 70cm)

If you get out of your shell you will be vulnerable – revealed. That is how I feel when I show my paintings. Life, like the yolk of an egg, can sometimes endure much and sometimes nothing at all - with only the thin egg shell as a protection. Life is fragile, and yet one can bear so much. As an artist you have to let yourself be vulnerable. By mirroring the revealed egg I protect it, as I try to protect myself. Here the problem was that the egg changed over time, so I had to use a sketch and a photo.



### STAGE 5

Here I blend and shape the green with Cadmium Yellow and Indigo. Then the red using Cadmium Red Light and Cadmium Red Deep. I use a white/grey mix as a first layer on the plastic and the metal. Ochre and Burnt Umber on the handle of brush. I use my fingertips and Q-tips to blend.



### STAGE 6

I use Indigo and Cadmium Yellow Lemon to give more life to the upper surface and to get more perspective. Underneath I use my earlier green. While modeling this area I think more about what kind of shadows I am up against. The reds are a challenge; finding the right reds took quite a while. On the upper surface I use Cadmium Red Light with a bit of Cadmium Yellow Medium and Cadmium Red Medium. Underneath I use Cadmium Red Deep and Indigo.



### STAGE 7

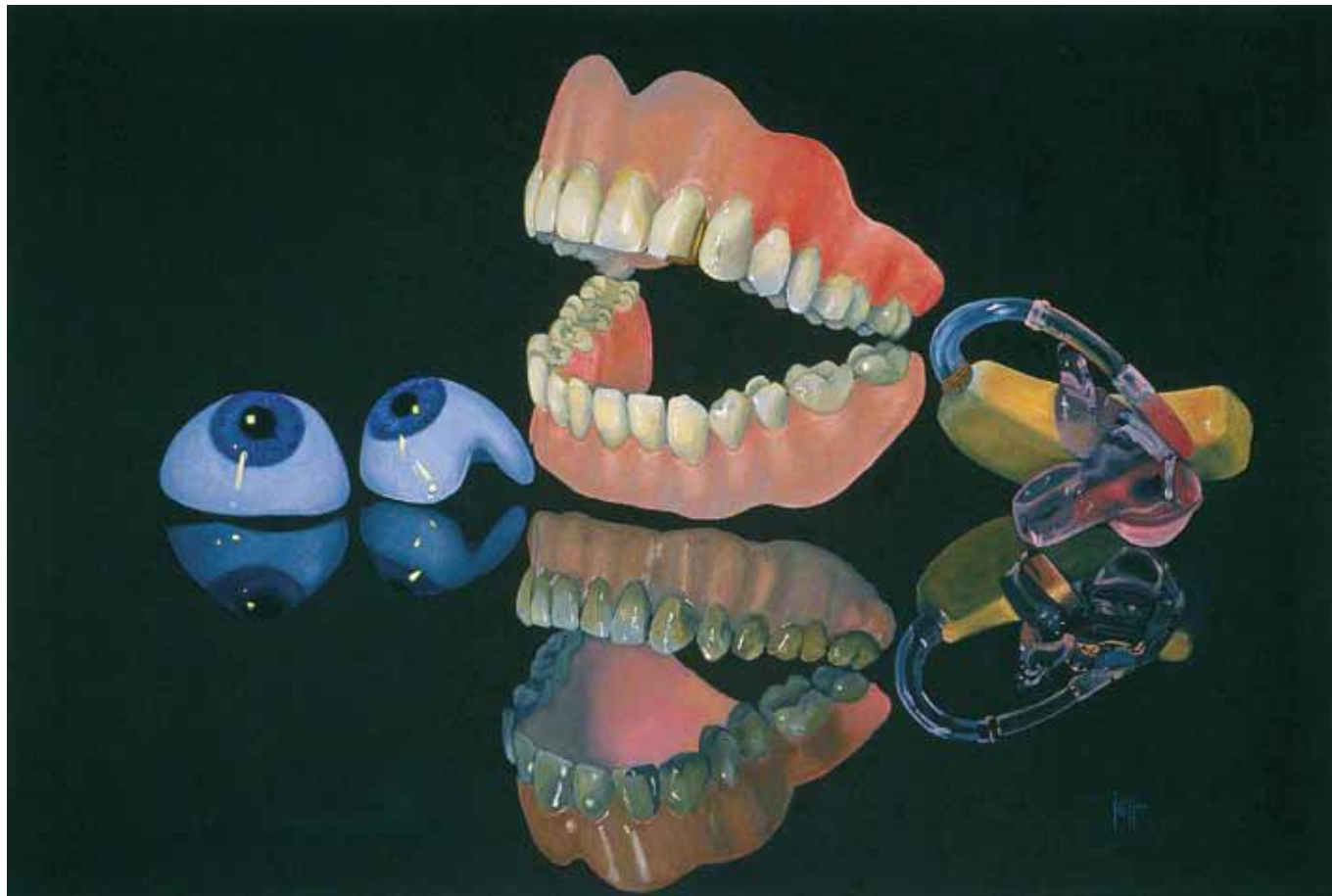
I use the same colors, putting a tiny amount of the complementary colors in the shadows. I shape it more by working with the light. I then paint the brush using more wet-in-wet, to make the brush seem used, and not as important as the windmill.



