

Parasols of protest

by Sharon France



Image courtesy Leanne McKnulty, IMPACT Communication • E leannem@netspace.net.au • M 0404 053 535

I do most of my best work while I am asleep, or so it seems. Newly awoken and on a path to activism, and early one morning in November 2015 I had an inspiration that turned into a small fun Parasol-of-Protest factory, in the lead-up to the People's Climate March.

You see, living in Brisbane, with very Anglo-Scottish hair and skin colouring, the idea of marching in the heat of a Queensland summer was not at all appealing, but obviously necessary. I needed a sign and I needed sun protection—and the light-bulb moment happened just as I woke on that fateful day—that I could combine the two!

A bit of quick searching on the internet uncovered the base materials I would need: paper parasols at a very reasonable price, but sadly these were located several suburbs away—so a bit of a trek. The parasols came in a variety of colours, and as a test batch I ordered two each of three colours: 'Climate March' orange; 'Australian Conservation Foundation' green; and good old versatile white: and had them mailed to me.

I may be a graphic designer but I am not an artist, so I consulted a couple of friends to ask about appropriate paints and they all suggested acrylics. And yes, I may be a graphic designer but I can't draw to save myself, so pretty much all my designs were rendered on my trusty Mac. I used InDesign (my daily workspace) and I played with lots of different fonts and a bunch of different icons.



My first parasol was based on the logo for the Climate March. I had access to the logo as a stand-alone image file, so all I had to do was create a design, based on a circle outline and position the logo in the middle.

The next bit was not quite a *McGyver manoeuvre*, but it was a little inventive. I set up my dining room table with my laptop and a projector, and projected the image towards the doorway, where I had assembled a stage for the parasol. I passed the handle of the parasol through the rungs of the ladder and secured it into place with a series of rubber bands just at the right height. I just needed it not to move *too* much. I projected the design onto the parasol canvas and then stenciled around the edges.

With a little fiddling and adjusting, I was off... I used a very soft pencil (4B) and erased where I needed to. I turned the projector on and off a few times to make sure that the outline was indeed complete, and when it was, it was just a matter of painting inside the lines!

I showed the first couple of parasols to Karl Goodsell (then of ACF Brisbane) and he asked if I could do some more designs.

That then saw the start of around 34 pieces of work, a total of around 60 hours—from concepts, stenciling and then painting.

You can find parasols here: www.sunriseimports.com.au/shop/ or just search for paper parasols in a town/suburb/city near you. You can also find a treasure trove of icons at: thenounproject.com/



Sharon France

Graphic Designer | Sustainability Advocate | Climate Campaigner | Freelance Writer | Community Radio Presenter

How you can find me (I'd love to hear from you)

Email: sharon@lgp.com.au

Web: www.lgp.com.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sharon.m.france

Twitter: twitter.com/mssharonfrance

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/sharon-france-b877342/