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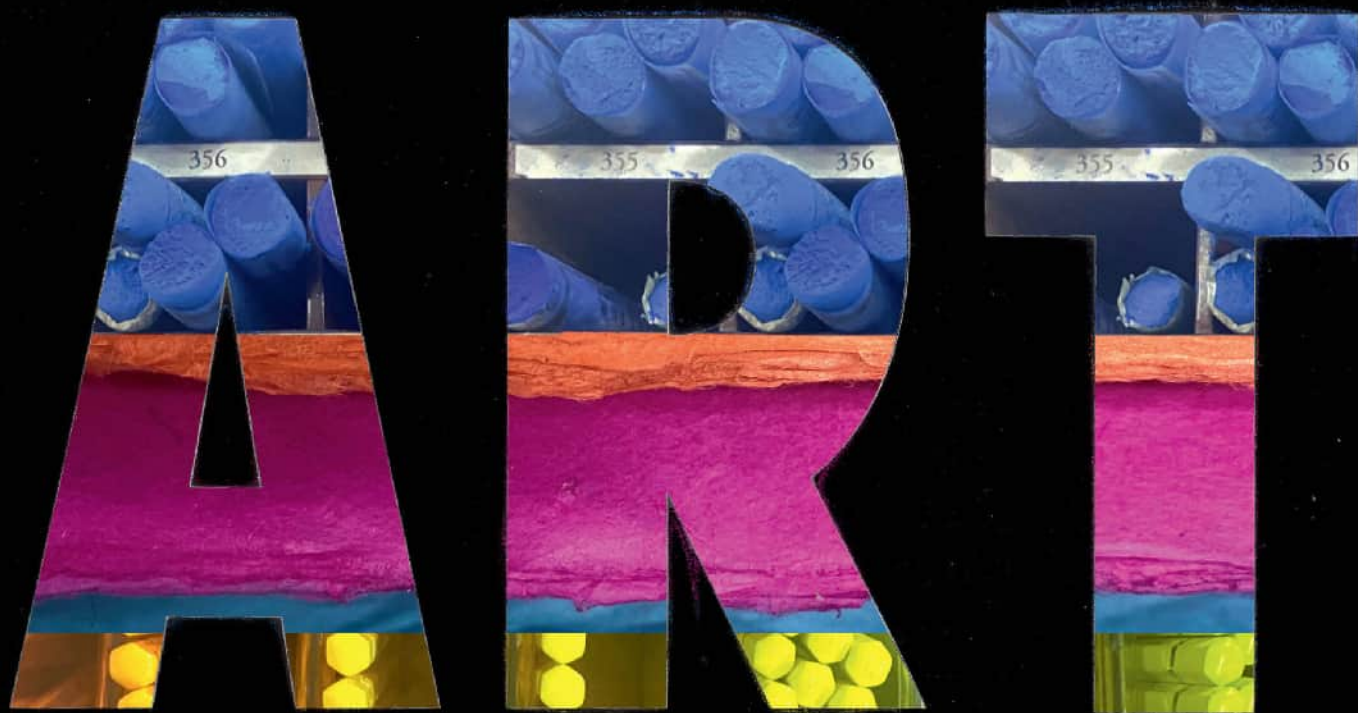


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Sally Bulgin Editor

# WELCOME from the editor

Want to comment on something you've read, or seen?

Email me at [theartistletters@tapc.co.uk](mailto:theartistletters@tapc.co.uk) or visit our website at  
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The focus of many of this month's artist-contributors is on the challenges and joys of capturing the landscape in all its myriad forms, moods and weathers. From our In Conversation with Highlands artist Jonathan Shearer in which we discover his approach to what he appropriately calls 'extreme painting' *en plein air* in all seasons in the mountains of Scotland, with insights into his recommended mountain-painting kit including a concertina sketchbook, pochade box, various media and a tarpaulin shelter, to Amanda Hyatt's top ten tips and advice on how to use a reduced palette to create a moody landscape painting in watercolour, we learn how artists can find inspiration and deliver creative responses even in the most difficult or apparently unappealing circumstances.

Be inspired, too, by the example of Edward Wesson as Steve Hall explains his importance and legacy in his tribute to this much-loved master landscape artist, including images of some of Steve's favourite Wesson paintings from his private collection, as we mark the 40th anniversary of Wesson's death. His skilful handling of tone helped to define his success as a landscape painter, a theme taken up by Tom Shepherd in his feature on loosening up in watercolour in which he shows how an understanding of tonal values can provide artists with a simple watercolour process for any subject.

Continuing with the landscape painting *genre* discover how to create the 'wow' factor of crashing waves in your seascape with Jenny Aitken, while Becky Thorley-Fox shows how to combine watercolour and gouache *en plein air* to capture light, movement and atmosphere and Barry Herniman demonstrates the importance of the lights and darks for capturing the drama of a painting of the Imbros Gorge in Crete in acrylics, with an exercise to try to encourage artists to paint in acrylics the 'watercolour way'. A fundamental element in landscape compositions is of course the sky, to which Sandra Orme turns our attention in her new book on painting all kinds of skies in all seasons in pastel, from which we publish this abridged extract highlighting how to capture wispy cirrus clouds using a restricted palette.

For help and advice with other subjects, Adele Wagstaff offers some excellent tips on measuring and drawing techniques to help improve your figure drawing, Liz Seward demonstrates coloured-pencil techniques for capturing a flower composition, plus build your confidence with Bob Brandt and Steve Griggs as they highlight strategies for overcoming the fear of failure, and the power of the sketchbook for developing creative ideas that will reflect what you most love as an artist.

As Mike Barr concludes in his final thoughts, find your rhythm in the painting process and enjoy being in the zone as you explore all the ideas, suggestions and techniques presented by this month's artist-contributors, and if we've missed anything you'd like to see in your magazine, please let us know!

Best wishes

Sally Bulgin Editor

*PS Become part of our larger online community. Sign up to receive our regular email newsletters, featuring more practical content and exclusive competitions. See page 77 for details*



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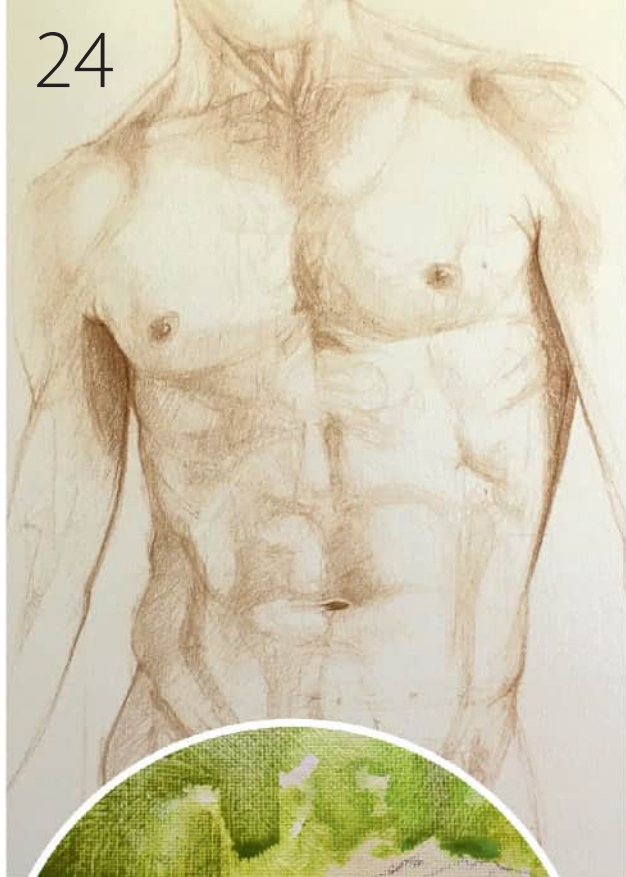
In the second of four articles on loosening up in watercolour, **Tom Shepherd** helps you get to grips with tonal value



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### THIS MONTH'S COVER



Tom Shepherd *Boats in a Harbour*, watercolour, 12x16in (30.5x40.5cm). See pages 19 to 23

### EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS



**David Curtis**  
ROI, RSMA

has won many awards for his *en plein air* and figurative paintings in both oils and watercolours. He has had several books published on his work as well as DVD films, and exhibits his work extensively.



**Haidee-Jo Summers**  
VPROI, RSMA

has won many awards for her *plein-air* and *alla-prima* oil paintings. She is vice president of the ROI, the author of *Plein Air Painting with Oils and Vibrant Oils* and also has a DVD with the same title.

# PAINTERS ONLINE

with *the*artist & Leisure Painter

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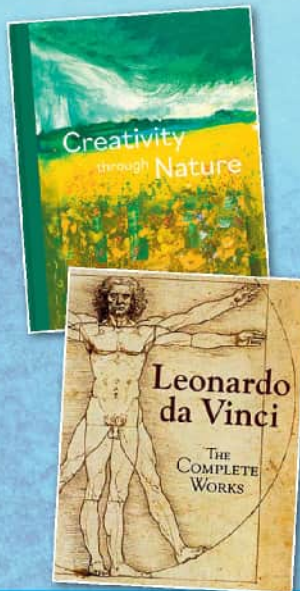


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## ENGLISH BEACH SCENES WITH MARILYN ALLIS

All webinars begin at 11am (UK time) Tickets: £15

Covering a range of beautiful English beach scenes, in this series of three webinars, Marilyn will demonstrate a variety of techniques from painting shimmering water to close-up and distant figures.



Shimmering water in  
watercolour

Wed 27 Sept



Using strong lights against  
strong darks for impact

Wed 25 Oct



People really aren't scary

Wed 29 Nov



## WATERCOLOUR PORTRAITS WITH LIZ CHADERTON

All webinars begin at 11am (UK time) Tickets: £15

In this series, Liz will be demonstrating how to create contemporary and joyful portraits, that will capture the faces and character of family, friends or people you encounter using watercolour.



Tonal portrait

Wed 13 Sept



Monochrome portrait

Wed 11 Oct



Line-and-wash portrait

Wed 22 Nov



Mixed-media portrait

Wed 13 Dec



Layered portrait

Wed 17 Jan





## EXPLORING PASTELS WITH ROBERT DUTTON

All webinars begin at 2:30pm (UK time) Tickets £15

This series of webinars is for artists of all abilities who want to explore soft pastel techniques in very different ways. You will gain a real insight into how to use the medium effectively to express your ideas, even if you have never used the medium before.



**First impressions**

Tues 17 Oct



**Autumn glow**

Tues 14 Nov



**Winter landscape**

Tues 5 Dec



**Season's change**

Tues 23 Jan 2024



**Getting to grips with greens**

Tues 20 Feb 2024

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The masterclass will take place on Zoom and will last for approximately 3 hours, including a 10-minute break half-way through, with Q&A session at the end (these are approximate timings and may vary slightly).

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# YOUR VIEWS

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Please note we may have to edit letters for reasons of space

## STAR LETTER

### Sharing your work

I am a long-time subscriber to *The Artist* and have drawn lots of inspiration from the various contributors over the years. In recent years I have moved from mainly oil painting to trying to improve my watercolour skills. I mainly use watercolour sketchbooks, because they are convenient and always ready for use, together with roughly A4-size blocks of good quality watercolour paper when I need to do a bit more paint manipulation.

I recognise that I don't have the best draughting skills but sometimes I do like to get viewer reaction to my work, just to see if a particular piece of work has any kind of positive visual impact. Like most of us, I don't have access to any exhibition spaces but I have recently started to take advantage of Twitter to

This month's star letter writer will receive a Sennelier portable watercolour palette, worth £29.95 (rrp)



▲ Bob Hill, *When Coal was King*, watercolour, 8¼×11in (21×28cm)

post some of my paintings. Ok, I'm not a social media fanatic but this allows me to take a quick photo using my phone, and to post the picture, again using my phone. No technical skills required! I can, however, see how many people have looked at each



picture and if they were moved enough to make comments, this helps me to see past just my own assessment of my work and perhaps improve. I don't paint to sell anything or to please any particular audience - I paint for fun and to test myself

Obviously, there are plenty of social media platforms available, but I thought I'd mention my approach just to indicate its simplicity and immediacy.

Bob Hill, *by email*

### The path of life

Recently I met a new client out in the rolling countryside in these parts. He wanted a long painting to remind him of his father's favourite walk. The whole of this rural area of Upper Austria is criss-crossed with old paths, ancient stony or rough grass tracks entering and leaving forests or winding their way like strands of hair in the wind and this section he took me to had a special timeless, peaceful but mysterious ambience.

When I began painting simple *plein-air* impressions of these totally deserted paths something strange happened; it felt as though someone had just gone along the paths but had left a ghost of their emotions behind. The paths weren't dead but seemed somehow quite alive.

Slowly it occurred to me that whereas over many years I have focused on close-ups of the traditional granite farmhouses round here and the flowery meadows which everybody loves, the underlying landscape rhythms are what it's all about. This is the energy that makes our emotions resonate, that speak to us in a primeval way. Then I realised that everything in nature is making

paths all the time, searching for their own unique way in life. Whether they are ants, fish, animals, tree roots, streams, air currents, we are all united in our individual search, or alternatively, content to simply follow the path life decides for us.

At the five-week International Summer Academy founded by Kokoschka in Salzburg (my only art training) the tutors there stressed: we can't find your way as artists for you, we can only try to point you to the right track. Each of you must find your own way.

Composition and steering the path of the eye with a painter's artifice is what fascinates me most. Sometimes what you are searching for can be right in front of your nose and one day when you're off guard what has just been a feeling suddenly drops into place.



▲ John Owen *On the Right Path, Austria, en-plein-air watercolour*, 20¾×30¼in (53×77cm); [www.owen.at](http://www.owen.at)

Maybe we find our own 'right path' easiest by not even thinking about it. Or as I believe Picasso said, inspiration exists but it must find us working.

John Owen, *by email*



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# THE ART WORLD

NEWS, INFORMATION AND ONLINE EVENTS IN THE ART WORLD

compiled by Jane Stroud



▲ Frans Hals *The Lute Player*, oil on canvas, 27½×24½in (70×62cm)

## Frans Hals The Credit Suisse Exhibition

One of the most sought-after painters of his generation, the 17th-century Dutch artist, **Frans Hals**, was renowned for his lively, realistic portraits, far removed from the static, staged portraits of his day. This exhibition, the first major retrospective of his work for more than 30 years, brings together some of Hals's finest work, from small paintings, to large group portraits, *genre* scenes and marriage portraits.

**The Credit Suisse Exhibition Frans Hals** can be seen at the **National Gallery**, London from **September 30 to January 21, 2024**.

### National Gallery

Trafalgar Square  
London WC2N 5DN

☎ 020 7747 2885

[www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk)

**September 30 to January 21, 2024**





▲ Lucy Kent *Big Clouds, Diani*, oil on wood panel, 9¼×11¾in (25×30cm)

## Lucy Kent: Plains to Coast

*Plein-air* painter, **Lucy Kent** will be showing her latest body of work inspired by the African landscape at **Patrick Mavros** this September. Lucy is founder of **Art for Charity Collective**, a global community of artists united in their goal of sharing their work whilst raising funds and awareness for charities. Proceeds from Lucy's exhibition will be donated to two Kenyan charities – Lion Guardians and Diani Children's Village. 'This has been one of my favourite painting destinations to date,' writes Lucy. 'I love painting the vast horizons, expansive skies and distinctive light, charting how it changed as I travelled from the plains to the coast. It is a real honour to be showing this work at Patrick Mavros, who does so much for the conservation of wildlife.'

**Lucy Kent: Plains to Coast** can be seen at **Patrick Mavros**, 104-106 Fulham Road, London SW3, from September 21 to 23; [www.patrickmavros.com](http://www.patrickmavros.com)

## TEN Artists

Ten well-known artists will once again be showing ten works each at the annual **Ten Artists** exhibition at Baslow Village Hall, Derbyshire DE45 1SR, on October 21 and 22, 10am to 5pm each day. This will be the 27th Ten Artists exhibition, organised by Isabel Blincow to raise funds for Samaritans. To date, the exhibition has raised £39,000 for the charity.

► Judy Day *Cyclamen*, acrylic on canvas, 23½×19¾in (60×50cm) at this year's Ten Artists exhibition







▲ Visitors discovering the site of Renoir's paintings on the Renoir Walk



▲ Auguste Renoir *View at Guernsey*, 1883, oil on canvas, 18×22in (46×55.5cm)

# Renoir in Guernsey, 1883

**Renoir in Guernsey, 1883** brings together a collection of Renoir's works, painted during his stay in September of that year. The exhibition, which has been organised by the charitable initiative **Art for Guernsey** in partnership with Guernsey Museum and the Musée des Impressionnistes Giverny, will go on show at **Guernsey Museum** at Candie – the first time that the works have been shown together in the locations they depict. Nine of the 15 works Renoir painted during his stay on the island will be shown alongside others inspired by his time there. The exhibition forms the focal point but Art for Guernsey has created a number of satellite exhibitions, at Priaulx Library, the Renoir Walk and the Art for Guernsey Gallery on Mansell Street, including **A Day in 1883**, which recreates the atmosphere on the island in 1883 through engravings, photographs and documents, and **Catching Light and Time: in the Shadows of Renoir** featuring the work of local photographer, Paul

Chambers, who challenged himself to capture the movement of the light using only the photographic equipment that would have been available in the 19th century.

Art for Guernsey's Renoir journey began with the curation of the Renoir Walk in July 2019, a self-guided walk that allows participants to see Moulin Huet bay from the same perspectives as Renoir did. Five steel frames were made to echo the ornate frames for his work. The Renoir Walk has now become a permanent fixture. Art for Guernsey's founder, David Ummels explains: 'It's brilliant to see this one-of-a-kind exhibition coming to life before our eyes. Guernsey inspired Renoir and fundamentally changed his painting style, and we only hope that our exhibition is able to inspire others in the same way. We look forward to welcoming visitors near and far to the island this autumn.' The exhibition will be open from September 30 to December 15. For tickets visit [www.artforguernsey.com](http://www.artforguernsey.com)

## Portraits of dogs

Coinciding with its major exhibition **Portraits of Dogs: From Gainsborough to Hockney**, until October 15, the **Wallace Collection** in London is running a number of events, including a two-day course on September 6 and 7, **David Hockney and Lucian Freud: Pet Subjects**, which looks at the key roles dogs have played in both artists' careers; a **Masterclass: Drawn to Dogs** on September 16 and 17; and two **lip-speaking tours** of the exhibition on September 12 and 26. For full details of all events, visit [www.wallacecollection.org](http://www.wallacecollection.org)

► David Hockney *Dog Painting* 19, 1995





# Parallel Lives:





# Eight Women Artists



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September 16 to January 13, 2024

### **Parallel Lives at St Barbe Museum & Art Gallery**

this autumn explores the work of eight women artists: Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Prunella Clough, Ithell Colquhoun, Evelyn Dunbar, Gertrude Hermes, Barbara Jones, Enid Marx and Monica Poole. Born within 20 years of each other and with lives spanning the 20th century, they drew inspiration from the artistic movements of their time, including neo-romanticism, realism, surrealism, folk art and abstraction, yet each had a creativity that was totally unique, whether in sculpture, painting, printmaking, textile design or book illustration.

The exhibition is curated by **Gill Clarke** and **Steven Marshall** 'in celebration of these artists' individuality, their remarkable lives and their unique contributions to British art.' The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue, published by Sansom & Company, available online at the launch of the exhibition, through the St Barbe Museum and Art Gallery's online shop <https://shop.stbarbe-museum.org.uk>

**Parallel Lives: Eight Women Artists** can be seen at **St Barbe Museum & Art Gallery**, Lymington, Hampshire, from September 16 to January 13, 2024.

◀ **Monica Poole *Pilgrims Way*, wood engraving, 19¾×23½in (49×60cm).** The artist pursued a career as a wood engraver when the medium was unfashionable, creating atmospheric depictions of Kentish landscapes, and is now recognised as one of Britain's most notable 20th-century printmakers



# Extreme painting

William Mather talks to Highlands artist, **Jonathan Shearer** about his love of painting inhospitable landscapes and the drama they inspire

**O**ut on the hill pastels are light, oils heavy. Jonathan likes to take both. He also likes to walk and camp so thinks nothing of humping 15kg of gear on his back. For him the hills and mountains are not for conquering or bagging, they are to be enjoyed, loved, experienced and painted. This takes time, energy, solitude and a determination to be out in extreme situations. Like extreme climbers he is unafraid of extreme painting challenges.

A professional Highlands artist and tutor, he so passionately wants to be involved in what he sees and feels, that it flows into his paintings, whether up a mountain, by the sea or in his own garden. His approach is bold, brave and unhesitating. He seizes those *plein-air* moments with sweeping strokes of pastel or with brushes loaded with undiluted oil paint on small 8×10¼in (20×26cm) boards. He freely admits that the results can look a mess but for him these are his

shorthand notebooks. He can de-code them back in the studio and bring them alive in vibrant works of art.

## Ben Nevis

An experienced hill-walker he recently camped a couple of nights on Ben Nevis (1,345m), complete with tent, cooking gear, pastels and oils. He spent a day sketching with a light pack. An A4 concertina sketchbook caught the fleeting moods of weather in pastel and his pochade box enabled several small oil-on-board sketches, including *Tower Ridge, Ben Nevis* (below).

Back in his Alness studio, near Inverness, there was enough dynamism to turn this into *North Face, Ben Nevis* (right). This graced the walls of his 2022 Corries to Coast solo exhibition in the Castle Gallery, Inverness. With thick impasto it is a powerful, vivid experience of the majesty, awesomeness and invincibility of a mountain that outwits many and will outlive us all. For him such work

is all about expressing ‘the sheer awe, exhilaration and physicality of these landscapes.’

For a previous exhibition at the Castle Gallery, *A Bothy Too Far*, he hiked to extremely remote highland bothies carrying two rucksacks, back and front.

Denise Collins, director of the gallery, who has hosted a number of Jonathan’s solo shows, describes him as the foremost contemporary landscape artist in the Highlands today: ‘His work is instantly recognisable and he is one of the most successful of Highlands artists with a huge following.’