### STAGE 8

Finally I deepen the shadows, and add the last highlights and details and then I stop. When is an artist finished or done?





**Abusus non tollit usum (Wrong use does not preclude proper use), oil on canvas, 41 x 27" (104 x 70cm)**

We have the ability to see, hear and talk. We can sometimes even get help if we can't. But what do we see, hear and talk about? Are we too selective in what we WANT to see, hear and say? What do we choose? We have got the ability, but how do we use this ability? Could we do better? Think more before we speak - listen more instead of talking - use our eyes to SEE people and what needs to be done. Here was the challenge to get the different "tools" to work together and still be different.

## Key points

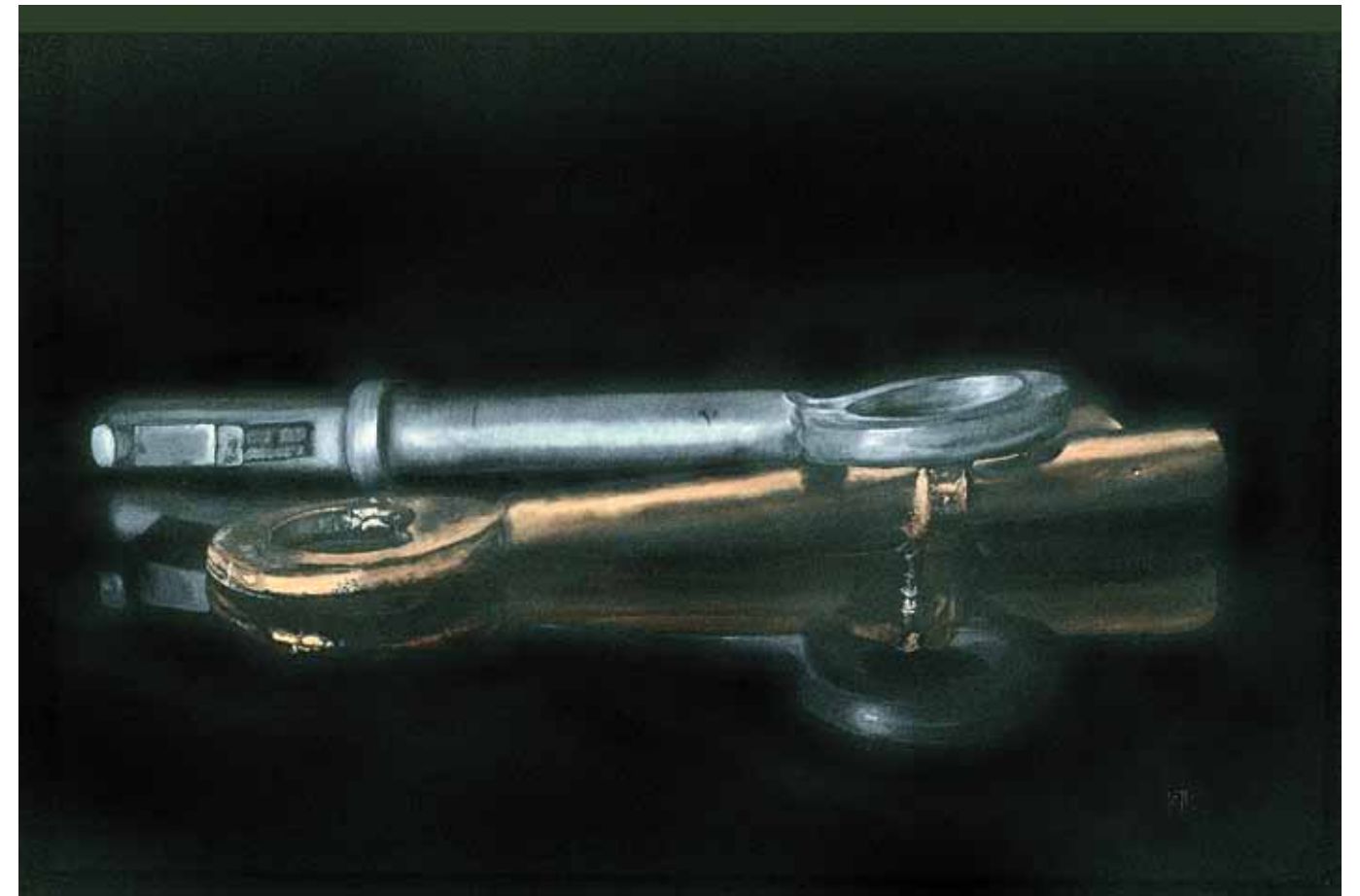
- I mentally work on my paintings over and over again – before I set a stroke. It could take weeks – even years! That way I become pretty sure of what to do, how to do it, and I don't have to disturb the background in my paintings.
- I always carry a notebook with me to get ideas down on paper.
- It is important for me to have clean vibrant colors, so I keep my colors and pencils clean.
- Since the pencils are my tools (besides my fingers), and they decide how the surface will end up, the choice of pencils, and how I treat them is crucial for the result. I set my pencils in some white Vaseline after cleaning them only with green soap, every day.
- I use the paint as it is, never blended with anything, but other colors.
- When I decide what colors to use, I also take into consideration what kind of effect and surface I have in mind. For me it is also important to be aware of when to use translucent, when to use opaque painting.
- I think about the bigger picture, but concentrate on one piece at a time.

