

Q&A with Steve Erwin - where art and cars meet

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#) 19 Feb 2019

Steve Erwin, a self-taught fine artist based in Cape Town, specialises in painting classic and contemporary cars and bikes using a combination of mediums.

We chat to Steve to find out more about how he turned his passion for art into a career painting classic and contemporary cars.

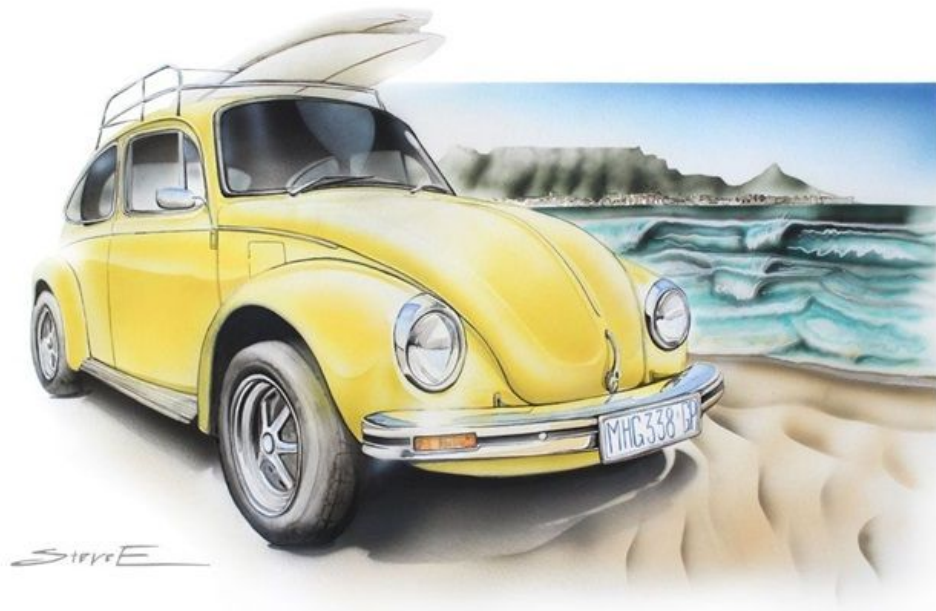


■ ***How and when did you get into painting?***

I have been drawing and creating art ever since I can remember, so I guess my earliest works were scribbles in pencil and crayon – which, through a lot of encouragement from my family, progressed into various different styles and mediums to get me to where I am today.

■ ***You're a self-taught fine artist. Did you ever go on to study fine art? Where?***

In terms of art education, I took art as a subject from grade one to 12, then after a year's deliberation between fine art, industrial, graphic or interior design, I went on to complete my B-tech Interior Design at the University of Johannesburg.



Surf Bug - 50 x 70cm - watercolour and airbrush on paper

■ **What methods of painting do you specialise in?**

At the moment, I mostly use three mediums and techniques.

- Watercolour which I picked up at university – it was widely used for rendering architectural scenes.
- Airbrush – I picked this up about six years ago, specifically to render cars. I have had a lot of fun and frustration trying to figure it out through experimentation, books and the internet. I think I have got some techniques down, but I could still learn a lot more.
- Acrylics – the basis of most artistic careers, it is bold, fun and easy to use.

These aren't the only mediums I use and I do intend to experiment with other mediums as I progress.



Rusty 58 Chev - 50cm x 70cm - watercolour on paper

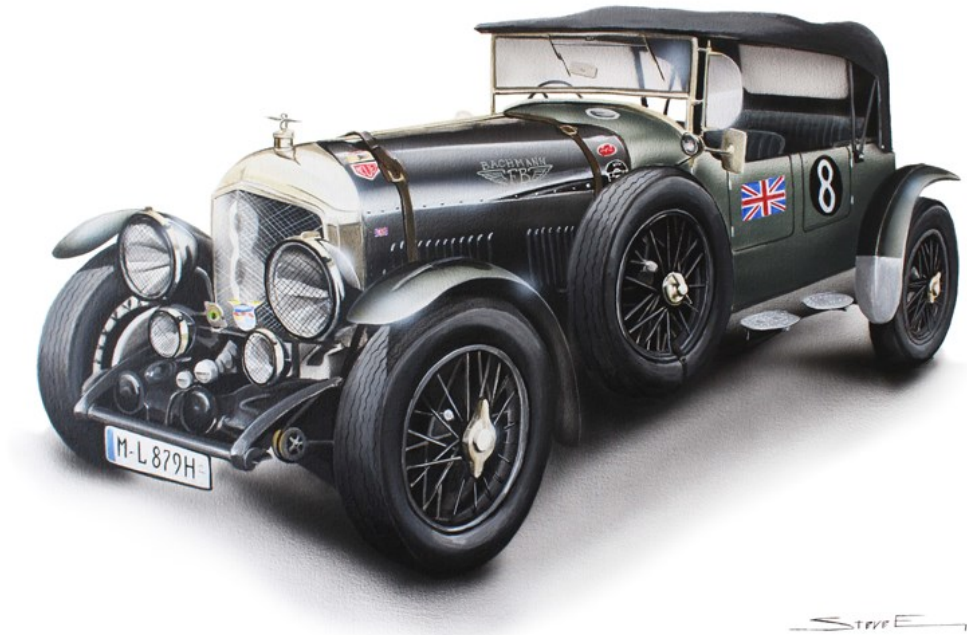
■ **What inspires you? What are you most passionate about painting?**

Obviously the things I enjoy inspire me; surfing, nature and, of course, the mechanical realm. But for me, I enjoy the challenge of coming up with a vision/scene in my head and trying to portray it as successfully as possible.