On one trip he reached the top of Beinn Alligin, in the Torridon range, kneeling in the snow with his ice-axe securing him from a 1,000m drop. Gusts of high winds were frightening but with a small panel in his pochade box he managed to achieve a painting of nearby Beinn Liathach in 20 minutes. It was about getting the paint on with almost frantic energy.

## Physicality

Another expedition was to the Cuillin Ridge on Skye, which Jonathan describes as: ‘the most incredible place to paint and sketch. My wife, Michelle, worries I’ll kill myself, but I am very safety-conscious. It is so rewarding and special to be up there. The physicality and experience is vital. I use lots of paint. This is precious. To do a painting in ten or 15 minutes has taken me a lifetime. You have to work fast in case of a white-out.’

Similar principles apply to lower-level lochs, corries and seascapes. At Strathy Point near Tongue on the north coast the forecast was three-metre waves. ‘Ok, I’m going!’ said Jonathan. In such conditions he either stands or kneels with a big canvas held down by rocks. ‘It was hard



◀ *Tower Ridge, Ben Nevis*, oil on canvas, 8×10¼in (20×26cm)





▲ *North Face, Ben Nevis*, oil on canvas, 31½×35½in (80×90cm)



*‘With painting you can’t dictate everything.  
You have to let nature work’*

and scary with huge waves pummelling and spray but great to study those breaking wave patterns and get down the essence in paint.’

Similarly for *Rollers on Rocks, Shandwick Beach* (right) on the north-east coast: ‘At times I was blinded by the spray so just had to paint intuitively, paint blind – so lots of thick paint was needed. Then I had to carry it half a mile to my van!’

Jonathan always works from paintings and sketches, never from a photo. ‘Your eye is scanning the landscape. Eyes are far more complex than any camera. Photos can provide reference but they can’t capture the huge scale of landscape or the subtleties of mood and light.’



▲ *Rollers on Rocks, Shandwick Beach*, oil on board, 7×9¾in (18×25cm)





### Understanding Monet

Closer to home among trees and burns he often uses a larger French box easel. Recently he was inspired in his own garden. An oil study of a willow tree resulted in the atmospheric *Last Light, Winter Willow* (above). 'The garden paintings are relatively new to me,' he explains. 'There is a different energy and so much life and colour. I understand Monet now and his love for painting his garden. For me it started with that winter willow tree in the snow as the sun went down. A lot of work was needed and I almost gave up. At least three times I threw it out for burning, but I retrieved it and worked on it more. Now it's one of my favourites.'

Other artists who have inspired him include William McTaggart, Joan Eardley,

▲ *Last Light, Winter Willow*, oil on canvas, 30×40in (76×102cm)

Tom Thomson from Canada, Ferdinand Hodler from Switzerland, Norman Ackroyd, the French Impressionists, the Romantic tradition and the American Robert Henri.

### Materials

Jonathan doesn't skimp on materials. Even on the highest peaks he will take six 200ml tubes of oil paint and about 30 brushes. To save weight and space he takes no solvents or mediums and keeps the brushes for separate colours. Excess paint is wiped onto a panel for the next painting.

He has a collection of 13 pochade boxes but his favourite is an antique Victorian box, which includes a mixing area,

thumbhole, container for brushes and two small panels.

'When I start with a blank canvas back in the studio with my sketches, I take a large brush with a mixture of Zest-it and linseed oil and cover it like a very wet watercolour wash. Then, using flat brushes, I start to block in large areas to get the canvas filled in quickly with the basics. Using rags and more paint I work all the canvas the whole time, putting paint on and off.' The results are expressionistic and semi-abstract but, as he teaches his students, the basic principles still apply, such as composition, perspective, tone and colour balance.

### In the moment

'With painting you can't dictate everything. You have to let nature work. Paint will drip and run. There are lucky accidents. When I'm painting, I'm immersed. I work very, very quickly. I aim to capture an experience, not just a view or a quick snapshot. In the field even though I work quickly there is often a two-hour walk to get to there and that all feeds into what I do. It is a process of waiting for the right light and mood, walking, meditating, looking, then painting.

'I'm not a religious person but nature is my form of spirituality. When I paint, I am completely detached from everything; I'm in the moment and it's the most wonderful experience. Sometimes you have to be hard on yourself, not precious. You must be prepared to destroy, as much as being prepared to create, like nature itself, and hopefully in that process you will become a better artist.'

### Advice to students

Jonathan has travelled to many parts of the UK and overseas, and he always takes a sketchbook. Sketching for him is creating vital visual diaries. As he tells his students: 'Simplify. Don't try to be perfect. Find something visually interesting. Absorb, look, get a feel, take your time, don't rush. It's about how you express your response, your involvement, your emotion. Be in the moment; listen to the sounds; be in that place. Respond intuitively to what's in front of you. Go for it. Make a mess. Don't worry about it. There's no competition. It's not a race! But if you can produce a good sketch with energy and emotion then you are building up a language about how you make marks that can translate into great paintings.'

### JONATHAN'S KIT

- Large rucksack; bungee straps; light daypack; waterproofs; hiking poles; sit mat; hard-bound sketchbooks (A4 and A5); concertina sketchbook; hairspray for fixing pastels; pochade box; food; water; flask; and a can of beer for those special end-of-day moments.
- Unison and Rembrandt pastels in a plastic tub.
- Daler-Rowney Georgian oils, Winsor & Newton or fast-drying Pebeo. His basic palette consists of: titanium white; ultramarine blue; cerulean blue; alizarin crimson; viridian green; cadmium yellow; and yellow ochre.



- For more extreme work and weather he has a tarpaulin shelter; a 'hot tent' that fits to a hiking pole; a 2kg stove that folds to the size of a laptop, with insulated chimney; and a small 2kg inflatable rubber boat for going over, rather than round, hill-lochs.



# DEMONSTRATION *In Coire Nan Arr*

This demonstration was given on a sketching course in the north-west Highlands at Kishorn in October 2022.



## ▲ STAGE ONE

Kneeling down, Jonathan applied the first sweeping pastel strokes in his hard-bound sketchbook opened up to A3 size



## ▲ STAGE TWO

Next, Jonathan established the basic colours and tones



## ▲ STAGE THREE

Greater detail was applied and Jonathan rubbed in some of the pastel with water



## ▲ STAGE FOUR

A Stabilo 'Woody' pencil was moistened to create black linear effects



## ▲ STAGE FIVE

Looking up, Jonathan applied the final touches

Jonathan Shearer moved from Surrey to north-east Scotland when he was 11. He graduated from Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen with a BA Honours degree in painting and drawing before being awarded the John Kinross Scholarship to Florence for a year in 1993. He decided to paint professionally after a post-graduate course at the Cyprus College of Art and now lives in Alness, near Inverness, with his wife Michelle and son Daniel. Solo exhibitions have included at the Air Gallery, Dover Street, London; Ressipol, Ardnamurchan and the Castle Gallery, Inverness.

## FINISHED PAINTING

*In Coire Nan Arr*, looking towards Nia Cochan with Loch Nan Arr behind, pastel, 11¾×16½in (30×42cm)



A woman with blonde hair tied in a bun, wearing an orange t-shirt and a necklace, is painting on a canvas. She is holding a paintbrush and looking at the canvas. The studio is filled with art supplies, including paint tubes, brushes, and a palette. In the background, there are shelves with books and other art materials.

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# Toning up

In the second of four articles on loosening up in watercolour, **Tom Shepherd** helps you get to grips with tonal value

**M**y previous article was all about learning to look for shapes (not things), and how a handful of larger shapes provide the underlying structure of a painting. As long as shapes retain their integrity, the painting will work and we can do whatever we like with the paint itself. This shift in mind-set to creating a jigsaw of shapes composed of washes and brushmarks, is the foundation of loose painting and comprises the definition of painterly watercolours.

We also touched on tonal values, since they are directly related to shapes. In this article I want to explore tonal values more deeply. Not only what they are and what to look for, but also how they provide us with a fantastically simple watercolour process for any subject. This process, combined with painting shapes, acts as a launch pad for loosening up our watercolours.

Most of my past students will roll their eyes every time they hear the phrase 'shape and tone', but I (and most other artists) are always harping on about them because understanding tonal values is absolutely crucial, whatever your experience level, whatever the subject and style of painting, and when combined with shapes are the gateway to that elusive loose style.

If we think of composition, the arrangement of shapes, and the shapes themselves, as the foundations and the building blocks of painting, then we can say that tonal values are the cement or the glue that holds them all together. They are literally how we see the world and our subject, providing light and shadow, form, depth, atmosphere, mood and much more.

Better still, whilst tonal values are one of what I call the four primary principles of watercolour – and if I was really put on the spot, potentially the most important one – tone does not have to be



complicated. Understanding tonal values can be surprisingly straightforward. It is a combination of how we observe our subject, and then the physical process of translating this into a painting.

## Tonal values and how can we identify them

In simple terms, tonal value (often called tone or value) refers to how light or dark an area, or part of a subject is. Start by imagining your subject in black, white and grey (easily done with the click of a button on a device but takes some practice by eye when colour is involved). Sticking with greyscale for a moment, the two extreme ends of the scale are easy: black and very dark greys are the darks and white and very light greys are the lights.

Where things can get more confusing, and where we can get lost as painters, is in that huge array of greys, the mid-tones. The human eye can recognise many hundreds of different tonal values, so as artists how on earth do we paint them all? Surely that would be a nightmare, and also make our subject ridiculously complicated, right? The answer is, we don't paint them all! We simplify our subject into as few values as possible.

You may have seen a mathematical approach to tonal values, with swatches of tones on a greyscale, each with a numerical value, or value studies using black, white and grey, or splitting tones into a dark, dark mid-tone, light mid-tone and light, and so on. These are just slightly different ways to conceptualise simplifying the hundreds of values we see into a significantly smaller number.

Over time I have distilled this idea into a more bare-bones concept. My approach is illustrated in the diagram (above). It is one I feel is in keeping with the fluid nature of watercolour whilst also providing us with a framework to tackle any subject. Better still, its simplicity is highly conducive to loosening up.

First we break our subject into shapes, then ask ourselves whether these shapes are in a light-value group (light family) or a shadow-value group (shadow family). Rather than the light family being made of a set of specific separate tonal values, I think of it as being a fluid spectrum of values from the white of the page through to mid-tones, never going too dark.

The way the pigments flow together when we are using watery paint naturally creates a wonderful myriad subtle tones



## 2ND OF 4: WATERCOLOUR

without compromising the overall integrity of the shape or area. So, our only job is to make sure we don't go too dark in these areas of the light family.

I think of the shadow family as being made up of two groups of values. First, the gentle shadow – darker than the light family but not too dark. Then the deep shadow, notably darker still. I also like to leave tonal room for any spots that may require an extremely dark accent.

Subjects and paintings do require a slightly more subtle and variegated

approach to tonal values to really get depth and interest, but the great part about painting a fluid light family, followed but a slightly creamier gentle shadow, then whilst still damp some deep shadow, is that the medium itself naturally creates this subtlety, variation and even sophistication as it melts together; one of the real joys of watercolour. An added bonus is that by painting the shadows in this way we get a beautiful, slightly out-of-focus, softness which contrasts wonderfully

with the harder, sharper edges of the light areas. We are drifting into talking about different edge types here – more to come on these in part three.

In summary, the natural qualities of the medium, combined with this simple process, lend themselves perfectly to painting two families of tones, which can lead to great results. Of course, like all good processes there's plenty of scope for breaking the rules, but this theory is always there to fall back on if needed to make a painting work.



Lion pencil sketch and watercolour, 16×20in (30.5×40.5cm)

### EXAMPLE ONE

The lion sketch (below) was created using three tones: the white of the paper for the light family, followed by a lightly shaded area for the shadow family into which I put a few smaller shapes of stronger shadow to represent the deep shadow. In the painting you can see that whilst there is subtlety and



variation in both the light and shadow family, the shapes of each are tonally quite separate. The fluid nature of the medium has created lovely variety within the light family, from the white of the paper into lots of earthy yellows, never going too dark.

The few large shapes of shadow anchor the composition and provide the structure. The shadow areas were painted with the lighter, gentle shadow, then whilst still damp the smaller shapes of deeper shadow were dropped in, leaving a little room tonally for a few very deep dark accents where needed. Knowing that the structure of the painting was anchored by simple shapes and a simple process, I felt confident to be free and painterly (loose) with the way I actually applied the paint, making exciting marks, flowing washes and bold brushstrokes.

### EXAMPLE TWO

Between the sketch and the final painting of the zebra (right) you can see the power of a handful of large shapes of light and shadow to provide structure. The underlying gentle shadow has some variation created by the medium, with the deep shadow in this case being the darker markings. They were painted in whilst the gentle shadow was still a little damp, not only giving softness, but also naturally creating further subtlety and variety of tone by the blending, using the simple process of gentle shadow, deep shadow, then letting the medium do all the hard work.



Zebra pencil sketch and watercolour, 15×22in (38×16½cm)





## EXAMPLE THREE

This seemingly more complex subject (right) has been simplified with a handful of large shapes. The light family is really only the sliver of sky, the ground, and some light hitting the figures. The rest is all shadow. I painted the gentle shadow first, letting colours all flow together, followed by the deeper shadow, allowing the medium to do what it wanted within these shapes and value families.



Street scene pencil sketch and watercolour, 12×16in (30.5×40.5cm)



## EXAMPLE FOUR

Whilst this painting (below) is obviously more complex than the tonal study, I hope that you can still see that there are large underlying areas of light and shadow doing their jobs. By focusing on keeping the light and shadow families separate, and painting the shadow areas wet into wet, I combined a handful of simple shapes with a simple process, giving me the freedom to let the paint flow and blend together. I could never have planned these wonderful loose effects that are borne out of an approach that encourages the natural tendencies of the medium.



Copper and garlic pencil sketch and watercolour, 16×12in (40.5×30.5cm)



## EXAMPLE FIVE

Even with subjects that may require more sensitivity and finesse, the exact same approach works extremely well as in the two portraits (below). We may have to work a little harder on the initial simplification of tones, but when we trust the process, and more importantly trust the medium, it always shines and is quite capable of providing all the subtlety and refinement needed.

You may have noticed a recurring theme. To achieve looser paintings, let the watercolour work its magic. The painter's job is to focus on simple shapes, simple tones, simple process, and stop interfering beyond this!



Two portrait pencil sketches and watercolours, both 16×12in (40.5×30.5cm)





## DEMONSTRATION *Boats in a Harbour*

### MATERIALS

#### ● Paper

Baohong The Master's Choice watercolour 140lb (300gsm) 100-per-cent cotton, Rough paper, 12×16in (30.5×40.5cm).

#### ● Brushes

Escoda Ultimo Mop size 18, synthetic squirrel hair.  
Rosemary & Co Red Dot collection size 1 mop, synthetic sable.  
Rosemary & Co Series 304 size 3/0 round.

#### ● Daniel Smith watercolours

Prussian blue; French ultramarine; pyrrole red; quinacridone red; aureolin yellow; cobalt teal blue.

#### ● Daniel Smith gouache

Lavender; and white.

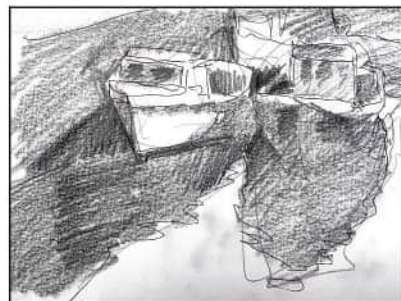
Following on from the watermelon demonstration in part one (September 2023 issue), I used the same approach here. I broke the subject into shapes, but this time with more focus on the tonal values of the shapes and how they could provide me with plenty of opportunities to loosen up

### SKETCH

This small study was an attempt to simplify the subject into large shapes of identical or similar tone. When I look for a strong design, I sketch the subject several times, using the white of the paper for lights, pencilling a gentle shadow tone and a deep shadow tone. Just three tones, that is all I need to find a design that feels workable.

You can see clearly how the large shape held the whole painting together, whilst trapping the light and making a bold statement. Within the large shape of gentle shadow there were then smaller shapes of deep shadow.

The final painting would have plenty of colour and more subtlety of tone, but I tried to focus first on simple light areas, followed by a large gentle shadow, which would have the deep shadows dropped in wet into wet, letting the medium take care of the subtlety and mingling of colours for me



### ▶ STAGE ONE

The first stage consisted of laying in the light family, leaving plenty of white from the paper showing, particularly in and around the boats to make the focal point 'pop'. I tend to err on the side of leaving more whites than I may need. I can always get rid of some later, but with watercolour it is hard to get them back again if they are lost.

With a fairly watery mix of aureolin yellow and quinacridone red I worked with a large soft mop brush to get the pigment and water really flowing in the upper left. Painting with as large a brush as possible forced me not to get caught up in details, keeping me in that carefree zone.

Having waited for this first colour to dry a little, I used a similar consistency of cobalt teal blue, some ultramarine blue in the boats, and a few patches of red for the smaller background boat. Notice how they blended at the edges, giving me that attractive loose and painterly look. Whilst these initial washes were still damp I brushed in a few extra strokes of blue in the water using a more creamy consistency. I let this first stage dry completely, trusting that adding the shadows would clarify it all later



### ▲ STAGE TWO

This stage was about the shadow family. Sticking with my largest brush I mixed a stronger milky-cream consistency of quinacridone red and aureolin yellow, with a touch of ultramarine blue, and began the large shape of gentle shadow for the entire background of the boats. Using the bead of water and pigment left at the bottom of the rusty wash I continued straight into a similar consistency of cobalt teal blue for the water, using a touch of Prussian blue in places for darker areas.

Working wet into wet, I tied together the large shape of background and water. A similar effect of uniting tones could be achieved even when painting them separately, but to stay loose and let the watercolour do what it does best, I worked with as large shapes as possible. Finally I refined the outer edges of the shapes to convey broken reflections on the water. One of the keys to looser painting is working from big to small, general to specific

### ◀ STAGE THREE

I continued the mix used for the darker water into the right-hand boat and down into its reflection. I started big and broad, then refined the outer edge of the reflection once it was in place. While still nice and moist I started dropping in creamier mixes of ultramarine blue to darken the large shadow shape of the right-hand boat.

I wanted to create some soft edges between the hull of the left boat and the surrounding area (edges are another element of looser painting; more to come on these in part four). To achieve this I brushed in a thin but not too watery mix of ultramarine blue to create the gentle shadow, then dropped in a few stronger consistencies to create depth. Finally I added some deeper shadows to the background wall as well. This whole stage was done quite quickly but also with care for paint consistency and accuracy of shapes







## ▲ STAGE FOUR

With the large shapes in place, I started to work on the medium and small shadow shapes. There was an interesting jigsaw of shapes on the cabins of the boat. I used a milky consistency of ultramarine blue for these. Whilst still damp I quickly started to explore some of the deep darks with smaller brushstrokes of very thick paint, hoping they would soften slightly into the damp washes.

I mixed a milky consistency of quinacridone red, darkened in places with a touch of blue, to create the wonderful little shadow shapes on the red boat. The shadow on the cabin was ultramarine blue, then I used similar mixes to give the impression of some boats in the distance



## Conclusion

There we have our boats. A nice loose feel, not overly laboured, with tone creating depth and atmosphere, and accuracy of shape holding the painting together. With these two principles firmly in mind we have the freedom to apply the paint in a looser way, knowing that the underlying structure provided by shape and tone will ultimately make the painting work.

Not only does looking for shape and tone help create light and shadow, it becomes a method. I find that having a simple process, a framework by which to tackle any subject, ultimately provides more freedom and more fun (I think I said before, fun being the ultimate key to loosening up!). As with all good processes, as you gain confidence with watercolour you can break away from it, as long as understanding the importance of shape and tone remains.

Hopefully this tutorial has helped to demonstrate the power of shape and tone, as well as given you a simple way to analyse your subject, and translate your design into a painting.

## ▲ FINISHED PAINTING

*Boats in a Harbour*, watercolour, 12×16in (30.5×40.5cm).

The final details might look like a big leap from the last stage, but actually it was only a handful of smaller shapes and niceties on top of the larger washes. I added more depth to the windows of the boats with a creamy mix of grey (all primaries together) brushed in gently and not too dark, still focusing on simple shapes.

Various brushmarks and little shapes created the illusion of details on the boats. Less is definitely more here. Because of the large shapes and big spaces in the composition, however, I could afford a nice amount of detail without making it too busy! I used some dry brushwork (thick dark paint on nearly dry brush) to add little flicks and marks for ropes and extra bits of definition on the boats. My last touches were a few flicks of thick white paint. There's nothing wrong with a bit of white, but go easy with it. A little calligraphy to bring the ropes to life, a couple of sparkles on the water, and the odd missed highlight on the boats was all that was needed

These foundational principles are the springboard to achieve the goal of loosening up your watercolours.

## Tip

Remember to keep it very simple and stick with painting shapes, not things – all the time asking yourself what tone you are aiming for. Large shapes first; the details can come later. This is a crucial part of looser painting; large shapes for as long as possible. Only when the large shapes are working and looking good, do we even consider turning to smaller shapes and details. No amount of detail will save a painting when the big and medium shapes are not hanging together and providing structure. Diving into details too early can break apart your large shapes. Get the whole painting working before focusing too heavily on individual parts.



Tom Shepherd

kicked off his art career using graffiti pens to draw bright and colourful custom artwork on guitars, but the infinite variety of subjects, and the endless possibilities of other media was always beckoning him.

Subsequently daring to pick up a brush, his encounter with more traditional media, opened a world of imaginative inspiration.

Now, with watercolour very much at the forefront, Tom loves the challenge of tackling a wide variety of subjects. Find out more at

[www.schoolofwatercolour.co.uk](http://www.schoolofwatercolour.co.uk)

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[@tomshepherdartist](https://www.instagram.com/tomshepherdartist)

Join me next month as I play with washes and brushmarks in part three.