**ST. Peters keys, oil on canvas, ► ▲  
41 x 27" (104 x 70cm)**

St. Peter had two keys. One silver that led to hell and one gold that led to heaven. The silver key is upon the golden key, but in the mirror it is the other way around. I worked hard on getting the metal in the keys to appear real.

**Quemadmoeum gladis nemeinum occidit, ►  
occidentis telum est  
(A sword is never a killer, it's a tool in  
the killer's hands.), oil on canvas,  
41 x 27" (104 x 70cm)**

There have always been many ways to kill, with or without manmade weapons. But killing people is never the only solution. If the people of this world are going to live together on this planet, we must find a way to deal with all our differences, without using anything to harm. My concern for this painting was how to show the stone. I wanted to use a stone that had a lot of "drawings" in it, like wrinkles in a lived in face.







**Israfil, oil on canvas, 41 x 27" (104 x 70cm)**

Israfil is Allah's right hand. I have read that Israfil writes down our names on a leaf. When the leaf with my name on it falls to earth, I die. The maple leaf is so beautiful in the autumn – just when they have fallen to earth. I am sure Israfil uses maple leaves. I mirror the leaf, so they will not fall down, but rise instead. The challenge here was all the oval shapes.

## About the Artist

2007 Winner of EMMA (European Masters of Modern Art)  
2006 Palm Art Award, Leipzig Germany, The Merit Award - "in recognition and appreciation of the outstanding originality of her Art"

Some Exhibitions:

2008 Biennale Chapingo – "Art with root in the earth", Mexico.

2008 Scottsdale Fine Art Gallery.

2008 and 2005 Ostlandsutstillingen in Norway and Germany

2007 New Art Center NY.

2005 Biennale Florence, Italy

2004 Agora Gallery NY.

Represented in Florida by Trudy Labell Fine Art Gallery, Naples Florida since 2007.

[www.trudylabelfineart.com](http://www.trudylabelfineart.com)

From February 2009 in Norway by Gulden Kunstverk, [www.guldenkunstverk.no](http://www.guldenkunstverk.no)

Member of:

The Association of Norwegian Visual Artists - NBK, CAN - New York, and International Guild of Realism.

Some bibliography

2009 First International Yearbook Encyclopedic Dictionary of Modern and Contemporary Art.

2009 International Encyclopedic Dictionary of Modern and Contemporary Art 16.edition

2008-2009 Who is Who in Visual Art.

2008-2009 Contemporary Artists of the World

2008-2009 Artists of the World

2008 La Estética y el Arte contemporáneo" (Aesthetics and Contemporary Art).

2007 Seetal Catalogue

[www.jette.nu](http://www.jette.nu)

**Wisdom through my eyes, oil on canvas, 41 x 27" (104 x 70cm)**

I can read, I can think and I am wise – but it will always be through MY eyes. This is a book from my grandmother that means a lot to me. I love reading it. My spectacles are my eyes. Wisdom often comes with age, so the book had to be aged. It was important to give the painting the feeling of a silent and quiet place. The atmosphere was the most important to get right here.



**Licentia liquendi (Liberty of speaking), oil on canvas, 41 x 27" (104 x 70cm)**

We have the freedom to speak. It is crucial for us. But when the liberty of speaking sets up the possibility to offend people, it becomes difficult. What weighs the heaviest? Offending people - or muzzling yourself? Does it help to mirror the problem, to try to see it from another angle? The problem was to let it be a newspaper without "writing a newspaper".



→ And sometimes when one makes a scary thing beautiful, it appears even scarier.

Because I strip the surroundings and place the windmill in a quiet space it is easier for the viewer to give it their full attention.

By mirroring, you are able to observe the windmill from a different angle – as well as giving it a new symbolic side.

Some of us are outside, because in the mirror we are outside ourselves.

And all the time I have my canvas size in mind – do I have to adjust?

The last, but also the first, is the title. The title has to reveal some of the thoughts behind the painting.

In this case it is obvious; it has to be Don Quixote. □

## 4 Best Pieces of Advice

**1** I concentrate on a few linen canvas sizes. It looks better at exhibitions, and is easier to ship. It is a challenge to get the subject to fit into a predetermined size.

**2** Exhibit abroad. Meeting artists from other countries, learning how different things work, and what is accepted and expected in these countries is valuable experience you can apply locally. What's more you'll see a lot you never would have otherwise.

**3** Get a membership where you can meet other artists to exchange experiences. And give to get.

**4** Go on the internet to meet artists all around the world; it is inspiring, and you find opportunities you never would have thought of.