■ **In 2016, you primarily started focusing on painting automotive mobiles. What has been your biggest**

accomplishment thus far?

It's hard to pick one, but I would say each work that I have successfully pulled off, when I can stand back and say to myself "nailed it!" is an accomplishment and, of course, turning something I love into a viable career.



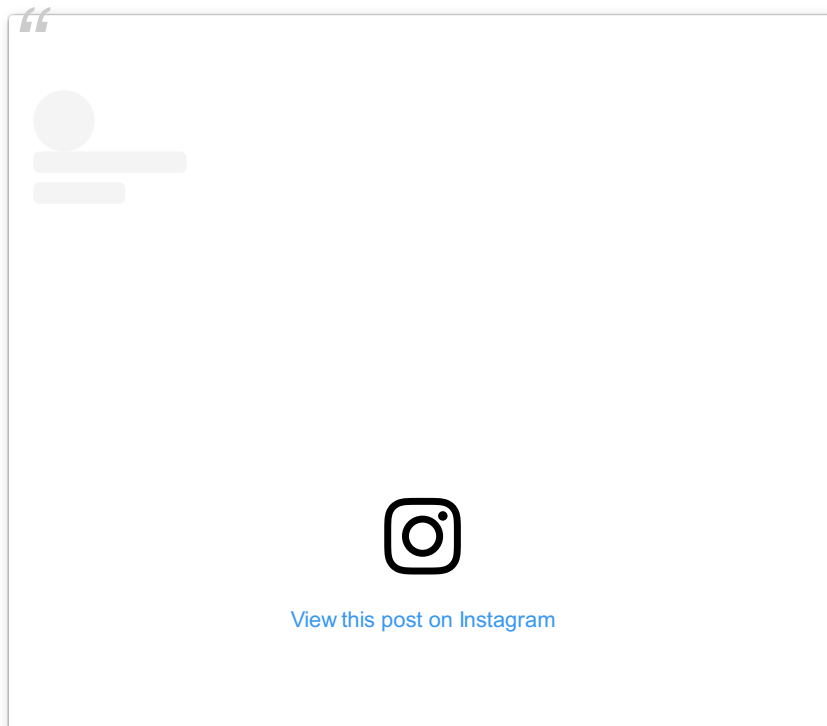
Bentley VI Special - 50cm x 70cm - acrylic-on-canvas

■ You are obviously creative, so what attracts you to cars? Is it the technical specs, how they are manufactured the design elements?

For me, it is the design aspect – I really do see beauty in automotive design, the sound and performance is an added bonus. In school, I was very keen on becoming an automotive designer but I am quite happy in the career I have ended up in.

■ Do you have any preference, brand, make, year or style of car?

The eternal personal debate! I go through phases but, overall, I prefer cars made between the '50s and '80s with a preference for Porsche and Corvette. One of my ultimate dream cars to own is a 1959 Corvette.



[View this post on Instagram](#)



Raspberry Beret! 1959 Corvette, airbrush and watercolour. ♦♦ #Corvette
#chevy #v8 #1959 #raspberry #watercolour #painting #airbrush #paper
#Capetown #car #autoart #red #classiccar #classic

A post shared by [Steve Erwin Artist \(@stencilworx\)](#) on Nov 14, 2016 at 5:58am PST

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▣ **What does a normal day in your life look like?**

Most of the time, not a lot of painting ha ha. In order to be a professional artist, you need to be the CEO, marketing department and the floor cleaner all in one but I do have to make sure I am always busy producing work, so things always need to be prioritised accordingly. Typically, I start a day with correspondence, marketing and other administrative duties then put in two to three hours of painting, eat lunch and repeat.



▣ **What is your dream for the future?**

My overall dream for the future is to continue to grow as an artist and gain further recognition for my work.

▣ **What is your advice for people who want to become an automotive artist?**

It's not easy and you really have to work hard to pursue it but if you do, experiment with different techniques and mediums until you find a style that is unique and your own.



Triumph Bonneville - 50 cmx70 cm - water colour on paper

■ How and where can people buy or view your art?

Online is always easiest – through my [website](#) and social media profiles. Commissions, original paintings and prints may be directly ordered from my website. I will also be at various shows throughout the year so follow me on social media to keep informed. My work is also available at Dapper Coffee Co., on the corner of Strand and Bree Street in Cape Town.

Get in touch with Steve through his website (www.stencilworx.wordpress.com) or follow his journey on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Behance](#).

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