Edgar Degas *Dancer with a Fan*, c1880, pastel on grey-green laid paper, 24×16½in (61×42cm). Collection of the Metropolitan Museum



#### Adele Wagstaff

trained at Newcastle University and the Slade School of Fine Art where she focused on working from the nude in sustained poses. Her practice continues to explore the human figure, anatomy and portraiture through drawing and painting. Adele has been shortlisted for the Jerwood Drawing Prize and the BP Portrait Award, and her work has been exhibited in the National Portrait Gallery, Royal West of England Academy, Royal Society of Portrait Painters and the Canadian Portrait Academy.

Adele has written two books: *Still Life Painting in Oils*, 2012, and *Painting the Nude*, 2015, both published by the Crowood Press and she teaches at Art Academy London, West Dean College and Royal Academy of Arts; [www.adelewagstaff.co.uk](http://www.adelewagstaff.co.uk)  
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# Drawing the human form

In her new three-part life-drawing series, **Adele Wagstaff** begins by showing how to construct a pose, exploring angles, shape and proportion

**T**he beauty and complexity of the human body provides us with a subject in which we can examine so many of the fundamentals and processes of drawing. At the same time, we can also explore a wide range of media, using a variety of mark-making, to express form and contour, proportion, anatomy and perspective.

During this three-part series we will look at some of the drawing and measuring techniques that can help us to approach these complexities as we begin to study the human body. In recent years there has been a great increase in the availability of life-drawing classes,

in particular online, which provides the opportunity to join a regular class from home.

The techniques we will be looking at during this series will apply to a number of different approaches; whether you are drawing in the studio, working in a Zoom class online or from a reference photograph and when also drawing from marble sculptures or casts in a museum or gallery.

#### Examples of master drawings

This pastel drawing by Degas (above) shows the figure of a dancer; her pose rotates away from us. The drawing is a study for the *Dancers in the Classroom*,

Painted around 1880. The figure of the dancer provides us with a strong shape, despite her position in relation to us. A vertical line held through the centre of her tilted head runs down through her torso and intersects her left ankle. This vertical helps us to understand and to see the dominant diagonal running through the pose and the movement as her head tips backwards. When simplifying the shape of the upper section of her body, we can identify a diamond shape tilting (or two triangles), as it connects her elbows across to her shoulder and to the point where her hand touches the fan.

This beautiful and sensitive drawing of a male model by Alphonse Legros





▲ Alphonse Legros *Study of a Figure*, graphite, touched with white on grey-green prepared paper, 14¼×8in (36×20.5cm). Collection of the Metropolitan Museum

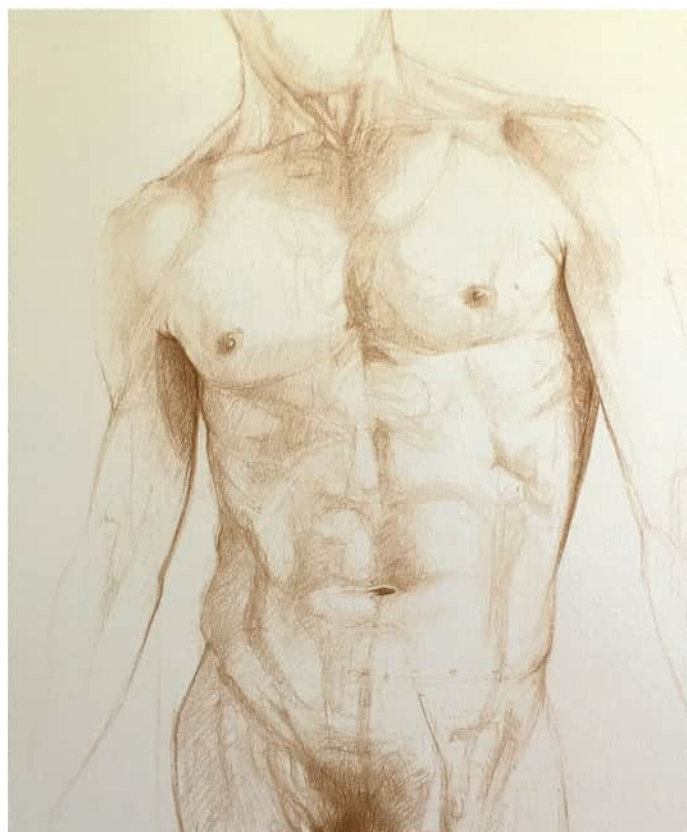
(above) shows how the artist modelled the musculature and shapes with a series of delicately built-up parallel lines, crossing around the body to describe its volume. Observing the major lines and angles of this standing contrapposto pose, we see the steepness of the shoulder line in relation to the slightly downward angle of the pelvis. The curving line that runs along the length of the spine, connects these two opposing angles.

In the contrapposto pose in my drawing of the torso (above right) you can see the asymmetry of the angles of the shoulders and pelvis. These two angles drop in opposite directions yet the pose is balanced and a beautiful S-shape

## MATERIALS

The drawings being used as examples and demonstrations in this series, both the master drawings and those of my own, will focus on using dry drawing materials that are easily available and can be used when drawing in a home environment. They include:

- Graphite, charcoal/charcoal pencils, colour pencils, pastels/pastel pencils and Conté pencils. For these sketches I have used mainly Faber-Castell Polychromos and Conté pencils.
- White pencil or chalk.
- Sketchbooks – A4/A3 size.
- A sketchbook with toned pages, such as Strathmore tan or grey tones.



▲ Adele Wagstaff *Adrian Torso 1 (detail)*, bistre Polychromos pencils, 25¼×20½in (64×52cm)



▲ Adele Wagstaff *Leo Reclining*, sanguine and white Polychromos pencils and black Conté crayon, 14¼×11in (36×28cm)



## TECHNIQUES TO HELP US OBSERVE AND SIMPLIFY

### Simplification of shape

When looking at a pose, whether it's standing, seated or reclining, are you able to identify an overall shape, or any particularly dominant shapes within the pose? You may be able to find rectangles, squares or triangles when observing the body. These can be helpful when looking at the overall structure and weight of the posture. In a seated pose you may be able to find a number of triangular shapes that help to give a framework to the pose, while also simplifying any particularly difficult positions or foreshortening. These shapes may be drawn very lightly as a starting point on the page as you begin to map out the position of the figure on your paper.

### Observing the major angles

As I observe a model when assuming a new pose, whether it's a five-minute warm-up or the beginning of a sustained pose, I look firstly for the major angles of the pose, the line and movement of the supporting structure of the spine, and the angles of shoulders and pelvis. These three lines can be drawn lightly as a starting point and used as an armature or framework. If each of these three lines

▲ Georges Seurat *Study for 'Poseuses'*, 1886-87, Conté crayon on laid paper, 11¾×8¾in (30×22.5cm). Collection of the Metropolitan Museum

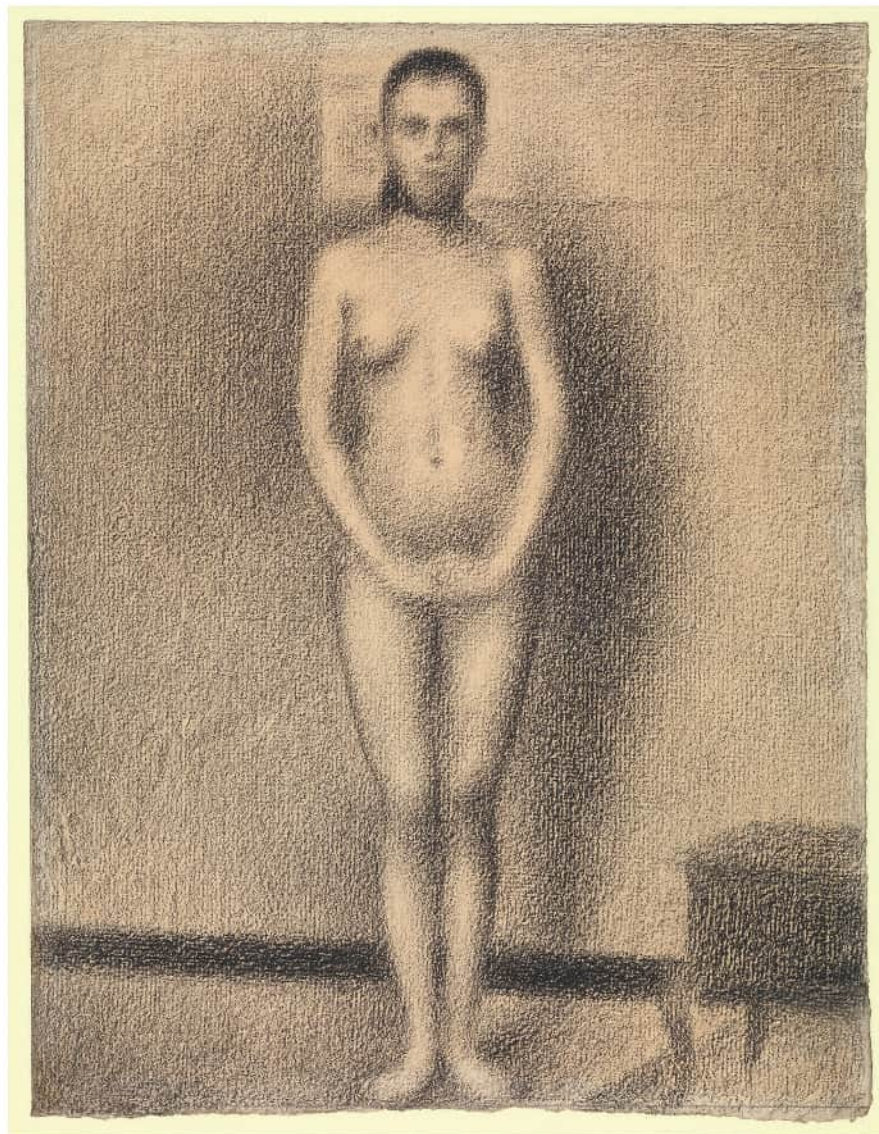
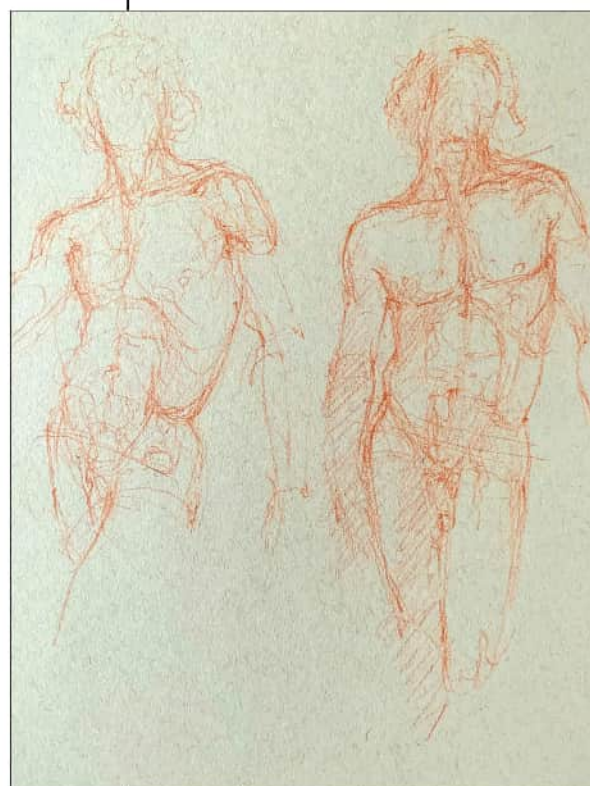
running along the spine is created. As we look at this beautiful Conté drawing by Seurat (above), we observe at first a seemingly straightforward standing pose. The model's pose is balanced as she stands upright. Here Seurat demonstrates his mastery when using Conté crayon, a medium that allowed him to explore its rich velvety textures and control of soft and sharp edges as he describes the light and shade of the figure.

This drawing is identified as a preparatory study for his painting, *The Models or Poseuses*. As we begin to look closely at the shape and proportion of this pose, it's possible to see how the subtle angle of the torso differs to the vertical line of her legs. Holding a vertical line along the centre of her pose enables us to see this movement clearly.

In a standing pose such as this, we can find the midway point along the length of

the pose at the height of the hips. The proportion of the body from this point equals the distance from head to hip, and hip to toe. We may also take a measurement of the head and use this as a scale to check proportion; measuring how many times a head-length fits along the length or width of a pose.

► Adele Wagstaff *Andrea sketch* showing major angles, sanguine Polychromos pencils, 16½×11¾in (42×30cm)





is placed correctly, then you will be able to achieve the essence of a pose very quickly.

## Proportion

As you look at the shape of the whole pose, as the full figure stands, sits or reclines, where do you find the midway point? As the model either stands or takes a supported pose, work out where the halfway point is along both the width and height. Make reference marks lightly where this point is and place where the top of the head and the feet will be. This helps to keep a check on the proportion of top and lower halves of the figure, making sure that the top section of a pose doesn't become too heavy, or the legs become too long.

## Measurement

Finding a part of the body that can be used as a unit of measurement throughout the drawing will help to check on proportions, and double-check the size of parts making up the whole figure. For example, the number of head-lengths that will fit into the length of width of a pose. This unit or scale may vary depending on the position of your model. For a standing pose, the head is a usual unit of measurement, whereas for a reclining pose when the upper body may be foreshortened or the head is not seen well enough, you might then use the length of a foot, or another part of the body.

## Using negative and positive shapes

Negative space is the area around the figure. Your model or other subject will be the positive, so everything else is considered to be negative space. This includes the shapes you may find within the body. For example, if your model stands with a hand on their hip then this contained area is referred to as a negative shape. Likewise, the shape between a model's feet running up along the inside of the legs will create an elongated triangle of negative space.

The proportion, size or

angles of these negative spaces are really helpful to check the angles of the body or position of a limb. A negative shape of the wrong shape or proportion will result in the part of the body next to this being in the wrong place, or of the wrong angle.

## Using vertical and horizontal lines to observe relationships and angles

When observing a new pose, particularly when a model takes a standing pose, the first thing I will do is to hold a vertical through the centre of the pose. Using a pencil, or a stick (wooden skewers are perfect for this job), hold vertically with your arm outstretched and one eye closed. You will see how the angles of the body, head, torso and legs appear against this vertical 'plumbline'. Immediately you will be able to judge the movement and angle of the spine/torso against this vertical axis. Note how the pose is balanced and how the legs are supporting the weight of the body. Is the body very upright with the angle of hips and shoulders being parallel or is there more movement and contrapposto?

If your model is in a reclining pose (*Leo Reclining*, page 25), vertical and horizontal lines help to check the alignment of parts when there is foreshortening. In this drawing it was helpful to see how a vertical connected the head position and heel, and a horizontal showed how the left knee and right hip were lining up.



▲ Adele Wagstaff *Andrea* sketch showing negative and positive shapes, Conté crayon, 14¼×11in (36×28cm)



► Adele Wagstaff *Andrea* sketch observing diagonals, sanguine Polychromos pencils, 42×30in (16½×11¾cm)

## Observing diagonals between two or more points

Alongside measuring the scale of one part of the body against another, we can also use angles that run between two or more points on the body, such as a diagonal running from shoulder to knee, or elbow to hip. When holding a stick diagonally between two points you can determine the steepness of an angle, and then transfer this angle carefully as you check the same angle on your drawing.

*Next time we will look at drawing techniques, including continuous line and directional mark-making and will explore contour and form of the human body in drawings of poses both short and sustained.*



# The bare essentials

**Amanda Hyatt** demonstrates how to use a reduced colour palette to create a moody watercolour painting

**T**aste in art is highly individual. It is often determined by populism, monetary value, point in time and trend. It is also conditional to subject matter, medium, style, colour, mood, detail, lack of detail, modernism, history and many other labels. But for the bulk of art appreciators, it is just a case of what one likes. If you like a bright red Spanish flamenco painting, that's fine. If you like a blank white canvas called snow, that's fine as well. But I like traditional moody, tonal, impressionistic realism. That's a

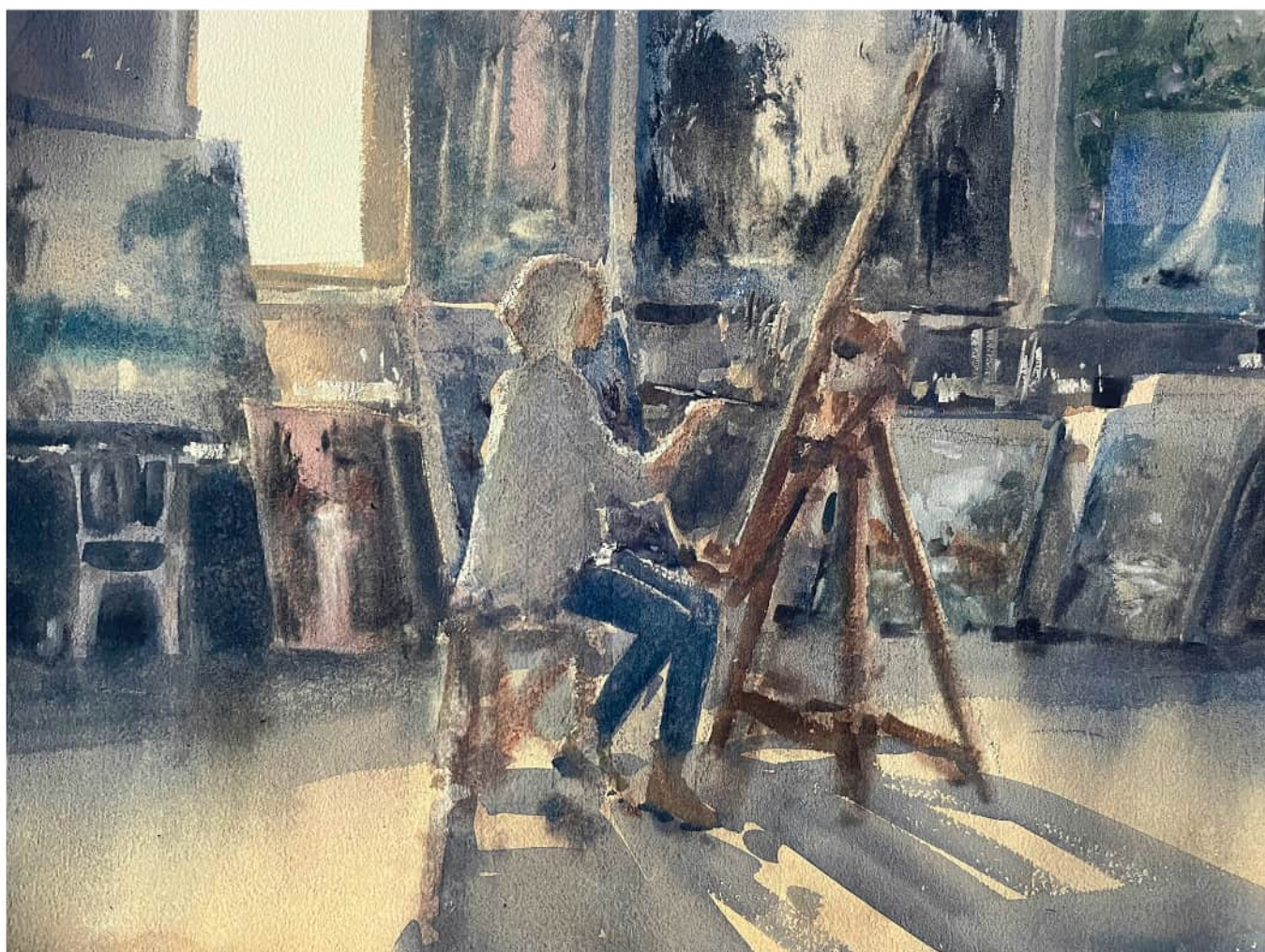
mouthful, but it basically means that you let tone do all the work (and maybe a splash of colour to get all the glory).

In this article I will be using a reduced colour palette to demonstrate the ability for light and tone to do the work rather than the colour. In watercolour painting, leaving unpainted white paper areas is important to create the light. I don't mean using liquid block-out or masking fluid but instead, wetting an area with clean water when you put on the initial washes, leaving strategically placed soft white areas which you can utilise further on in the painting to give depth and mood.



**Amanda Hyatt**

has been a professional watercolour artist for 40 years and has won many awards. Primarily a watercolourist, she also paints in all other media. Her style is *alla prima*, capturing spontaneously the mood, magic and light of the subject with confident and minimal brushstrokes. She is also a judge, a leading teacher in the medium and a member of the prestigious Twenty Melbourne Painters Society. She has four teaching DVDs with APV Films and her book *Watercolour: Tonal Impressionism* is in popular demand. Amanda leads international *en-plein-air* painting workshops. Find out more at <https://amandahyatt.com.au>





## Amanda's ten top tips

**1** Subdued colour paintings can still be full of light and atmosphere.

**2** Palette 'gunge' is a good grey colour to use as a mixer to subdue primary colours and dull them down for a more natural look.

**3** Don't use straight primary colours unless you want a colourist painting.

**4** The seven main colours all exist in nature (red berries, oranges, yellow daisies, green vegetation, blue seas and skies, indigo mountains, violets), and can make a beautiful painting. Tone them down a bit and you can still get a beautiful painting in shades of greys, black and white, and other muted colours.

**5** A reduced palette forces you to experiment and learn. By not using an easy straight-from-the-tube primary colour, the artist is forced to think about how to convey or represent their work.

