



Fish & ships

Artist Sam Mathers' nautical theme takes inspiration from just down the road.

Sam Mathers has always been totally absorbed by art, but never considered it to have the financial potential as a full-time job — until it did. Fifteen years ago, Mathers went abroad and painted 10 pieces based on his travels. These paintings were shown at an exhibition in Raglan, the right people saw it, and bang, Mathers left graphic design and background acting roles behind.

He has since carved out a name for himself as a playful contemporary artist who illustrates graphics, text and cartoons, all heavily influenced by the local environment. "Wherever I am, I paint my surroundings. When I was in London, I did lots of paintings of food markets. When I was in Paris, it was the Eiffel Tower. Now, it is all blues and ocean because of Raglan."

Mathers uses "pretty much every Resene colour" for his art, but his current favourites are Resene Charlotte, Resene Juniper, and Resene Riptide. "I don't mix them, I use them straight from the testpots. It's easy and saves time."

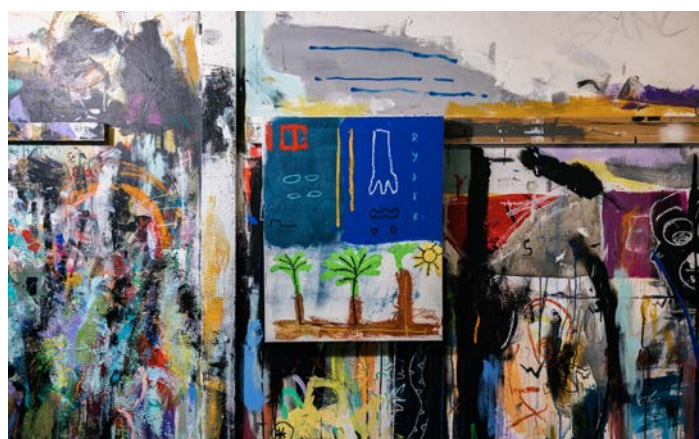
The paintings in his studio look rustic and weather-beaten, designed by Mathers to create texture and character. "My style is heavily layered, with multiple coats of paint that are sanded to bring patches of colours to the front."

Not only does this technique add physical depth, but it also showcases the history of his art journey. Mathers frequently paints completely new art over the top of old paintings, so when they are sanded, glimpses of the past peak out.

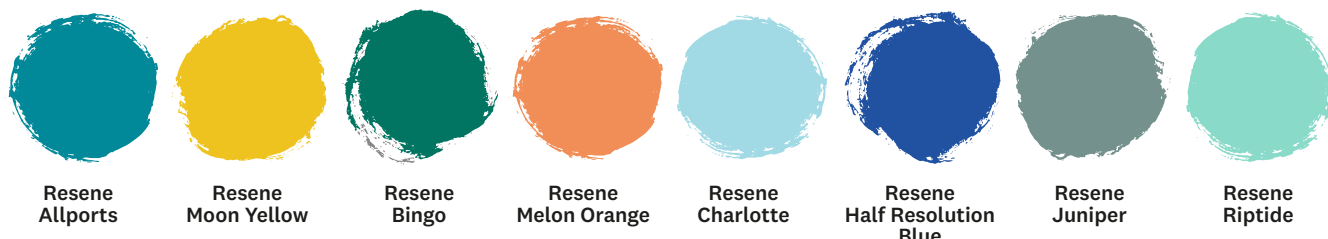
"Sometimes I will feel sad about painting over an old painting. I think 'Aw I shouldn't have done that...' Even worse, is when someone wants to buy the old painting and I'm like 'Oh s**t, I have already painted over it!'"

The Mathers brood, Ryder (7) and Van (3), love to draw on the walls of their father's art studio, which looks right at home alongside his own paint splatters and streaks. "They are allowed to draw at the studio, but they are not allowed to draw on the walls in the house — of course they have though."

Sam Mathers' art will be on sale at the Art in the Park Show in Auckland from 7-10 September. For more of Mathers' work, see Instagram @sammathers or sammathers.com.



Photos: Reuben Looi



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