**6** There is mystery, mood, atmosphere and light in a painting done using a reduced colour palette of muted colours.

**7** A moody atmospheric painting is like an opera, full of crescendos and quiet passages of darks and lights.

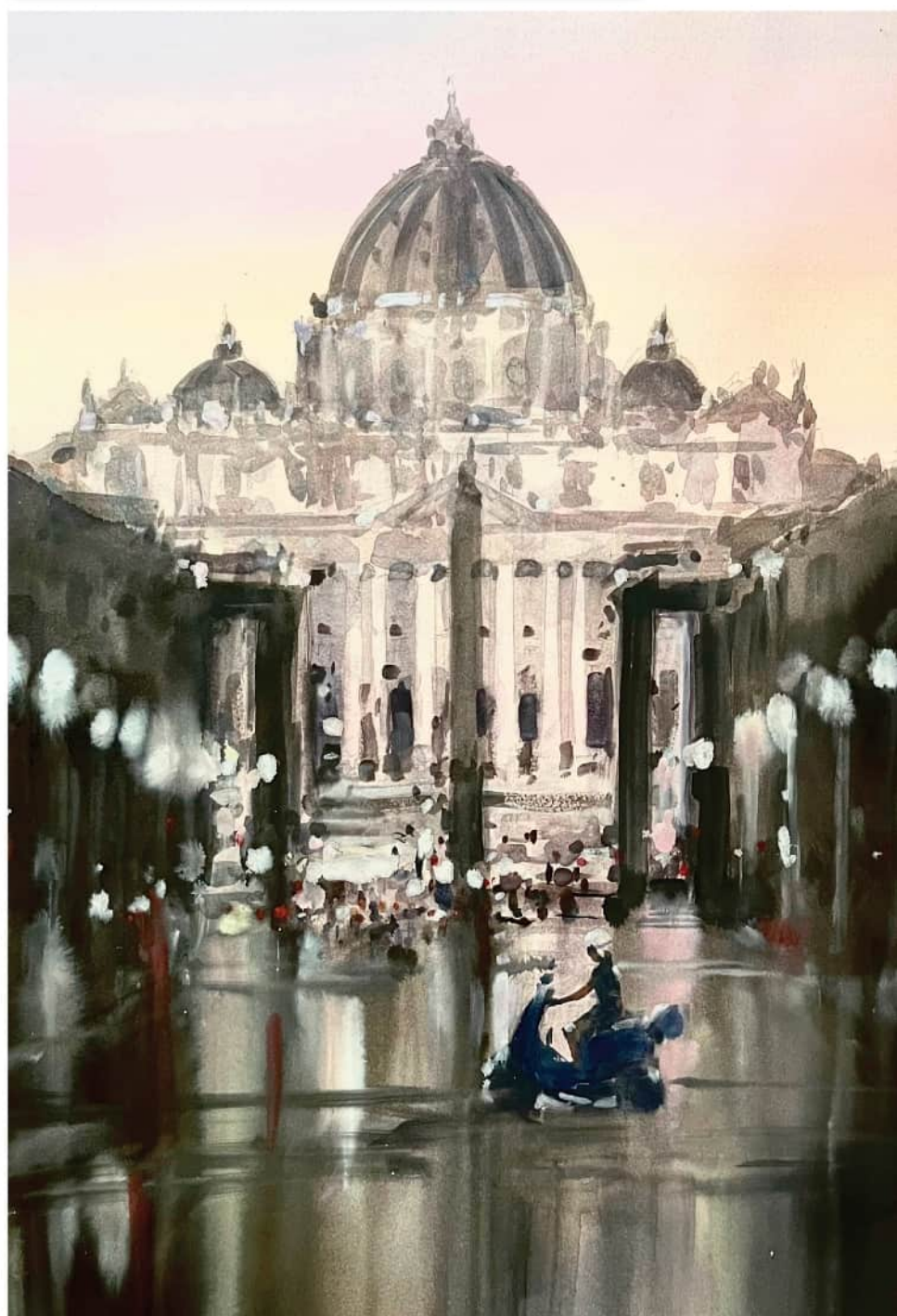
**8** Look deeper at your subject and see the negative spaces, that is, the shadows and the space around objects. This is just as important as the object itself and a good painting will have a satisfying balance of the two.

**9** See the big picture first, rather than all the details which can always be added at the end.

**10** You will be a colourist artist (react immediately to colour) or a 'lightist' (my word) artist (react immediately to light) and you will prefer one or the other. Painting the light doesn't require a lot of colour.



◀ Amanda's painting palette



◀ *The Artist in the Studio*, watercolour, 18×24in (46×61cm).

This study in grey was based around the light coming through the window casting shadows across the floor and on the artist. The painting was done in ultramarine blue, cerulean blue, black, white gouache, burnt sienna and a touch of alizarin crimson.

▶ *Vespa at the Vatican, Rome*, 43×34in (110×86cm).

This painting is very monochromatic with only pink and yellow used in the initial sky wash. The painting was recently (June, 2023) exhibited at the L'acquarello sulle vie del Grand Tour at the Villa Falconieri, Frascati in Rome.





## DEMONSTRATION *Esk River, Whitby*

### ◀ REFERENCE PHOTO

The subject is along the Esk River in Whitby. The grey mood of the scene appeals to me greatly and I'm never put off by the lack of a sunny day. The most famous grey painting, in my opinion, is Whistler's *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1* best known under its colloquial name *Whistler's Mother* or *Portrait of Artist's Mother* and it is very memorable for many reasons, the main one being its grey tones. Whistler used a radical new method of modulating (diluting or strengthening tones of single colours). His *Nocturne in Black and Gold* is another monumental painting done with a reduced colour palette. As always, in every painting I use my *Five Steps to Watercolour* process. These are detailed in the DVD of the same title from APV Films; [www.apvfirms.com](http://www.apvfirms.com)

I've listed here (below right) the colours used in this demonstration, but one other vital ingredient is what I call 'gunge', that is the natural grey you get when you don't clean your palette or empty your water container. Using a large hake brush and some of 'yesterday's' used water you can re-wet your palette by sloshing the hake around and mixing up all the dried-up paint (page 29). To me this is the most beautiful and useful 'colour', essential for creating mood. Just add a bit of ultramarine blue if you want transparent darker greys or some burnt sienna if you want transparent warmer greys. Mixing it with black and cerulean blue will give you an opaque grey which is very useful. Mixing it all with the white gouache will give you a colour to use for the highlights.



### ▶ STAGE ONE

I analysed the reference photo for its main components and a rough drawing was done, omitting the details at this stage



### MATERIALS

- Baohong 140lb (300gsm) cold-pressed Rough paper.
- Daniel Smith watercolours: ultramarine blue; cerulean blue; burnt sienna; and lunar black.
- White gouache.
- Six brushes were used, including hakes, three synthetic flat brushes, a rigger and a bristle fan brush.

### ◀ STAGE TWO

A wash of 'gunge' with some ultramarine blue was placed over the surface, grading it back (only using clean water) in the centre so that the wash remained lighter and more transparent. The main items of interest were painted in again using 'gunge' with combinations of the other colours





### ◀ STAGE THREE

The main areas were darkened with thicker paint of the same initial block-in colours, increasing the strength of the paint and highlighting areas where more depth was required, such as under the boats and around the buildings

### ▼ THE FINISHED PAINTING

*The Esk at Whitby*, watercolour, 18×24in (46×61cm).

Some dark areas were strengthened again, reflections were added and black and white highlights were used to represent masts, rigging and boat gunwales. Washes were then placed over the distant hills, buildings and foreground water. A dash of white gouache here and there added highlights. The old rule of never using white paint in watercolours is surely up to the individual. If Sargent used white paint in his watercolours, then I'm sure we can





# Counterchange is king

In the first of two articles on counterchange, **Barry Herniman** urges you to make the most of your lights and darks as he paints a Mediterranean scene in acrylics

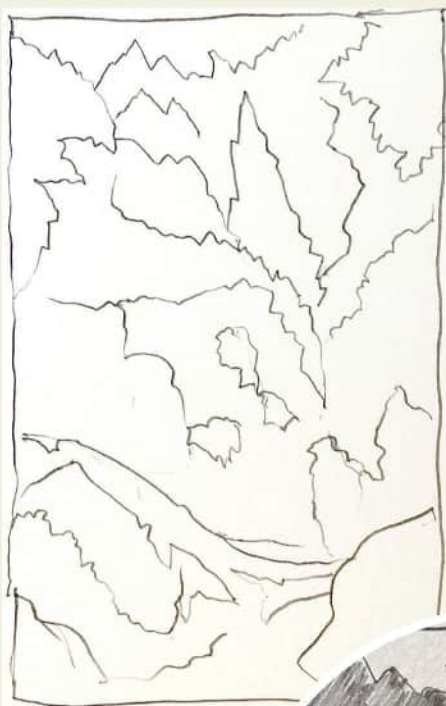
**V**ery early on in my painting career I realised the importance of lights and darks on any given scene, lifting a quite ordinary one to an extraordinary one. This was my introduction to the world

of counterchange and it changed the way I looked at things from that time forward. Every time I now look at a scene I begin by ascertaining the counterchange elements and decide whether there is enough there to inspire me to paint it!



**Barry Herniman**

organises and tutors painting holidays at home and abroad. He is also available for workshops, demonstrations and Zoom sessions to art clubs and societies. His new book, *Sketching Outdoors: Discover the Joy of Painting Outside*, is full of tips, techniques and demonstrations. If you would like to go on Barry's mailing list for future events, please email at [bazherrflick@gmail.com](mailto:bazherrflick@gmail.com). His Cloverleaf Paintbox is available online at [www.cloverleafpaintbox.com](http://www.cloverleafpaintbox.com). Also visit [www.barryherniman.com](http://www.barryherniman.com)



## EXERCISE ONE TONAL STUDY

Before we move on to the demonstration, I would like to show you the importance of a preliminary tonal study to get your focus on the different lighting elements of the scene you want to paint

◀ **1** Using a sheet of cartridge paper and a 2B pencil, draw in all the main elements of the scene. You can use anything to produce this tonal study – ink, pastel, charcoal, in fact anything that will give you a variety of tones. Also, don't go too big as that could prove a bit laborious. This exercise was 8x5in (20x12.5cm) but I could have gone smaller and still had enough information about the tones within the scene



▶ **2** Now with simple hatching marks, begin to delineate the different areas of tone, taking care to emphasise the lights and darks and adding all the mid tones in between



▲ **3** Here's my completed tonal study where you can see a breakdown of all the relevant tones within this scene. Whatever colours I use now, as long as I follow this sketch, I will have a painting that 'works'.

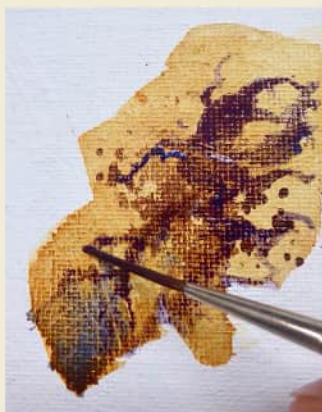


## EXERCISE TWO ACRYLICS THE WATERCOLOUR WAY

Before we get started, have a quick go at painting acrylics the watercolour way, which is a technique I favour when using this medium.

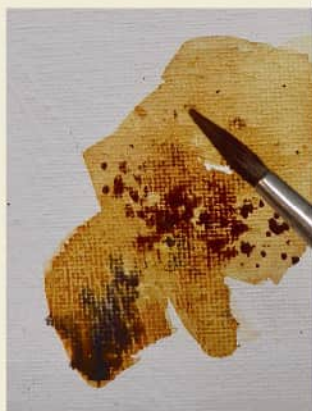


◀ **1** On a primed canvas board and with a flat brush, lay down a wash of Indian yellow and orange in a rough rock shape. I reduced the paint down with water to a fluid watercolour consistency, which is apparent by the pools of colour at the bottom of the picture



▲ **3** With a rigger brush and the same dark mix, start to 'draw' in some of the cracks in the rock surface

▶ **2** With a creamier mix of cobalt blue and madder brown, flick the paint into the semi-dry wash and watch the paint slowly diffuse within it



▶ **4** Once dry, go in with a creamy mix of dilute Indian yellow and white to establish the sunlit edges of the rock



## DEMONSTRATION *Through Imbros Gorge, Crete*

Before I start, I prime the canvas board with a rough coating of gesso as I prefer this surface to a smooth one, but that is only a personal choice.



### ▲ STAGE ONE

I lightly drew out the main elements of the picture with an HB pencil keeping the line work to a minimum

### MATERIALS

- Schmincke PRIMAcryl Artists' acrylics: brilliant yellow; Indian yellow; translucent orange; madder brown; cobalt turquoise; cobalt blue light; translucent violet; phthalo green blue shade; and titanium white.
- Brushes: flats, Nos 6 and 4; rounds Nos 4 and 2; and rigger No 2.
- Canvas board.
- White gesso.
- Clear painting medium.
- HB pencil.



### ▲ STAGE TWO

With a flat brush and a very diluted brilliant yellow, I started to paint in the lightest areas of the scene. You can see how the wet paint was pooling at the bottom, just like a watercolour



### ◀ STAGE THREE

Moving out of the scrub grass area I moved down into the rocky side of the gorge, adding cobalt blue and madder brown to the mix as I worked into this area



## 1ST OF 2: ACRYLICS



### ▲ STAGE FOUR

This is a view of my palette where I kept my colour mixing to a minimum to keep colours clean and vibrant



### ▲ STAGE FIVE

Moving into the green areas and using my round brush I started to paint in the light areas of the fir trees along the rim. I used a slightly creamier mix but still dilute enough to move about on the canvas



### ▲ STAGE SIX

Moving across to the left-hand trees, I mixed up a slightly darker, duller green using phthalo green, Indian yellow and a touch of madder brown



### ◀ STAGE SEVEN

The huge boulder in the bottom right-hand corner was next on the agenda. With a lovely fluid mix of cobalt blue, madder brown and violet I let the colours mix and merge together on the canvas forming some striking 'semi' mixes. I then flicked in some dark accents into the wet paint for more texture

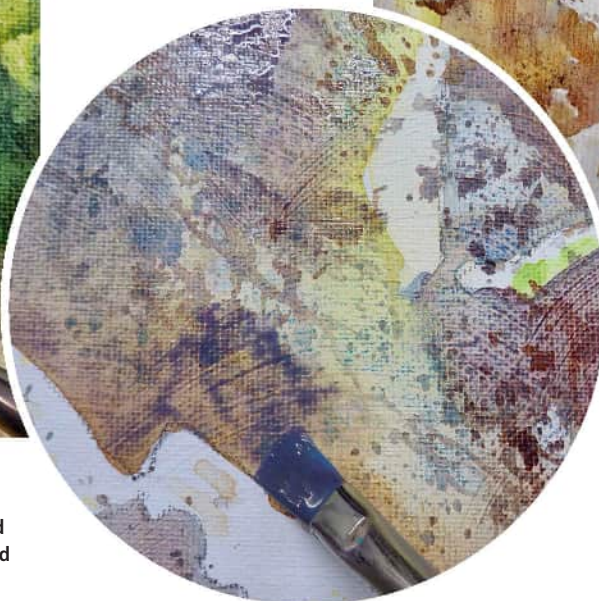
### ▶ STAGE EIGHT

By this point I had basically covered the whole canvas with a colourful underwash, ready to start building up the colours with stronger mixes



### ▲ STAGE NINE

It was time to get the clear painting medium out. I mixed up cobalt blue and a touch of violet with the medium and painted the tree shadows over the yellow grasses



### ◀ STAGE TEN

Still using the medium, I painted over the shadow areas of the rock faces, allowing all the underpainting to show through







### ◀ STAGE ELEVEN

The basic shadow areas had all been established and you could start to see the scene really taking shape



### ▶ STAGE TWELVE

Moving back into the greenery, I added some vibrant darks in the shadow areas



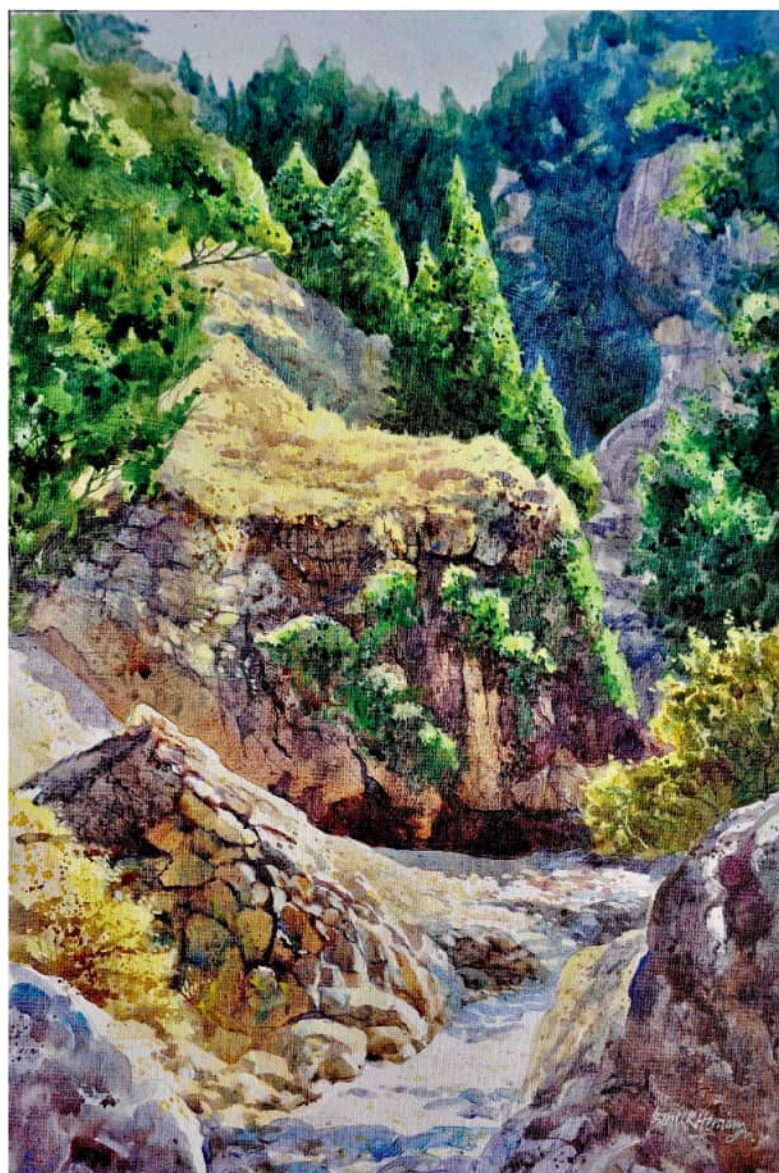
### ▲ STAGE THIRTEEN

Time for the fun bits. With my rigger and a creamy dark mix, I started to 'tick' in some of the cracks and crannies within the boulders and rock faces



### ▲ STAGE FOURTEEN

I was nearly there! All I needed to do was to add some yellow to my white and paint in the highlights in the bushes and the rock faces



### ▲ FINISHED PAINTING

*Through Imbros Gorge, Crete, acrylic on board, 8×5½in (20×14cm).*

Can you see how the counterchange, the lights and darks, play such a big part in the drama of this painting. On a different day, at a different time, the scene was probably a lot less captivating so it's always a good idea to keep your eye out for that special moment when the scene comes alive





▲ *Big Seas, Pendeen*, acrylic on board, 19¾×30in (50×76cm)

# Putting the wow into waves

In the third article in her five-part series on capturing special effects in your paintings **Jenny Aitken** uses colour, composition and brushwork to bring her seascape paintings to life



**Jenny Aitken**

has been painting professionally for over 20 years, and exhibits across the UK. She tutors workshops and demonstrates to art societies throughout the UK. Jenny can be contacted by email: [jen@jennyaitken.co.uk](mailto:jen@jennyaitken.co.uk) or through her website [www.jennyaitken.co.uk](http://www.jennyaitken.co.uk)

Often when I am painting waves from life, I start with a bit of a panic. Everything is moving! Everything is changing! There are at least 50 colours in that wave alone! After a while I remember that whilst the light is always changing, the sea has a rhythm and repetitive nature. If you study each crashing wave, you will notice the patterns and see reason in the colours.

Making sense of all this helps when you're faced with a mass of waves: discerning the rhythmic space between waves, noting where the rocks and shore are interfering with the flow, spotting the way the colour of the water responds to the light depending on the colour and depth of the sea bed. It is invaluable to remember all this in the studio, too. We all want that sense of life in our paintings.



## Jenny's top tips

● **Composition** Avoid symmetry and a halfway horizon if possible. Look for an off-centre, dominant feature to subtly anchor the eye. In *Evening on the Wild Atlantic Way* (right), I placed the main breaking wave along the edge of the top third, within the light, as my focal point. In *Big Seas, Pendeen* (left), there are many more elements throwing the eye about – but the increased light on the nearest waves draws the eye.

● **Colour** Identifying why colours are what they are gives you a big hint for mixing and choice. Shadowed foam is usually a mix of the colour of the sky it is facing, that of the water itself and a bit of whatever else is nearby. As with any subject it is also affected by our viewing angle – if *contre jour*, then the colours will often be warmer and greyer. In *Evening on the Wild Atlantic* the foam colour varies across the painting in accordance with the light. On the left, it is a cool grey purple; on the right, it is a greyer, warmer version, with more pinks and yellows in the mix.

● **Brushwork** This is everything when it comes to expressing the movement of

the sea. The direction of the placed paint tells us which way and how the water is flowing, whether it's crashing, foaming or being drawn smoothly up the face of the wave. Awareness of texture is great but don't forget the language of brushstroke direction. And add some noise, some splashy rigger dashes and dots can bring a static painting to life!

● **Layers** When painting in acrylics, see your painting as a series of layers. My acrylic paintings always involve several layers, as

▲ *Evening on the Wild Atlantic Way*, oil on canvas, 31½×39¼in (80×100cm). For this painting I used oils, but built in layered *alla prima* in the same way as acrylics. Each wave is shaped and coloured for a reason. It's worth studying and understanding a little about wave structure for that sense of authentic light and movement in your work

even the expensive paints initially sink a bit on the first pass. Building up layers makes for richer colours, brighter lights and denser darks.



## DEMONSTRATION *Ayrmer Cove, Devon*



### ▲ REFERENCE PHOTO

First of all, I turned the image upside down and analysed the main shapes and angles in the dominant waves. Get the angles right if you can, as they tell us a lot about the perspective and space. I mixed sap green with a touch of scarlet, ultramarine and white to get that murky wave colour. The distant rocks were a mix of purple and phthalo green with scarlet

### MATERIALS

- **Acrylic paints:** titanium white; bright yellow lake; scarlet; dioxazine purple; ultramarine; sap green; and phthalo green.
- **Brushes:** ½in synthetic flat brush; size 4 filbert; size 0 Rigger.



### ▲ STAGE ONE

With the flat brush, I laid down the shadows in the waves and rocks, with lighter tones for the surf. I used just enough water to thin the paint slightly, for flow. When you lay on the waves, apply the paint in the direction they are flowing, at the angle of the brush pictured right





## 3RD OF 5: ACRYLICS



### ▲ STAGE TWO

Continuing with the flat brush, I continued to paint the water surface, using mixes of sap green, scarlet, yellow, ultramarine and white. I get to these mixes using the method described right



### ▲ STAGE THREE

I then mixed the colour of the shadows in the sand and laid this all down. I will add more colour later in the painting as, with acrylics, it's usually easier to start with the darks first

### JENNY'S MIXING METHOD

Firstly, describe the colour (murky grey green) attempt the mix, then compare the result against the source photo/scene. Look for similar chroma and temperature and adjust accordingly. Take time at this stage and you can be much freer on the canvas.



### ◀ STAGE FOUR

I started on the next layers of lighter sea and foam, using warm greys (scarlet, sap green, white and yellow) and cool. These colours will support the brighter lighting later on. When you brush on the foam on the left, brush it on in the direction it is flowing, as pictured. Keep thinking about how the water is moving; it will inform all your brushwork



### ▲ STAGE FIVE

It was time to light the painting. Up until this point, everything looked a bit dark and dull. With a clean flat brush, I started with a light yellow/white/red and deepened it as the colours moved away from the sun



### ▲ STAGE SIX

I worked from the light-yellow sky into the murky purple clouds in one mix, which made for harmony across the sky and helped with speed. You don't want edges or hard contrast in soft, cloudy skies. I also lightened the background rocks a tiny bit, and added deep green brown to the beach



## ► STAGE SEVEN

With the clean filbert, I popped in some white, tinted with yellow and red, for the first lighting layer. You can define the shapes of the waves at this point, with the light

## ▼ FINISHED PAINTING

*Ayrmer Cove, Devon*, acrylic on board, 9½×11¾in (24×30cm).

It was time for the finishing touches. I added some light cool greens and warm pink greys around the lighter areas, and some more pronounced yellows in the sand and highlights, with some Rigger 'noise' in yellowy whites for water lines and seagulls. I added a lighter colour to the crashing foam with the side of a filbert. Since the light is very yellow/orange in quality, I pushed the grey foam in colour a touch to a more complementary dusky blue. Having colours work together in this way always adds a dash of excitement to a painting





# Keep it simple

Paint a vase of your favourite flowers with **Liz Seward** as she describes why coloured-pencils are her go-to medium for flower paintings



**Liz Seward**

taught and demonstrated for 36 years and is a member of the Society of Women Artists and the Society of Floral Painters. She has exhibited widely and won many awards for her work and is an active and committed member of many local art societies.

[www.sewardart.co.uk](http://www.sewardart.co.uk)



I have painted flowers for many years in many media; watercolour, acrylic, pastel, collage and mixtures of all of these, but by far my favourite is coloured pencil. Slow, gentle, and forgiving it is easily the most enjoyable of all. From the first drawing to the final finishing touches there is a great deal to satisfy and delight.

Coloured pencils have so many advantages. Firstly, they are very portable; even a big set can be carried quite easily. Secondly, they can be used anywhere with the confidence that they won't make the mess that the liquid media make, or need water supplies and old clothes. Thirdly, there is the pure relaxation that they give. All they need is a table and a subject. Once started the work can be done in short bursts, safe in the knowledge that it can be left and returned to without changing in any way, unlike watercolour which lightens and produces 'cauliflowers' as it dries, or acrylics which sometimes dry a lot darker.

I am aware, however, that many artists would like more drama in what they produce, and pencils can be used in conjunction with both watercolour and acrylic to beautiful effect, but with the inevitable list of additional equipment needed. For this article, though, I am going to keep it simple and just use the pencils and their accessories.

◀ *Japanese Anemones*, coloured pencil on 140lb (300gsm) Bockingford HP paper, 19×13in (50×35cm).

Despite the fact that these flowers rampage all over my garden I love them dearly. The same pencil selection as my demonstration was used for these with the addition of Derwent lightfast strawberry



## DEMONSTRATION *A Mass of Mock Orange*



### MATERIALS

- Derwent Lightfast coloured pencils – amber gold; yellow ochre; sienna; magenta; cloud grey; and deep blue. Caran d'Ache Luminance 6901 – moss green; dark sap green; grass green; Prussian blue; ultramarine; steel grey; and sepia.
- Blender pen.
- 3B graphite pencil.
- Plastic eraser.
- Metal pencil sharpener.
- Drawing board with an A3 pad of Derwent watercolour paper clipped to it.
- Some flowers from the garden in an old jam jar.

### Liz's handy tips

- Keep a sketchbook and use it as often as possible, drawing everything from exciting to mundane. Doodling is good for you!
- Keep your pencils sharp.
- Practise varying the pressure on the pencil tip to create different tones.
- When painting flowers, always take a photograph of them at their best for future reference.
- Most flowers have a basic shape; draw that first, paying particular attention to where the centre is, which will give you the angle. All the little details come later.

### ▲ STAGE ONE

I am passionate about keeping a sketchbook. Throughout my teaching career I would encourage all my students to own one and use them regularly. They are where all the preparation and drawing practice are done, where mistakes are made, and strengths, weaknesses, and compositions are discovered and worked on before you even start your finished piece.

Given that flowers move, wilt, and die quite quickly once they are picked, I start by making a comprehensive tonal drawing of the arrangement, to help me once the flowers are past their best. I paint flowers partly for the drama of the colour but these being white will be an interesting tonal exercise. I often paint flowers growing *in situ* but the composition of these paintings can be more complicated as they never grow and flower quite where you want them to. These paintings can have more movement and less formality to them, but I love painting glass and today it's pouring with rain! I do take photographs for reference when the arrangement has passed its best. These also keep me going in the winter when I'm looking for a subject

### ► STAGE TWO

Making sure that I didn't put the glass jar in the middle, (too predictable), I lightly drew in the composition with a 3B pencil, taking care not to make too many hard marks which would interfere with the finished piece. The paper is Derwent 140lb (300gsm) watercolour paper which has a smooth surface that will not give any additional texture to the pencil work, but is up to the task of watercolour washes if needed (though not in this case)







### ◀ STAGE THREE

Many of the pencil paintings that I do end up being exhibited so it's essential that the pencils used have a lightfastness that will ensure that the risk of them fading is minimal. For this reason, although there are many fantastic pencils on the market, I use two that are guaranteed lightfast. The first is Derwent Lightfast, an oil-based pencil with excellent blending qualities and responds well to the Derwent Blender pen. The second is Caran d'Ache Luminance 6901 – a softer wax-based pencil, which I use for backgrounds and softer edges.

I started by putting a very light layer of moss green on the foreground leaves and grass green, which is a cooler softer green, on the background leaves. I kept the pressure light at this stage, though it was a bit of a struggle not to increase it in places. A background of ultramarine blue was used to define the white flowers on the left-hand side, and to keep me on the straight and narrow, I coloured the centres with yellow ochre and a light touch of magenta. The glass pot was defined with cloud grey, and a light layer of brown ochre was used on the stems. When tackling glass vases I try to keep things simple by defining the sides in part by ending some of the stems on them, an economic way of describing a shape. This foundation layer of pencil formed the lightest tones in the piece, similar to working in watercolour

### STAGE FOUR ▶

When I work on flower paintings, I normally paint the flowers first, leaving the leaves until much later in the piece because they are supporting players, but in this piece with all the flowers being white they needed to be described by the greenery between them. Using dark sap green, the darkest green I can muster in any range, I worked over the piece defining leaf shapes, paying particular attention to the shadows on the leaves which give them their rounded shape, the veins, and most of all, the small very dark areas around the flowers, making them more prominent. There were some ghostly blue shapes at the back that may well become leaves later. I also worked on the background taking it down to the bottom of the piece as well as adding more cloud grey to the glass jar and the surrounding area to let the light shine through it



### ◀ STAGE FIVE

Taking ultramarine blue I shaded each flower into a three-dimensional shape, carefully observing where one petal lay over another and where one flower did the same to the flowers underneath it. In addition, I lay cloud grey over the ultramarine to intensify the shadow colour. I am often asked why I don't just use a grey and my answer is that I am allergic to grey and I always feel the need to inject some colour into it. The centres of the flowers were then darkened on the shadow side with sienna and the red rims were intensified with magenta, well sharpened and pressing really hard. The ghostly back leaves were defined softly with grass green, and additional background flowers were made by gently rubbing out flower shapes with a plastic rubber, then describing their edges with a deep blue pencil behind them. The stems in the jar were also darkened, particularly underneath the flowers and where they met the glass. Cloud grey, used with a lot of pressure, emphasised the light in the glass next to it, and a highlight on the left was accentuated in the same way





## ▲ FINISHED PAINTING

*A Mass of Mock Orange*, coloured pencil on Derwent 140lb (300gsm) watercolour paper, 14×11in (35×28cm).

Lastly, I concentrated on darkening and giving shape to the background in order to push the flowers there forward, taking care not to overdo it and just hint at them. Using deep blue, magenta and steel grey I made a pattern of verticals and horizontals behind the flowers hinting at windows and tabletops. I emphasised the fact that there was light shining through the glass jar on to the table top in a very interesting pattern. By overlaying these three colours I achieved an interesting variation in the colour of the shadow while preserving the overall coolness. The magenta, in particular, gave a variety of cool pink, which was missing from the flowers. I couldn't resist having another go at emphasising the shadows on the flowers and putting some warm amber gold into the stems. Finally, I took my blender pen and softened the leaves for a smoother effect.



# Windy-weather clouds



▲ Photo reference

In this abridged extract from **Sandra Orme's** forthcoming book, *Painting Skies in Pastel*, the author demonstrates how to paint wispy clouds using a restricted palette



## *Painting Skies in Pastel*

by Sandra Orme focuses on creating dramatic clouds and atmospheric skies in pastel. Published by Search Press in paperback, and priced at £14.99, the book will be available from August 31. Visit our Painters Online bookshop at [www.bit.ly/ARTIBOOKS](http://www.bit.ly/ARTIBOOKS) for details.

In this article we will be looking at the effect of wind on clouds and how to create delicate cirrus clouds – wispy and wild. This will push you and develop your observational skills. More importantly, it will introduce you to the delicacy and subtlety possible with pastels. I've deliberately kept the palette quite restricted so that you can concentrate on the mark-making without the added complication of colour.

## DEMONSTRATION *Cirrus Clouds*

### SELECT YOUR PALETTE

Subtle blue- and grey-based pale to mid toned Unison pastels are used for the sky, while a variety of complementary earthy colours – lilac, ochre, cream, white, brown are needed for the beach. I used:

- **Sky colours:** BV9; BV10; BV11; BV12; BV3; LT1; and LT12.
- **Land colours:** LT5; BV8; BV1; BV16; G33; and A52.



▲ The painting at the end of stage one – initial marks

### STAGE ONE Mark-making

- Start the picture by using the nib of the pastel to block in the basic shapes of the cloud formations and landscape.
- Use pale shades, chosen with the rule of three, in sweeping marks from the lower part of sky up towards the top. Use the photograph to inform the direction of the clouds.
- Add some darker grey towards the horizon. Use more controlled marks here, with less movement.
- Use two shades of blue to fill in the blue sky area. The sky is

darker at the top and lighter towards the horizon.

- Build up the layers until you get to a smearable stage.

### Blending

- Start your blending with the deep, intense blue of the sky before moving on to the clouds.
- Rather than using circular movements, blend the clouds using pushing and sweeping marks up towards the top of the picture.
- Use tighter blending in the sky near the horizon.
- The land doesn't need any attention yet, so leave it unblended.





### ▲ STAGE 1A

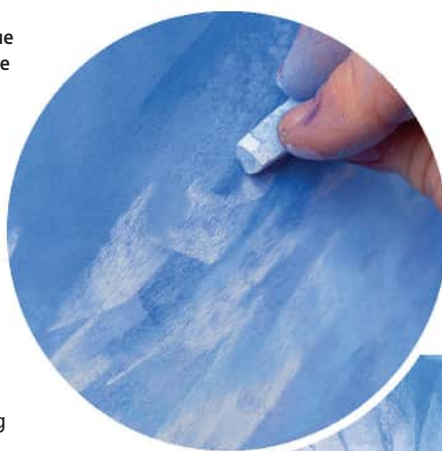
#### Initial layout

Use a pale sky colour to mark out the areas of blue sky and the horizon line. You don't need any more than that

### STAGE TWO

#### Mark-making

- Start adding block marks to the lower part of the sky with pale pastels chosen with the rule of three. Allow the blocks to become longer shapes higher up to create movement.
- Work up into the middle areas of sky using angled gestures with very pale light tones.
- Cut lightly through the blue areas below the main part of the middle cloud, but use more solid mark-making for the cloud areas in the centre and on the left-hand side.
- Blend with sweeping marks, angling diagonally. Work with energy, but keep the pressure light for subtlety.
- Now add some more blue over the edges of the clouds – don't forget to vary it from dark to lighter as you come down the sky.



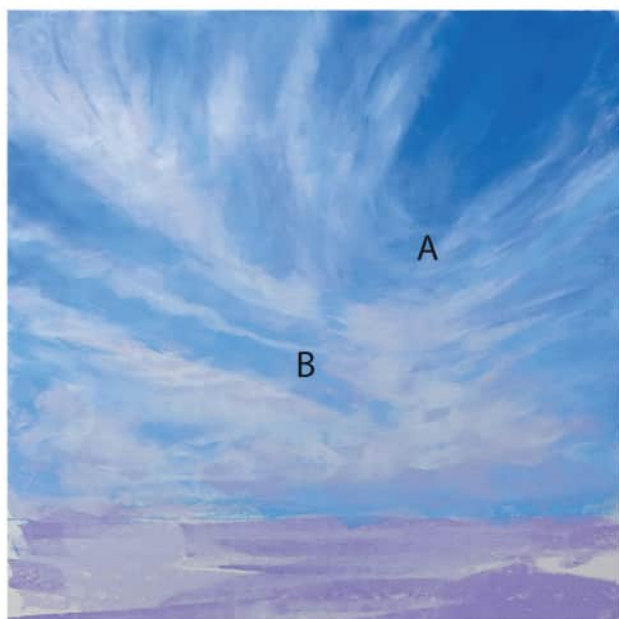
### ▲ STAGE 1B

#### Work upwards

Angle your marks across then up. Normally with rounder clouds, you're working in small blocky marks. Here, you're using the side of the pastel to make big sweeping gestural marks

#### ◀ Flicking

To achieve the ethereal, wispy effect, you need to lift away the pastel as you work, and use energetic movements of the pastel to apply repeated light layers



▲ The painting at the end of stage two – blended



▲ The painting at the end of stage two – blocking in and structure

#### ◀ Blending

- In the focal areas (A and B), blend lightly with just your little finger – try and keep the mark-making somewhat visible.
- Further out, work more decisively: switch to two or three fingers for blending larger areas.
- As well as following the directions made with your mark-making, work across them as well.



## PASTELS

### ► STAGE THREE

Work more slowly at this stage to develop the form of the clouds more. The criss-cross layers and gentle arcs of cirrus clouds are delicate; so reflect that in your developing work.

- Repeat the earlier build-up of mark-making using layers of pale pastel to build the surface movement of the clouds.
- Use slicing marks to create the sharp lines at the edges of the light cloud, and through the central areas of the main cloud.
- Blend with the shaper, using pulling gestures to add movement and soften. Repeat as needed to build up.
- Use blue to work back into the edges of the cloud where necessary: redefine the sky where the pale cloud has spread too far. Use the shaper to blend on top of these areas to diffuse the results again.

► The painting at the end of stage three



▲ The painting at the end of stage four

### ▲ STAGE FOUR

- Use white pastel and the tip of the pale pastels to draw some wispy cloud areas out from the edges of the main cloud on the left and right. Combine this with some slicing marks for variety.
- Use the shaper to draw these marks out, simultaneously elongating and smoothing them.
- Tip the shaper up onto its edge and slice through the areas to add more movement – this will cut through the pale colours. You can smooth over the area with a finger if they remain too defined.
- To create smaller, finer wisps, add white to the edges of the clouds and use the shaper to pull and flick this new pigment into blue areas.
- Add soft grey near the horizon and blend the marks in with your fingers. Marks further down the sky should be made more broadly and softly, with less definition.
- Embolden some of the thicker areas of cloud by adding some blocking, then softening them in.



#### ▲ Colour shaper

This is invaluable at this stage, allowing you to keep the fine marks and wispy lines while integrating and softening them with the underlying colour



#### ▲ Stuttering slices

Because the cirrus clouds are wispy, the best way to tackle them is with erratic marks. Very lightly, and repeatedly, tap and lift the pastel away from the surface as you make your slice marks to create stuttering, broken lines





## ▼ Horizon

Nibble downwards from the horizon line to define and add interest to the distant beach – blend in places but leave most of the texture



## FINISHED PAINTING

- Add colours to the beach and blend them in lightly with horizontal movements. Use grey-greens to create the distant dunes. Define the horizon. Keep the top line fairly sharp and clear against the sky.
- Use the complementary colours of pale gold and purple-brown for the foreground seashore.
- Push and sharpen the foreground areas with the shaper tool.
- Add white and pale lilac pastel to the bottom of the sky on the mid-right near the horizon, and blend.
- Add more white, working diagonally from the horizon area up into the cloud, to lead the eye into the sky. Use the tip and tilt technique along with slicing movements.
- Add defining blues to the edges of clouds as needed. Keep these marks subtle.
- To finish, check over the piece as a whole to ensure the composition is balanced. Make sure the wispy effects are softer away from the focal areas. Ask yourself whether the wisps pull together towards the focal point, and whether the cloud structure flows well. If not, use your finger and shaper tool to work on this as needed.



# Controlling CONTRASTS

## PALE CLOUD EDGES

In this abridged extract from her new book, *Painting Skies in Pastel*, **Sandra Orme** offers tips on how to control the tonal strengths of pale clouds

### Painting Skies in Pastel by Sandra Orme

*Painting Skies in Pastel* by Sandra Orme focuses on creating dramatic clouds and atmospheric skies in pastel. Published by Search Press in paperback, and priced at £14.99, the book will be available from August 31. Visit our Painters Online bookshop at [www.bit.ly/ARTIBOOKS](http://www.bit.ly/ARTIBOOKS) for details.







▲ BEFORE



▲ 1



▲ 2



▲ 3



▲ 4

**W**hen working with pale or bright clouds against a darker sky, there are some key points to bear in mind as you don't want to end up with a halo effect around the edge of your cloud. You need to build up the cloud gradually towards the brightest colour so you create a three-dimensional effect. This tutorial will take you through how to do this with white clouds, but the principle will remain the same for use with other bright colours.

Before you start, you'll need to have created a base layer of cloud using off-white colours – remember the rule of three! We use off-whites so we can build towards adding the very brightest colour last (white, in this example).

**1:** Add another layer of your off-white colours with blocking, before blending lightly.

**2:** Add pure white with the tip of the pastel to the edge of the cloud where it meets the blue. Keep the edge erratic.

**3:** Use the shaper to soften the marks – this immediately darkens the white as it mixes with the colour underneath. Add a further layer of white to just the very lightest and sharpest areas, then blend. Repeat as needed.

**4:** Once happy, use the tip of your sky colour (blue in this example) to work back up against the white. To finish, add a final layer of white to the very brightest parts. Don't blend these – leave them as they are.



▲ AFTER

### TIP

Remember to add some white in the solid body of the cloud to build a three-dimensional effect.

### ● THE RULE OF THREE

While a cloud may appear one shade, as you look closer you will see subtle variations of tint and shade within its surface – and it is this that reflects what we would see in nature.

Our task is not to find one pastel to match the exact shade of grey we see in our cloud, but instead to create the hue on the surface of the paper through a combination of three or four different pastels. This will create a richer, more subtle result.

For each area on which you are working, use a group of at least three pastel hues in slightly different tones. This is my 'rule of three'.





▲ My preferred sketchbooks are Arteza hard cover 140lb (300gam) cold-pressed watercolour paper, 9×12in (23×30.5cm)

# Sketchbook joy

In the third of his five-part series **Steve Griggs** shows how keeping a sketchbook develops your visual vocabulary and allows you to express your ideas more successfully

A number of years ago I was invited to present a demonstration of my painting process for a local watercolor society. During the demonstration I discussed how I use my sketchbooks to develop ideas. I brought several sketchbooks with me and passed them around the room for the watercolour society members to look through. My partner, Sue, and our daughter, Anna, were in attendance and when the sketchbooks came their way, they took a minute to glance through them as well. Although I always have a sketchbook with me and am constantly adding to it, my sketchbooks had been so ubiquitous that neither Sue nor Anna had ever truly taken the time to look at them. That evening they enjoyed what

they saw and after returning home, Sue mentioned to me that she thought we should give each of our three grown children one of the sketchbooks as a Christmas gift. Baffled by the suggestion, I simply replied, 'Why?' She went on to explain that having taken the time to look through a couple of the books, she realised that they contained not just sketches and painting development, but glimpses into how I think, how I process, and even what I value.

The sketchbooks contained more than just sketches. I hadn't considered that anyone would want to own one of my sketchbooks, but I consented to her request. We took time looking through several sketchbooks finding ones we thought would interest each of our children. That December, we wrapped

them as gifts and they were, much to my surprise, not only appreciated but greatly valued.

The practice of keeping a sketchbook started when I was a student at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. We were required not only to keep a sketchbook but also to have them reviewed by faculty on a regular basis. This was not something I enjoyed. Developing the habit was challenging and sharing the contents of my sketchbooks felt vulnerable. Over time, however, I recognised the value in maintaining a sketchbook, became more comfortable with it, and eventually adopted it as part of my daily practice. Today I can't imagine not having a sketchbook with me everywhere I go. I've learned the value of using my sketchbook to express and



# SKETCHING TECHNIQUES

I use a variety of techniques when sketching. Each has a unique purpose and allows me to experiment with different ideas and creative approaches to painting.

## CONTINUOUS LINE

Using a water-soluble ink pen, I capture the scene in front of me in one continuous line. After that, I use a small travel brush to apply water to the line, adding value to the sketch. I use this technique in busy and dynamic environments where I want to record the scene quickly, such as airports, bus stations, and coffee shops.

► Four separate examples, all drawn in the same setting, using the continuous line-and-wash technique



## Steve's sketchbook tips

- Use a sketchbook daily.
- Be free to experiment with techniques, colours, styles.
- Include quotations, poems, or other sources of inspiration.
- As soon as you finish one, start another.
- Have fun!

## FREESTYLE SHAPE DEVELOPMENT

Looking at a scene, I break it down into simple shapes, and assign relative values, using a watercolour travel brush and small paint palette. I paint the major shapes in front of me, recording the essential elements of the scene. Using traditional watercolour techniques of wet in wet, dry brush, or dry on dry, I express the values quickly. I use this in a less busy environment, but when I might not have a lot of time and want to capture the scene quickly.

### ◀ Shape development

The top of the page shows the breakdown of simple shapes and values



### 3RD OF 5: KEEPING A SKETCHBOOK



Four different images from the same source material



### MOTIF DEVELOPMENT

Using different techniques, I generate multiple ideas from a single source material. This is primarily for studio sketching when I am seeking to find the best or most unique way to develop a painting of a specific subject.

develop my visual vocabulary which, ultimately, allows me to express my ideas better.

I use my sketchbooks in myriad ways. I don't follow a formula, and each book

takes on a slightly different personality. That said, I almost always take a few minutes to use tape to create a border on the sketchbook page. It isn't essential, but I like the way the border finishes the image and makes the page look neater.

It is very common for me to add quotations, and/or poetry that offer inspiration or thoughts to consider alongside the sketches. Sometimes they match the image in the sketchbook. Occasionally they seem random, although I almost always add them because something in the sketch inspired me to include the writing. It isn't out of the realm of possibility to find a random phone number jotted into a sketchbook and

once, while waiting for an appointment with my physician I found a salad recipe that sounded appealing, so I sketched it for later reference.

I always have a sketchbook with me when I travel, whether it is to teach a workshop or simply take a vacation. Of course, I have a camera with me, but I find a camera will only capture so much of the experience. Sketching helps me capture the mood and feeling.

It is important to remember that sketchbooks are places where we develop our ideas. They are places of experimentation. By trying out different techniques we can work on style development and push ourselves to practise techniques that are not our natural 'go to.' By expanding our visual inventory, we become better painters.

Not only are sketchbooks places to develop ideas, I discovered they also create a record of who I am, what I'm thinking about, and where I am in my artistic process at any given moment. While that was never my objective, I learned from my family's response to my sketchbooks that the books create a legacy and are packed with information about who I am. Not only do my sketchbooks hold value for me as an artist, they hold value for those who love me as well.







"TO BE NOBODY BUT YOURSELF IN A WORLD WHICH IS DOING ITS BEST DAY AND NIGHT TO MAKE YOU LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE MEANS TO FIGHT THE HARDEST BATTLE WHICH ANY HUMAN BEING CAN FIGHT AND NEVER STOP FIGHTING."  
E.E. CUMMINS

## COLOUR

Applying different colour combinations, I experiment with expressing the scene using loose and free watercolour painting techniques. I use this purely to experiment with colours I might not have considered using for a specific painting otherwise.

Perhaps the number one reason for keeping a sketchbook, though, is to experience the pure joy of painting, every day, with just a few supplies, a small page, and nothing more than the ideas in my head.

ITA

Sometimes diverging from the actual colour in the scene garners dramatic results



"THE WORLD IS FULL OF MAGIC THINGS,  
PATIENTLY WAITING FOR YOUR SENSES  
TO GROW SHARPER."  
W.B. YEATS

### Steve Griggs

is a Colorado artist best known for his loose watercolour painting style. Steve has won an abundance of awards for his paintings and has been the invited juror for numerous state and national exhibitions. He has been commissioned to create paintings for several client homes and offices as well as a national restaurant chain. A series of his instructional videos are available through Epiphany Fine Art and Kara Bullock Art School. He is a popular workshop teacher and hosts his own online classes. Steve's paintings can be seen on his website, as well as at Mirada Fine Art Gallery in Denver; Twisted Fish Gallery in Elk Rapids, Michigan; J Petter Gallery in Douglas, Michigan; and Five 3 Gallery in Laguna Beach, California; [www.stevegriggswatercolor.com](http://www.stevegriggswatercolor.com)





# An oil painter's approach

**Becky Thorley-Fox** encourages you to explore combining watercolour and gouache and demonstrates why the technique has much in common with oil painting



**Becky Thorley-Fox**

lives on the west coast of mid Wales where she enjoys painting *en plein air* up and down the coastline. She is a member of the Society of Wildlife Artists, and her work will be featured in The Natural Eye exhibition at the Mall Galleries, London, from November 2 to 11, 2023. Becky's work is available on her online gallery; [www.beckythorley-fox.co.uk](http://www.beckythorley-fox.co.uk)

Combining watercolour and gouache seems to appeal particularly to oil painters. Turner and Sargent are two of my favourite examples of oil painters who combined both water-based media. Their paintings have a dynamic range of transparent watercolour washes and opaque gouache marks that are reminiscent of the way oils are often applied, from lean to thick. Combined, the two media have the ability to create a wide range of textural effects that achieve a wonderful sense of depth.

Working with water-based media *en plein air* is a great way to lighten and simplify your painting equipment, freeing you up for more adventurous excursions into the landscape. With a lightweight

palette, filled with all the paint I need, some sheets of paper and a couple of brushes, I'm ready to go! A simple set-up allows for quick

'emergency paintings' as Sargent put it. Having work dry on the spot also means multiple studies can be churned out for more explorative exercises and for time spent getting to know a subject. The coast is one of my favourite places to paint but is perhaps one of the most changeable environments to paint in. The light, weather, tide and wildlife are always on the move!

## Learn the characteristics

When discovering the exciting ways in which watercolour and gouache can work together, a good starting point is to know how each medium behaves on its own first before you can achieve some success in combining the two.

Watercolour is a delicate medium that creates wonderful transparent and glowing washes, often with beautiful granular effects. It is best worked with a big brush, in as few layers as possible. For this reason, it can seem very unforgiving at first to someone who is used to working with oils. Watercolour

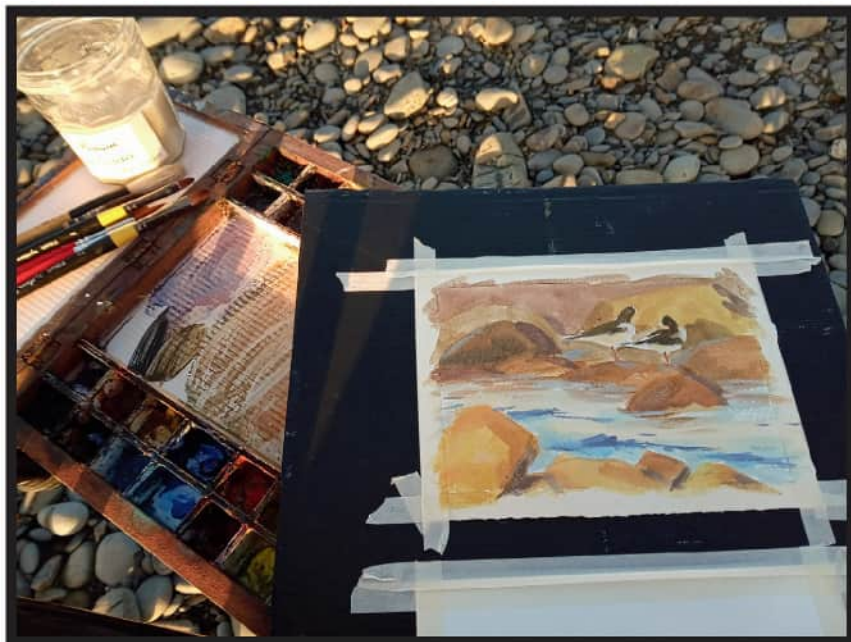
## ◀ Becky's watercolour and gouache palette

I began with the same palette of colours for both watercolour and gouache that matched my oil palette. This meant I was already familiar with my pigments, which sped up my ability to work with them when painting *en plein air*. Watercolour and gouache paints behave differently from oils so I found producing colour charts really helpful. They reveal the individual characteristics of the different watercolour pigments and how they behave with the rest of my palette.

These are the main colours I use for my watercolour and gouache palette, using closely matched pigments. Both pigments consist of colour particles suspended in gum Arabic. Gouache particles are larger and more tightly packed together, giving them that opaque and solid colour. Watercolour on the other hand has smaller pigment particles, allowing light to bounce through to the paper and create that luminosity







▲ This is my homemade watercolour and gouache palette. It consists of a wooden frame and Correx panels for lightness. I fit my palette to my telescope's tripod for a multi-purpose easel, since I tend to work with my paper level and held resting on my palette. This simplified my kit but the downside was that I had to steady the scope as mixing a colour on my palette made it wobble!

## Becky's top tips

- A minimum of 140lb (300gsm) paper is recommended to avoid the paper warping.
- Be aware that values alter slightly as the water dries. Generally, they lighten but sometimes lighter gouache colours may appear to darken as they dry.
- It helps to wet gouache paints before you begin so that they are ready to be used. A spray bottle or a wet brush to flick water over the paint wells will suffice.
- Don't let the pigments fight against each other. This can happen if you add too much water to both pigments. I'll use more with watercolour mixes and usually only a small amount with gouache. This allows their different traits to contrast and bring out each of their strengths.
- Finally, have fun playing with the two media. Allow yourself the freedom to explore their different capabilities and ways of working together through making a mess and enjoying many happy accidents!

teaches you to let go and let the medium's unpredictable nature work its magic. When used outdoors, the weather will often contribute to the end result.

Gouache on the other hand is an opaque, matt and velvety medium. It is the most dominant of the two, with a higher pigment-to-binder ratio, making it ideal for foreground elements or areas that require a thicker body of colour.

Combining gouache with watercolour lends a greater freedom and flexibility, since gouache is ideal for reconstructing areas. New layers may be added and areas can be re-wetted to make adjustments or to blend colours. Gouache also dries much faster than watercolour which makes it ideal for using in the latter stages of a painting, so you don't have to wait long for the whole piece to dry.

► *Young Gull Peering into the Incoming Tide*, watercolour and gouache on 140lb (300gsm) paper, 5×7in (12.5×18cm).

For this piece I began with a sketch and simple watercolour washes. I used the wet-into-wet technique for the wave in the background. This softening effect helps to achieve a greater sense of depth in contrast with the foreground waves where I used dry-brush techniques in gouache for a sharper focus. I applied gouache to the gull, lending a greater opacity to the gull's warm sunlit feathers. I also used gouache for the brilliant-blue sky reflections and bright orange seaweed on the foreground rock

*'When discovering the exciting ways in which watercolour and gouache can work together, a good starting point is to know how each medium behaves on its own'*







▲ *Beak Towards the Wind*, watercolour and gouache on 140lb (300gsm) paper, 5×7in (12.5×17cm).

This small study also uses the wet-into-wet technique for the background wave, which contrasts with the almost-dry impasto gouache marks which add foreground texture

## DEMONSTRATION *Black-headed Gulls, Evening Light*



### ◀ STAGE ONE

I began with a loose sketch and light watercolour washes as I knew I wanted the evening light to glow through the completed painting. This is an approach I often use when working with oils as I like to unify areas with a base colour that shows through



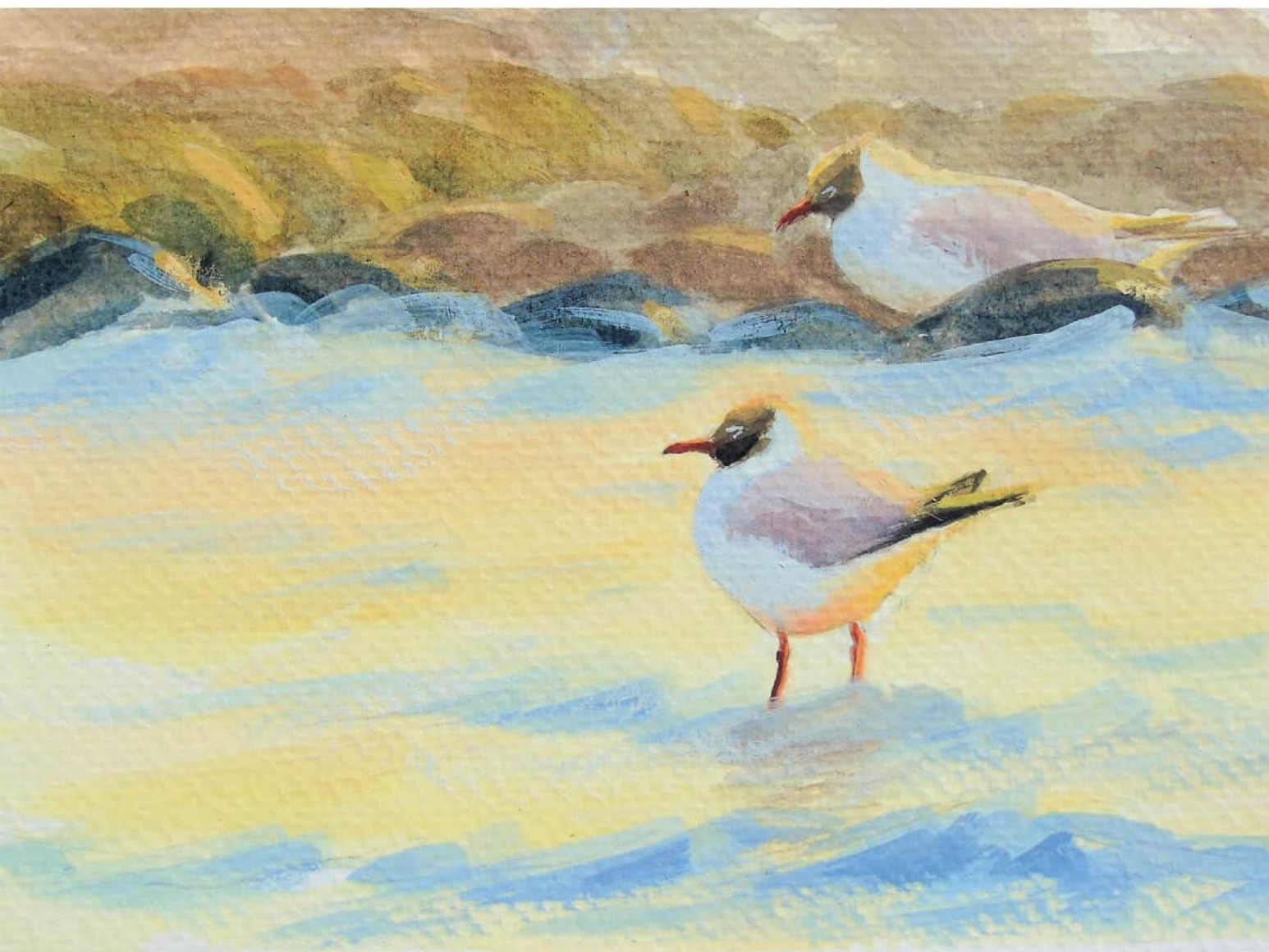
## ► STAGE TWO

I used gouache quite early on in this painting as I wanted to get my gulls down first. They are my focal point and they could fly away at any moment! The colour brilliance of the gouache gave a solidity to my foreground gull. I also added further washes to the pebbles along the water's edge to build up their colour, value and form

## ▼ FINISHED STAGE

*Black-headed Gulls, Evening Light*, watercolour and gouache on 140lb (300gsm) paper, 5×7in (12.5×18cm).

Here in the latter stages of my painting I added further colour and tonal washes to the background pebbles and to the yellow, glowing water. I painted the brilliant blue sky reflections on the water with gouache, using some dry-brush work for added texture to convey the shimmering effect in the water. I applied gouache for the blue highlights on the wet, dark pebbles and yellow glowing highlights over the background sunlit pebbles. The opacity and colour strength of gouache is ideal for highlights such as these





# The fear of failing

Don't allow fear to hold you back. **Bob Brandt** shares his strategies for overcoming his fears and pushing forward to create successful paintings

**J**MW Turner is quoted as having said: 'It is only when we are no longer fearful that we begin to create', and from years of tutoring as well as painting I am inclined to agree that what holds most of us back from producing paintings we think of as successful is simply the fear of failing. The odds are against us from the start. As students we mostly study paintings by artists who have achieved fame and universal recognition. How can we possibly succeed like these great painters? Apart from their reputations, we have to meet the challenge of our own aspirations, always moving the bar up even while our work is steadily improving. Even the greatest of painters must have produced works that they recognised as failures, to be consigned to the rubbish bin or painted over.

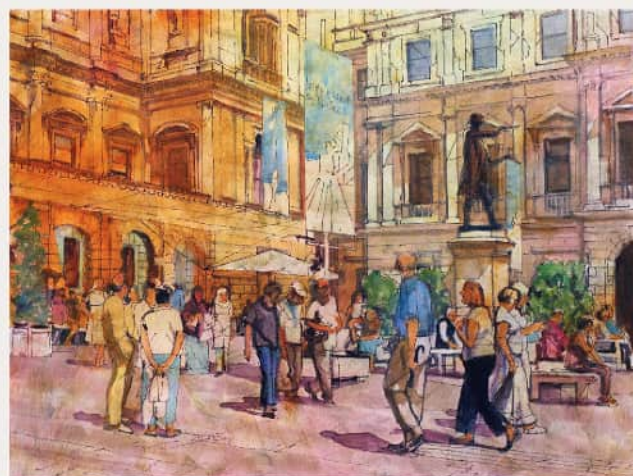
I regularly run into that barrier of self-criticism, feeling I am wasting my time by

## LET'S CONSIDER A FEW EXAMPLES FROM MY OWN WORK

### ▶ EXAMPLE 1

This painting is based on a photo I took in the courtyard in front of the Royal Academy. As is usual when I am painting people and buildings, my idea was to contrast the classical solidity of Burlington House with the informal clothing and movement of the visitors passing to and from the exhibition. Having drawn and blocked in the basic design from the photo, I had to unite these two elements in order to develop the painting further, and I chose to do this by scumbling randomly over my canvas, as shown, with a loose mix of all the colours already on my palette.

When I am demonstrating, it is at this stage that a member of the group will inevitably exclaim: 'Oh, you've ruined it!', as if they have identified my moment of failure. But, as in this example, this step actually allowed me to see the painting as a unified whole, which I could develop into the finished picture



### ◀ EXAMPLE 1A

*Outside the Royal Academy, oil on canvas panel, 17¾×23½in (4×60cm).*

But, as this painting shows, there are quite often times when I genuinely lose my way while designing a painting. I may have caught the essential message of the picture but become unable to see how to develop this by building up the correct balances of tones and colours which will draw the attention of the viewer to what I have decided is the actual subject – and how I feel about it. I am faced by the likelihood of failure!

The next lesson I have learned from experience is to identify these moments when I might be overcome by facing a potential disaster, and instead see them as opportunities for deciding on possible ways ahead. My choices certainly might be wrong, but are just as likely to lead to success



trying to make a particular painting work. In fact, this has happened so often that I have learnt how to find a way past that moment of apparent failure. Facing and resolving problems not only saves my bin from overload but often shows me how the painting in question could turn out to be a success, if I have the nerve to stick with it.

I always avoid working on only one painting at a time. My preference is to have four paintings on the go at once, but another, highly successful, painter I knew liked to work on up to 20 at a time, and it is said that to maximise his production rate, Turner would have a large number of watercolours set out before him at any given time, mix a particular colour then apply it to one painting after another.

If I work on only a single painting, I tend to become obsessive about it, and this inevitably leads to overworking. With a number of paintings in progress, I start each day in the studio by looking at each in turn with a critical, but positive, eye and choose the one to make a start on. It's a help that I mainly use quick-drying alkyd paints, so that every morning I can choose any one painting to work into rather than have to leave it to dry further.

## What makes a successful painting?

Before moving on to demonstrate my personal method of controlling my fear of failure, it is important to describe what I think of as a painting success, because every painter has their own definition of this variable goal.

Traditionally, the craft of painting was based on learning the techniques needed to describe the physical appearance of the subject accurately, and this remains the foundation of a good deal of formal art teaching even today, as well as being the main aim of many successful artists. But, as I explain in my book, *A Painter's Book of Magic*, I see painting as a means of communicating between the painter and the viewer, so for me a picture needs to do more than describe the subject physically; it must also convey the painter's feelings about that subject.

Turner's own career can be seen as a continual development from the descriptive illustration style of his early watercolours to the almost abstracted portrayal of emotion seen in his later works, such as *Rail Steam and Speed*, National Gallery, London.



### ▲ EXAMPLE 2

Decision moments particularly crop up when I have designed a complex image containing a number of elements, all of which are competing for the viewer's attention. I must choose – will this painting really be a failure or can I pull it off? In this example I chose to glaze the underpainting with a dilute mixture of cobalt and alizarin rather than a scumble combining all the colours already used. This cool glaze both unified the image and calmed down its inherent contrasts, allowing me to find a way to pull it all together.



### ▲ EXAMPLE 2A

*Crowd in the Louvre*, oil on canvas panel, 23½×23½in (60×60cm)

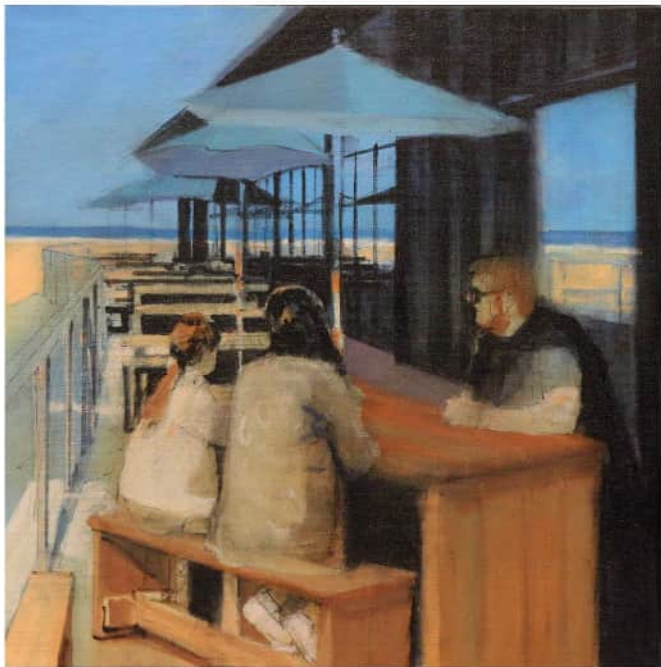


## DEMONSTRATION *The Cornish Mug*

### REFERENCE PHOTOS

The Royal Academy painting seen earlier was designed from a single photograph, whereas the Louvre picture was composed using two photos, allowing me to group the visitors into an interesting composition. My design for this demonstration painting was based on an initial photo of a restaurant terrace overlooking Perranporth Bay in Cornwall. It powerfully caught the atmosphere I wanted to describe but, though the scene had a landscape quality and something of the loneliness of some paintings by Edward Hopper, did this single view have a sufficient narrative quality to please me? I felt the need to incorporate some figures to give the picture life. So, a second photo was called for, and this was taken at the same terrace but from a different angle some time later.

Combining photos to make a design often creates problems involving adjusting the angle of the light and correcting perspectives. So would it be possible to combine these two images into a consistent, single view? The only answer would come from trying



### ▲ STAGE TWO

When building a painting, it helps to establish a firm structure at an early stage to see if its elements balance correctly, and this time I used a dark pattern, of Payne's grey. This helped me to identify the important counterchanged features in the painting – places where a light foreground element would be set against a dark background and vice versa.

Having got this far, I felt confident that this painting was worth pressing on with



### ▲ STAGE ONE

Three colours were used at this stage: cobalt blue and a mixture of burnt sienna and cadmium orange. The highlights were lifted out from the wet paint, using a soft cloth moistened with white spirit. I convinced myself that, so far, the painting remained viable

### BOB'S MATERIALS

- **Support** Winsor & Newton Artists' canvas board.
- **Brushes** A range of flat and round synthetic brushes by various makers, plus a couple of small rounds for detailing. Importantly I use a 38mm Winsor & Newton Cotman watercolour brush to soften and blur each stage of the painting except the last.
- **Paints** Mostly Winsor & Newton Griffin alkyd colours as described in the text, together with Daler-Rowney light blue oil from the Georgian range.



### ▲ STAGE THREE

To give a feeling of the sunlight, I needed to add more warmth to my design, and chose a mixture of burnt umber and Naples yellow, with a little cadmium orange. Despite having now established a balanced colour palette, I was beginning to struggle with how the finished painting might be developed





**Bob Brandt**

has been a professional painter, teacher and writer for more than 30 years. A founder member, past president and now a fellow of the Institute of East Anglian Artists, he has shown work with the Royal Institute of Oil Painters and the Royal Society of Marine Artists at the Mall Galleries. A contributor for many years to magazines and with a book published in both the USA and UK, he has now published his own second book, *The Painter's Book of Magic*, reviewed in *The Artist*, May 2021; [www.clockhousestudio.co.uk](http://www.clockhousestudio.co.uk)

## ◀ STAGE FOUR

Realising that I needed to strengthen the blue colour of the sky and sea, I used a mixed palette of cobalt, phthalo, ultramarine and white, with a hint of Naples yellow near the horizon. Still at risk of 'failure', I had to decide how much detailing to add to the basic structure of the painting. I particularly felt that the colours of the sunshades were weak, and added little to the design

## ▶ FINISHED PAINTING

*The Cornish Mug*, oil on canvas panel, 15¾×15¼in (40×40cm).

It was only at this late stage that I realised that my design had no particular point of focus – a feature typical of the place which most viewers would probably ignore but which would create a starting point from which their attention could circulate around the picture. How could this be created?

My choice was to invent the Cornish mug, standing on the table, which now features in the title. To position this new design element correctly, I felt the need to bring the nearest figure forward, which I did by suggesting the pattern on her coat, using alizarin crimson and titanium white mixes. Too literal a description of the pattern would have disrupted the balance of the picture.

As usual, I feel I could do more to this painting, but am only too well aware of the dreaded risk of overworking. At least I can console myself that I have battled through my recurring fear of failing by making a series of considered decisions, and I hope that this painting is all the better for that





# The legacy of Edward Wesson

Sharing his own collection of works by Edward Wesson, **Steve Hall** demonstrates how there is much to learn from studying the work of great painters

**T**he middle of the 20th century saw some of the finest work produced by traditional English watercolour painters. One of these was Edward Wesson who, along with a whole crop of painters of this era, left a legacy which is still admired today.

It has been 40 years since the passing of Edward Wesson. Edward, or Ted to his countless admirers, was a proper painter. It was, of course, his humility and honest approach to painting that ensured his popularity with both fellow painters and collectors of his work alike. That same popularity also ensured the non-recognition of his talents by the art establishment who, as Ted would have said, 'decide what is on and what is not on in the world of art.' It was a similar story with the work of that other great Edward – Edward Seago.

Most of Edward Wesson's life was spent around London and in the home counties. Following a career in textiles in the city

and a lengthy spell in the army he turned to full-time painting around the early 1950s. Ted is survived by his daughter Elizabeth, and she recently recalled for me those formative years of his life and the start of his full-time painting career.

'His passion for art was reignited in his early 20s, grabbing every spare moment to pursue it, in his lunch hour (people had them then), at weekends and throughout his war in Egypt and Italy, during which my mother, Dickie, whom he'd married two years earlier, kept him supplied with painting materials and copies of *The Artist* magazine. It was not until 1951 when I came along, that his painting career began proving rather more lucrative than his city directorship, which was gladly if somewhat courageously sacrificed to a life doing what he loved best, painting, teaching evening classes and tutoring painting holidays, many organised by *The Artist* to which he was also a regular contributor.'

In fact, Ted wrote over 20 articles for

*The Artist* magazine and *Leisure Painter*, and these were mainly based around his experiences and exploits of teaching and painting *plein air* or, as he called it, 'in the field'. His courses were always fully booked and took in such delightful locations as Norfolk, the Chichester Harbour, the Isle of Purbeck, and the Lake District. Many of his subjects were coastal and today, these are probably the most collectable, particularly those of Thames barges.

Ted was also very active in the promotion of art. He was accepted by most of the professional societies. He was elected a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, a member of the Royal Society of Marine Artist and the Wapping Group. He produced many posters for the Post Office and British Rail and undertook numerous commissions, both private and commercial.

## Inspired by Ted

I first became aware of Edward Wesson's work in the late 20th century when, after taking early retirement, I had attempted to fulfil a lifetime's ambition to master the art of painting in watercolour. After a couple of very unsuccessful years, I was about to give up when I walked into a bookshop in Bath one day and there on the shelf was *The Art of Edward Wesson* by Ron Ranson. For me, it was a life-changing experience. I was immediately inspired by the sheer freshness and simplicity of the work; work that was born out of a lifetime of painting in the field.

I would like to share with you some of Ted's legacy, a legacy of work that has delighted and inspired me over the years and one that I think you will also enjoy. These are some of my favourite Wesson pictures, taken from my own collection of his work.



▲ *Snow on the Pilgrim's Way*, watercolour, 13×20in (33×51cm)





▲ *Near Shaftesbury*, oil on hardboard, 18×24in (46×61cm)

*Snow on the Pilgrims Way* (below left) would have been painted somewhere in the Surrey hills near Ted's home. It typifies how, with the minimum of marks, he has captured the feeling of that cold winter's day some half-a-century ago. The sky colour is perfect, with the prospect of more snow to come. The distant trees on the North Downs are expressed with a couple of wet-into-wet brushstrokes that perfectly portray the mist that forms in the distance on days such as this. A winding track takes the viewer's eye through a gap in the foreground bushes and staccato brush marks indicate clumps of foreground grasses peeping through the lying snow. At some time in our lives, we have all walked down a track like this and Ted has managed to perfectly capture the feeling of the day with this masterful composition.

Although he generally regarded himself as a watercolour painter, Ted was also very proficient with the use of oil paint. His work in this medium was, like his watercolours, both direct and, at the same time, atmospheric, his aim being to capture the feel of the place, the time of year, time of day and the prevailing light.

In *Near Shaftesbury* (above) we are treated to his portrayal of an autumn or possibly early winter's day in southern England. The sun is low in the sky with shadows cast across a country road,

giving the feeling of early morning or late afternoon. The air at this time of year can be quite chilly, but Ted has captured a warm glow with light everywhere – on the buildings, the tree trunks, and the road surface itself. Everywhere there is to be found contrasting tonal values, giving the whole scene energy. He has used the old device of linking both sides of the composition with the shadows cast from the trees on the right: a masterclass in picture planning and execution.

*Morston Church* (below) features another of Ted's artistic techniques, line

and wash. For this approach he used a traditional dip pen or pointed matchstick stuck into a length of bamboo cane, and black permanent ink. He would usually paint the scene direct without the use of a preliminary pencil drawing and then proceed to add washes with a limited palette such as Payne's grey, raw sienna, burnt sienna and light red. In fact, for much of his life, Ted used a simple palette, consisting of no more than about eight colours. This picture of Morston Church appeared in the June 1978 issue of *Leisure Painter*, where Ted describes one of his



▲ *Morston Church*, line and wash, 13×20in (33×51cm)





▲ *Dell Quay*, watercolour, 13×20in (33×51cm)



▲ *Albury Heath*, watercolour, 13×20in (33×51cm)



▲ *Roses*, watercolour, 13×20in (33×51cm)

many adventures painting in East Anglia.

*Dell Quay* (left) is another location frequented by Edward Wesson and one where he regularly painted as part of his Chichester Harbour courses. This is a picture where everything is described without a single wasted brushmark. Each shape has been carefully observed and put down with the minimum of fuss and with strong counterchange of light against dark. When you analyse the foreground boat, there is less than half-a-dozen shapes, yet these perfectly describe its form.

Ted loved painting winter trees and was known to have said that he liked nothing better than painting when there was an 'R' in the month. He developed a way of describing the delicate tracery of twigs with a nonchalant sideways brushmark and this can be seen used in *Winter Trees* (top right). Also notice the winter puddle that has been placed in just the right position to reflect the left-hand tree. The background bushes, field and hills are a masterclass in how to capture the English countryside on a winter's day with just a few seemingly casual receding tones.

*Albury Heath* (left) is another of those country scenes, so loved by Ted, this time featuring Albury Heath, just outside Guildford. It's such a simple scene, yet so very typical of the English countryside. The location is close to the painting *Snow on the Pilgrim's Way* (page 60), heathland, trees and the all-important track leading the eye through the scene.

No collection of Wesson paintings would be complete without one of his rose pictures. These were executed with great panache; just a few casual marks were used to indicate the delicate form of these flowers. In this example (left) just a couple of blooms placed in a jar suffice for a beautifully balanced composition. Like all representational artists, Ted was very accomplished with just the drawn line. As well as a great painter and teacher, Ted was a family man and would often paint or draw the family pets (right).

In January 1988 watercolour painter Ray Campbell Smith wrote an article for *Leisure Painter* titled *The Genius of Edward Wesson*. His opening words sum up admirably the place that he occupied in the world of art. He described Edward as 'Not only a fine painter, with a highly individual style and vision, but a brilliant and generous teacher who





▲ *Winter Trees*, watercolour, 13×20in (33×51cm)



▲ *Family Pet*, drawing, 8×10in (20×25.5cm)

shared his technique and method with all his students and held nothing back. His robust, friendly, and down-to-earth manner and his honesty of approach and purpose endeared him to everyone with whom he came into contact.

Finally, his daughter Elizabeth recalls: 'Sadly, to the great regret of family and

followers, Edward or Ted or Teddy was taken ill in the spring of 1983 and died aged just 73 on September 15.'

Thanks to his vast body of work and to those who have written so highly of his talents, his paintings continue to excite interest and bring pleasure and inspiration to many.

### Books about Edward Wesson

A number of books have been published about the work of Edward Wesson and can be obtained as follows:

- Edward Wesson *The Masters Choice* by Steve Hall and Barry Miles. Available from [www.halsgrove.com](http://www.halsgrove.com)
- *The Watercolours of Edward Wesson* by Steve Hall and Barry Miles. *Currently unavailable.*
- *Edward Wesson* by Barry Miles (used edition). Available from [www.edwardwesson.com](http://www.edwardwesson.com)
- *The Art of Edward Wesson* by Ron Ranson (used edition). Available from [www.edwardwesson.com](http://www.edwardwesson.com)
- *Honesty in Art* by Peter Slade. *Currently not available.*
- *My Corner of the Field* by Edward Wesson (used edition). Available from [www.edwardwesson.com](http://www.edwardwesson.com)



Steve Hall's

own work can be viewed at Bradford Gallery, 15 Station Approach, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1FQ. Telephone 01225 309332; [www.bradfordgallery.co.uk](http://www.bradfordgallery.co.uk)

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FEBRUARY  
2 to 12  
2024



Peter Brown

# Paint with Peter Brown

PPNEAC, RBA, PS, ROI, RP

## in KATHMANDU, NEPAL

Bodhnath Stupa

A special one-off opportunity to join 'Pete the Street' *en plein air* painting in Kathmandu and the foothills of the Himalayas, at one of the best times of the year to visit Nepal, and experience the Sonam Lhosar Festival

### Painting with Peter Brown, aka 'Pete the Street' in Nepal

Pete is one of the UK's leading figurative artists and is best known for depicting street scenes. Working alongside Pete is an enriching and fun experience. He is happy to share his knowledge with you and for you to learn by example. This is a free-style painting programme that is best suited for experienced artists or confident intermediate students. Pete will be working in oils but all media are welcome.

### Kathmandu

Nepal is a unique and sacred country. It is home to the highest mountains in the world and its cultural and religious heritage is visible everywhere and

remains a part of life today. Kathmandu is full of Hindu temples, shrines and palaces and has the largest Buddhist stupa in Nepal. You will be based in Patan which has the most impressive collection of historical buildings of the three towns in the Kathmandu Valley and is a thriving working town. You will find plenty to paint – pagoda-style temples, busy street scenes, washing wells and bronze and metal workshops, as well as quieter alleys, hidden courtyards and sacred shrines. A couple of days will be spent painting the snow-capped peaks of Mount Everest and the Annapurnas and you will visit the great Bodhnath Stupa in Kathmandu during the Sonam Lhosar Festival which celebrates the Tibetan New Year.



▲ Peter Brown *Afternoon Clocktower*, oil on canvas, 16x16in. (41x41cm)

### Accommodation

Your hotel is in the heart of Patan and has a courtyard and roof terrace. One night will be spent in a mountain lodge with spectacular views of the Himalayas from its garden. An event host will be with you in Nepal to take care of everyone and all the arrangements and to help you have the best experience possible.

### Details

- Dates: February 2 to 12, 2024
- Number of students: 8 to 10
- Price per person: £3,695 (no single supplement)
- Price includes: 10 nights' ensuite accommodation, breakfasts and dinners, transfers in Nepal, Patan and Bodhnath permits, host artist, event host

For more information please contact [events@spencerscott.co.uk](mailto:events@spencerscott.co.uk) t +44 (0)1435 864360





### Sarah Edmonds

is the marketing manager for Pegasus Art and gallery manager at Art Cotswold. She lives and breathes art by promoting artists, writing about art, consulting, selling and painting herself. Sarah studied a short course at the Slade School of Fine Art followed by a degree in marketing and has worked in the industry ever since;

[www.sarahedmonds-marketing.com](http://www.sarahedmonds-marketing.com)

# BUILDING A COMMUNITY—ON AND OFFLINE

**Sarah Edmonds** shows why community marketing is both cost-effective and impactful

Ever heard of 'community marketing'? Yes, it's a thing. In a post-Covid landscape, building connections has become a new marketing cornerstone, and more important than ever in attracting customers and securing sales. But how do we define 'community' in a modern world? Communities aren't always tangible. They can be found both on and offline, in human connections, online forums, social media groups and most likely a mixture of them all. This dictates a multi-channel marketing strategy defined by your particular audience – in other words, what works best for you, where your followers can be found and where they seek information.

Even the most independent individuals need networks and communities to survive. Consider the rise of 'influencers' and how they are shaping our social media content, sponsoring products and aligning with other brands. Have you accessed the new collaborator extension on Instagram yet? Request 'Invite Collaborator' when you are posting and you'll benefit from content shared on both grids. Businesses are monetising what we already knew: that we need our people, we need to 'find our tribe'!

Community marketing is cost-effective and impactful; it's mutually beneficial for both customer and service provider. Engaging

with your audience is a win-win. It garners authenticity and loyalty. If your customer knows that you really care, and that there is a human at the end of a question or conversation, they will be much more likely to return. Transparency builds trust. Social media has allowed people to interact with CEOs and heads of companies, where that would have been unthinkable before. Your new customers will become supporters and thereby brand ambassadors, spreading the word and doing some of the work for you. It's common sense, but word-of-mouth is still one of the best marketing tools you can employ, as verified in our Case Study over the page. Open communication with your followers, subscribers and customers is basically great customer service. Direct and timely communication means you know exactly what your customer wants. In the end, this translates to building a loyal community of like-minded people who believe in your brand.

In this article, we speak to two creatives who share their journey from working as independent artists to opening a local arts centre and work space: 'When we first expressed our intentions for Three Storeys, local residents were really relieved that the plans centred on this being a shared space that could be enjoyed by many.' Creating connections and building a community

were central to planning the project and its future success and continues to guide the decision making in its development. Nicki, Deb and Susie place people at the core of their business, providing a functioning, welcoming and effective business model that will survive and co-exist within the community.

It's clear that the building itself plays a character in the day-to-day life of Three Storeys as a living monument to the town and the people who have moved through it. Nicki took her time to carefully conceive a space that would be balanced and thrive – a mixture of working spaces, public spaces and private art studios. This has enabled them to offer a broad programme of exhibitions and events that they plan to expand.

The word community derives from the verb 'to commune' and Three Storeys is a place where everyone is welcomed. When I googled 'community', other words such as 'kinship', 'unity', 'identity', 'co-operative spirit' popped up too, which sums up the altruistic spirit of the venture. It's impossible to quantify the impact Three Storeys has had on bringing arts to the town, restoring a building that needed a new lease of life and providing workspaces to an evolving workforce, thus improving quality of life. It's arrival in Nailsworth has been embraced and they are very lucky to have it.



▲ Story Book co-working space on the lower ground floor of Three Storeys Art Centre in Nailsworth





▲ Three Storeys from the outside

## CASE STUDY: THREE STOREY'S ART CENTRE

**Q: Tell us about your idea of opening an arts centre in Nailsworth – how did it come about?**

**A:** Nicki and Susie had exhibited together quite a few times as part of a collective they formed in their village, known as 'Amberley Artisans', which was a great way to feel part of an artistic community and to showcase their creative work in textiles and print. It was whilst they were on the till together at a Christmas event that Nicki mentioned, in passing, that she would love to own an old industrial building and repurpose it as a shared creative space. There were similar venues nearby, but she felt there was still further demand amongst artists and makers. The benefit of connection to other creatives was already clear to Nicki, having been part of shared events and open studio trails. But

for this idea to work, location, and the right type of building, would be important.

When Susie saw the former Comrades Club up for sale near Nailsworth town centre, she sent the details on to Nicki with little expectation that she would actually even view the premises. But for Nicki it was more than just a daydream; she had been serious, and soon set to work trying to rationalise the quite complicated floorplans to see if it could work. As it was a large building with many different spaces, this encouraged Nicki to broaden her original idea of art studio spaces, to something that could accommodate a whole community of creative working. At the Clayloft, an open access pottery studio between Nailsworth and Stroud at Inchbrook Mill, she had seen her friend Tom Knowles-Jackson encourage a

connected atmosphere amongst the various small businesses that rent units around a shared courtyard. Creating a gallery there, and installing picnic tables for all to use, had created a real sense of community amongst tenants and visitors. Nicki realised this could maybe be achieved down the road in Nailsworth, but with the added benefit of a café and gallery, bringing residents and the general public together.

Eventually Nicki was able to buy the building and, despite the pandemic, slowly refurbish the site (originally Nailsworth Brewery) into Three Storeys. The name is a play on words to describe the layout of the building across three floors, but also as a nod to the three different uses the building has served: the first 100 years as the Brewery; the second 100 years as a Comrades Club for ex-servicemen; and then, when the Comrades were looking for alternative premises, Nicki effectively stepped in as the third custodian of this historically important building. And so the third story begins! In the past, the Brewery was a big employer in the town, and the Comrades Club also played a crucial community role, so when she first expressed our intentions for Three Storeys, local residents were really relieved that the plans centred on this being a shared space that could be enjoyed by many.

**Q: What are the benefits to the community of having an arts centre in the town?**

**A:** The layout of the building across three floors, helped set in place three defined roles as a multi-functional venue. The art/maker studios are on the first floor, which we call Storey Makers. These are private, professional spaces with 24-hour access so our residents can work in their studio at any time, seven days a week. We were also able to create Storey Book on our lower ground floor, which is a co-working space, with desks we hire out. This has become particularly useful to people whose working habits have changed post pandemic; working from home can be a mixed blessing, but working near home has many benefits, especially when there is good coffee on offer and other perks such as bike storage and a shower.

Then, on our fully-accessible ground floor, we offer the local community a wonderful café, The Plot, and an adjacent gallery space, The Setting. This floor is the hub of the building, and we are proud to host a diverse programme of events, from art exhibitions to book launches and much more in between. It isn't uncommon to come into Three Storeys and find someone holding a language lesson in one corner of the cafe, a knitting group in another, and to see dog walkers stopping by for refreshments on their way through the town – all in addition



▲ The Plot café and bar





▲ Next Level Young Person's exhibition



▲ Fundamental Essentials exhibition in The Setting gallery with paintings by Miranda Carter and papier maché vessels by Gill Hackett

to those using the building for their day-to-day working life.

Having the café/bar adjacent to the gallery has meant we have a great space for private view events as each show opens, and we have enjoyed poetry evenings and even pop-up restaurant nights in our annual calendar. The gallery has seen all sorts of art exhibitions; some shared and some solo, and we feel Nailsworth has embraced this extra space and the opportunity it brings. Deb is our business manager and is the main point of contact for our residents and the general public, and we have a fantastically friendly team of café staff who ensure we provide a welcoming atmosphere, as well as great locally-sourced food and highly rated coffee, amongst other refreshments.

**Q: How have you built a loyal following? What marketing tools do you employ?**

**A:** We keep our followers up-to-date with a monthly newsletter, which supports our ever-changing 'What's On' section on our website. Subscribing to our mailing list is probably the best way of being the first to know all of the dates for your diary. Of course we use social media as a promotional tool, and especially enjoy Instagram as a way of building our online community. We also find the old-fashioned print/paper an important vehicle for promotion of current events, and find visitors like to take away an eye-catching flyer from artists with shows coming up, or open studio brochures, and so on.

Word-of-mouth is invaluable in a small town too. We should probably shout louder about the lovely comments and reviews we get online or in our visitor's book, but we also find our customers do that for us by bringing their friends and helping us grow. There is a lovely synergy between the café and the gallery; an exhibition can bring in new visitors who haven't previously been



▲ Rooted exhibition by Susie Hetherington in The Setting gallery

to the café, and vice versa. We love it when someone comes in for coffee and cake and leaves having purchased a painting!

**Q: How do you feel about the cut to arts funding in this country?**

**A:** There are probably many views our residents and the team behind Three Storeys could offer on this subject, but no doubt the overall consensus would be that the arts are very important and cuts to funding are a shame and a mistake. Every budget slash is a missed opportunity to encourage the next generation and inspire creative change.

Our venture is entirely privately funded, and Three Storeys simply wouldn't exist if that wasn't the case. It's part of our mission to bring art to a wider audience locally, for

example through our Next Level Young Person's exhibition which we held for the first time in February this year. Over 150 local children, aged 4 to 19, were able to show their work in an exhibition in the gallery, and the event was extremely popular. We are looking for funding to support events like this in the future.

We have also recently hosted a local government consultation about arts provision in the area, with many of our residents and exhibitors attending. We hope that our local contribution to art helps support the thriving art culture in the Stroud district, and that centralised funding to our area and others, isn't cut further.

**Q: What are your plans for the future of Three Storeys? How is it developing?**

**A:** We opened Three Storeys fully in 2021, and since then our focus has been on building awareness to establish a great reputation and help our business grow. Our studios were let instantly, and we run a waiting list of people looking for the right spaces, as and when they come up. We have a growing band of co-workers, and also love the loyal customer base we have built up for the café, so our focus for the next few years will be building on what we have started.

We want to continue to draw in interesting exhibitors for our gallery and to broaden the events that happen in this space. There are a couple of undeveloped spaces within our tardis-like building, so in the longer term there might be more to develop, but for now we want to hone what we already offer and secure it as a key space in our local community. TA

**Contact details:**

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<https://www.instagram.com/threestoreysnailsworth/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/ThreeStoreysNailsworth/>



# STUDIO MEMBERSHIP



Chloe Hibberd *Antonio II*, soft pastels and pastel pencils, 27½X19.7in (70X50cm)

## MEET THE WINNER OF OUR LATEST STUDIO MEMBER COMPETITION

Chloe Hibberd is a full-time professional artist, takes commissions and also teaches in-person workshops. She has recently had a piece of art selected for the TALP exhibition at Patchings, has been long-listed for the Sketch for Survival annual competition and is about to start teaching online too.

'I came to art relatively late in life. My father was a well-respected artist as well as a police officer. I was always so in awe of him but I didn't have any interest in following in his footsteps – indeed it became a bit of a joke that no one had taken after him and we could only draw stick people!

'He died in 2012, and in 2019 I was spending several months out in Spain, looking for something new to do, and I found a gorgeous art studio, with an amazing artist and tutor called Julia Evangeli of Wild Woman Art. I soon carved out my own style and artistic identity; I literally breathed art practically every moment of every day. I tinkered with a few human portraits, but it was always going to be animals that were my forte.

'I now work in soft pastels with pastel pencils, colour and watercolour pencils, acrylics and oils. I love working realistically but for me it's not enough just to replicate a photo. It has to have soul, movement and character – as if it's breathing. I want the viewer to feel as though the animal is in the room and yet at the same time it's apparent that it's a painting or drawing. I do believe that realism and expressive elements can co-exist, even if only in subtle ways.'

For more information on Chloe's work, you can see her website: [www.creationsbychloe.co.uk](http://www.creationsbychloe.co.uk) and she is on Facebook [www.facebook.com/creationsbychloeh](https://www.facebook.com/creationsbychloeh)

## ABOUT ANTONIO II

'I've always loved horses and knew that part of my journey had to include drawing or painting them, as they have so much spirit and essence. As with the majority of my art now, (apart from commissions) I love to go out and take as many reference photos as I can and I study my

subjects in great detail. I tend to use a few reference photos per painting as one photo on its own doesn't always give the full story. When you work from several photos you build up an idea of the animal, create a story and give them their own identity.

'I love to use colour to both complement and make a painting

look like a painting whilst still keeping my realistic style. With Antonio II, I felt that the green was strong enough to add a whimsical feeling to hopefully complement all the detail. Aspects such as creating shine on the bridle and highlights to amplify the lighting are important to create that 3D effect and avoid letting something appear flat.'

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Visit [bit.ly/STUDFEATURE23](https://bit.ly/STUDFEATURE23)

SCAN ME





# Opportunities & Competitions

Check out the latest competitions to enter and make a note of important deadlines

## Sending-in days

### A Letter in Mind

**Details:** The National Brain Appeal invites artists to get creative on an envelope. The theme of this year's exhibition is 'Changing Perspectives'.

**Exhibition:** Artworks will be exhibited at Gallery Different in Fitzrovia, central London, from October 24 to 28, and sold via the charity's online gallery, from October 25. They will be exhibited anonymously, alongside invited professional and celebrity entries, priced identically at £85. The identity of the artists is revealed at the end of the exhibition, once the artwork has sold.

**When:** Open for entries until September 22.

**Contact:**  
[www.letterinmind.org](http://www.letterinmind.org)

### Bath Open Art Prize

**Details:** Now in its 11th year, the Bath Open Art Prize welcomes submissions from visual artists around the world, working in any medium. Developed as part of Fringe Arts Bath (FaB) alongside the established traditions, the prize welcomes more idiosyncratic and whimsical works that reflect FaB's open approach.

**Exhibition:** An exhibition of selected work goes on show at 44AD Artspace, Bath, from October 12 to 28.

**When:** Closes for submissions on September 11.

**Contact:**  
[www.fringeartsbath.co.uk](http://www.fringeartsbath.co.uk)

### ING Discerning Eye

**Details:** Artists based around the UK are invited to enter small-scale works in all media.

**Exhibition:** Exhibition of selected work will go on show at the Mall Galleries, London, from November 16 to 26.

**When:** Closing August 31.

**Contact:**  
<https://artopps.co.uk>

### John Ruskin Prize

**Details:** With a theme of 'Seeing the Unseen, Hearing the Unspoken', the 6th John Ruskin Prize is inviting entries from artists, designers and makers worldwide. The John Ruskin Prize

aims to attract entries from a wide range of artists and makers celebrating creativity in all media, encompassing drawing, painting, print, sculpture, photography, textiles, animation, digital art, performance, installation and mixed-media art among others.

**Exhibition:** Up to 40 artists will be selected to show their work in an exhibition at Trinity Buoy Wharf in London, from February 1 to 28, 2024.

**When:** The deadline for submission is 5pm on Wednesday September 20.

**Contact:**  
<https://artopps.co.uk>

### The London Group Open

**Details:** The London Group is now accepting entries for its 85th open exhibition, which takes place in November at the Copeland Gallery in London, with £10,000 in prizes. UK-based artists are invited to enter works in any media including painting, sculpture, drawing, print, photography, mixed media, installation, video, sound, digital and performance.

**Exhibition:** An exhibition of selected work will go on show at the Copeland Gallery in London, from November 9 to 26.

**When:** Open for entries until 5pm on September 5.

**Contact:**  
<https://artopps.co.uk>

### Robert Walters Group UK New Artist of the Year Award

**Details:** The Robert Walters Group UK New Artist of the Year Award returns for the fourth time, in collaboration with Saatchi Gallery and UK New Artists. Artists are invited to enter work under the brief: 'The Journey of Self-Actualization: Exploring the Illusion of Greener Grass and the Pursuit of the Dream'. Entrants must be aged 18 or over, within the first 10 years of their professional practice, and have the right to live, work or study in the UK.

**Exhibition:** Ten artists' work will be exhibited at London's Saatchi Gallery in November. An online exhibition will go live from November 10 to December 10.

**When:** Closes for submissions on September 3.

**Contact:**  
[www.robertwaltersgroup.com](http://www.robertwaltersgroup.com)

### Royal Institute of Oil Painters

**Details:** Artists are invited to submit work for exhibition alongside members of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters at the ROI annual exhibition 2023. Any artist over 18 may submit. Acceptable media include: oil, acrylic and water-soluble oil paint if framed as an oil. Glazed work is not encouraged.

**Exhibition:** An exhibition of selected work goes on show at the Mall Galleries, London SW1, from November 29 until December 16.

**When:** Closes for submissions at 12 noon on Friday October 6.

**Contact:**  
[www.mallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk)

### Small but Mighty

**Details:** Small but Mighty showcases all forms of printmaking and highlights the powerful, ambitious and impressive nature of works created on a small scale. The open submission exhibition, established by the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers (RE) aims to create long-term opportunities for artists and promote printmaking to a wider audience. The size limit for works in this exhibition is 50cm on the longest edge (including framing).

**Exhibition:** Selected work will be exhibited at the Bankside Gallery, London, from November 9 to 19.

**When:** Closes for submissions at 11.59pm on Monday September 25.

**Contact:**  
[www.re-printmakers.com](http://www.re-printmakers.com)

### Society of Wildlife Artists

**Details:** Artists are invited to enter the society's 60th anniversary exhibition, *The Natural Eye 2023*. The society seeks submissions of works that depict wildlife subjects and evoke the spirit of the natural world. Botanical subjects, pets and domestic animals will not be accepted. The selection committee seeks to encourage all forms of three and two-dimensional artwork that is based on representing the world's wildlife and is particularly keen to encourage artists with fresh vision to submit work that shows imagination, artistic ability, originality and genuine creativity. Works are invited in all media.

**Exhibition:** Selected work will go on show at the Mall Galleries, London SW1, from November 2 to 11.

**When:** Open for submissions now and closing at 12 noon on Friday September 8.

**Contact:**  
[www.mallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk)

### South West Academy of Fine and Applied Arts

**Details:** The South West Academy (SWAc) invites all local, national and international fine and applied artists to enter the 2023 Open Exhibition to be held at Kennaway House, Coburg Road, Sidmouth in November. This is the 24th consecutive call to artists for this exhibition. Work in three as well as two dimensions, applied arts and the fine arts are welcomed, including painting, drawing, print, sculpture, photography, textiles, multi-media, jewellery, glass and ceramics.

**Exhibition:** An exhibition of selected work goes on show at Kennaway House, Sidmouth, Devon, from October 31 to November 11.

**When:** The deadline for entries is October 3.

**Contact:**  
[www.southwestacademy.org.uk](http://www.southwestacademy.org.uk)

## Demonstrations

### Framing your work

**Details:** Jo Palmer will be giving a presentation to the Sidmouth Society of Artists on how to frame your work to make the most of your paintings.

**Where:** The Cellar Bar in Kennaway House, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 8NG.

**When:** Thursday September 28, 2pm. Entrance free for members; £3 for visitors.

**Contact:**  
[www.sidmouthsocietyofartists.com](http://www.sidmouthsocietyofartists.com)

### Animals in pastel

**Details:** Richard Crabtree will demonstrate how to paint animals in pastel to members of the Tewkesbury Art Society.

**Where:** Watson Hall, Barton Street, Tewkesbury GL20 5PX.

**When:** Tuesday September 26, 10.15am to 12.30pm. Visitors welcome; entrance £5.

**Contact:**  
[www.tewkesburyartsociety.org](http://www.tewkesburyartsociety.org)



# Exhibitions

GALLERY OPENING TIMES AND EXHIBITION DATES CAN VARY; IF IN DOUBT PHONE TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

## LONDON

### Bankside Gallery

48 Hopton Street SE1.  
☎ 020 7928 7521  
www.banksidegallery.com  
**Summer at Bankside;** original works by contemporary painters and printmakers of the Royal Watercolour Society and the Royal Society of Painter Printmakers, until September 10.

### Dulwich Picture Gallery

Gallery Road SE21.  
☎ 020 8693 5254  
dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk  
**Berthe Morisot: Shaping Impressionism;** until September 10.

### Mall Galleries

The Mall, SW1.  
☎ 020 7930 6844  
www.mallgalleries.org.uk  
**DSWF Wildlife Artist of the Year 2023;** September 11 to 16.  
**Royal Society of Marine Artists;** annual exhibition, September 21 to 30.  
**Art for All: A Fundraising Auction;** online exhibition featuring postcard-sized works by members of the Federation of British Artists at the Mall Galleries, October 9 to 16.

### National Gallery

Trafalgar Square WC2.  
☎ 020 7747 2885  
www.nationalgallery.org.uk  
**Paula Rego: Crivelli's Garden;** exploring the relationship between Rego's painting and the 15th-century altarpiece that inspired it, until October 29.  
**The Credit Suisse Exhibition Frans Hals;** September 30 to January 21, 2024. See page 9.

### Osborne Studio Gallery

2 Motcomb Street SW1.  
☎ 020 7300 8000  
www.osg.uk.com  
**Christopher Baker: Midnight Sun;** featuring daily studies of Climping Beach in West Sussex, in all weathers, September 26 to October 14.

### Royal Academy of Arts

Piccadilly W1.  
☎ 020 7300 8000  
www.royalacademy.org.uk  
**Image of the Artist;** self-portraits by current and recent Royal Academicians from the last 50 years, on show in the free Collection Gallery, until December 31.

### Tate Britain

Millbank SW1.  
☎ 020 7887 8888  
www.tate.org.uk  
**The Rossettis;** the radical Rossetti generation, until September 24.

### Tate Modern

Bankside SE1.  
☎ 020 7887 8888  
www.tate.org.uk  
**Hilma af Klint & Piet Mondrian;** until September 3.  
**Capturing the Moment;** a journey through painting and photography, until January 28, 2024.

### Victoria Miro Gallery

16 Wharf Road N1.  
☎ 020 7336 8190  
www.victoria-miro.com  
**Paula Rego: Letting Loose;** works by Paula Rego from the 1980s, September 22 to November 11.

### The Wallace Collection

Hertford House, Manchester Square W1.  
☎ 020 7563 9500  
www.wallacecollection.org  
**Portraits of Dogs: From Gainsborough to Hockney;** until October 15. See page 11.

## REGIONS

### BATH

#### Holburne Museum

Great Pulteney Street.  
☎ 01225 388569  
www.victoriagal.org.uk  
**Michael Simpson: Drawing Towards Painting;** until September 17.  
**Painted Love: Renaissance Marriage Portraits;** until October 1.  
**Jann Haworth & Liberty Blake: Work in Progress;** until October 1.

### BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

#### The Granary Gallery

Dewar's Lane.  
☎ 01289 330999  
www.maltingsberwick.co.uk  
**Anne Redpath and her Circle;** until October 8.

### BIRMINGHAM

#### RBSA Gallery

4 Brook Street.  
☎ 0121 236 4353  
https://rbsa.org.uk  
**RBSA Drawing Prize;** Work by artists whose practice is rooted in drawing, September 5 to October 14.

### CHICHESTER

#### Pallant House Gallery

9 North Pallant.  
☎ 01243 774557  
www.pallant.org.uk  
**Gwen John: Art and Life in London and Paris;**

until October 8.

**A Place of My Own;** inspired by the Gwen John exhibition, artists from the gallery's community programme have created works exploring the theme of personal space, until October 8.

### COMPTON VERNEY

#### Compton Verney

Warwickshire.  
☎ 01926 645500  
www.comptonverney.org.uk  
**Audubon's Birds of America;** until October 1.

### DEDHAM

#### The Munnings Museum

Castle House.  
☎ 01206 322127  
www.munningsmuseum.org.uk  
**Munnings: Colour and Light;** featuring over 40 paintings, until October 22.

### EASTBOURNE

#### Towner Eastbourne

Devonshire Park, College Road.  
☎ 01323 434670  
townereastbourne.org.uk  
**Towner 100: The Living Collection;** until August 28.  
**Barbara Hepworth: Art and Life;** until September 3.  
**Turner Prize 2023;** September 28 to April 14, 2024.

### FALMOUTH

#### Falmouth Art Gallery

Municipal Buildings, The Moor.  
☎ 01326 313863  
www.falmouthartgallery.com  
**The Legend of King Arthur: A Pre-Raphaelite Love Story;** major exhibition, touring from the William Morris Gallery, London, until September 30.

## ART SOCIETIES

#### Bothwell Art Club

Annual exhibition at Bothwell Parish Church Centre, Main Street, Bothwell G71 8EX during the village scarecrow festival on Saturday September 16, 10am to 5pm and Sunday September 17, 11.30am to 5pm.

#### Canterbury Society of Art

Open-air exhibition in the Westgate Gardens, Canterbury, on Saturday September 9, 10am to 4pm;  
www.canterburysocietyofart.org.uk

#### Carlton-le-Moorland and District Art Group

Exhibition at the Village Hall, Brigg Lane, Carlton-le-Moorland, Lincolnshire LN5 9HP, on October 7 and 8, 11am to 4pm each day.

#### Guild of Wiltshire Artists

Autumn exhibition at the John Bowen Gallery, Malmesbury Town Hall SN16 9BZ, from 1pm on Friday September 8 until Thursday September 28, 10am to 4pm daily;  
www.guildofwiltshireartists.com

#### Hempnall Art Club

Exhibition at Hempnall Village Hall, Bungay Road, Hempnall NR15 2NG, on October 21 and 22, 10.30am to 4pm daily.

#### Highgate Watercolour Group

Exhibition at Lauderdale House, Highgate Hill, London N6 5HG, from October 11 to November 6. Open daily, 12noon to 4pm. Check [www.lauderdalehouse.org.uk](http://www.lauderdalehouse.org.uk) or telephone 020 8348 8716 for occasional short notice closures;  
www.highgatewatercolour.org.uk

#### Mellow Art Society

Exhibition at St Martin's Church Hall, Brabyns Brow, Marple, Stockport SK6 5DT on Saturday October 13, 10am to 5pm and Sunday October 15, 1am to 4pm.

#### The Post Office & BT Art Club

The 116th annual art exhibition at St Sepulchre's Church, 10 Giltspur Street (Holborn Viaduct), London EC1A 9DE, from Tuesday September 5 to Friday September 15. Open daily, (excluding Saturdays and Sundays) from 10am to 5pm.

To submit details of an exhibition for possible listing here, email Jane Stroud at [jane@tapc.co.uk](mailto:jane@tapc.co.uk)





Osborne  
Studio  
Gallery

▲ Christopher Baker 22/8/22, oil on canvas, 11¾×15¾in (30×40cm) from *Midnight Sun* at the Osborne Studio Gallery in London

## GUILDFORD

### Watts Gallery

Down Lane, Compton.  
☎ 01483 810235  
[www.wattsgallery.org.uk](http://www.wattsgallery.org.uk)  
**Invented: The Art of Upcycling**; celebrating work that makes the best use of things artists find, until September 3.  
**Formations: Fiona Millais and Lucy Lutyens**; combining painting and sculpture, inspired by the landscape  
September 7 to October 29.  
**Victorian Virtual Reality**; highlights from the Brian May Archive of Stereoscopy exploring the 19th century photography craze, until February 25, 2024.

## MARGATE

### Turner Contemporary

Rendezvous.  
☎ 01843 233000  
[www.turnercontemporary.org](http://www.turnercontemporary.org)  
**Beatriz Milhazes: Maresias**; until September 10.  
**Antony Gormley: Another Time**; (Nayland Rock), until November 1, 2030.

## NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

### Gallagher & Turner

30 St Mary's Place.  
☎ 0191 261 4465  
[www.gallagherandturner.co.uk](http://www.gallagherandturner.co.uk)  
**Spin Me a Yarn**; work by artists Ellie Clewlow, David Hockney and Deborah Snell retelling popular stories by the Brothers Grimm and Shakespeare using drawing, printmaking and sculpture, September 1 to October 7.

### Laing Art Gallery

New Bridge Street.  
☎ 0191 278 1611  
[www.laingartgallery.org.uk](http://www.laingartgallery.org.uk)  
**Essence of Nature: Pre-Raphaelites to British Impressionists**; until October 14.

## OXFORD

### Sarah Wiseman Gallery

40-41 South Parade.  
☎ 01865 515123  
[www.wisegal.com](http://www.wisegal.com)  
**Objective Beauty**; new work by Sarah Spackman, September 7 to 30.

## PENZANCE

### Penlee House Gallery

Morrab Road.  
☎ 01736 363625  
[www.penleehouse.org.uk](http://www.penleehouse.org.uk)  
**Lamorna Colony Pioneers**; major exhibition, until September 30.  
**A Collector's Eye: 50 Years of Collecting Cornish Paintings**; October 11 to January 13, 2024.

## SAFFRON WALDEN

### Fry Art Gallery

19a Castle Street.  
☎ 01799 513779  
[www.fryartgallery.org](http://www.fryartgallery.org)  
**A World of Private Mystery: British Neo-Romantics**; until October 29.

## SHEFFIELD

### The Millennium Gallery

Arundel Gate.  
☎ 0114 278 2600  
[www.sheffieldmuseums.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldmuseums.org.uk)  
**Dutch Flower Paintings: Exploring Art in Bloom**; until September 17.

## SHERBORNE

### Jerram Gallery

Half Moon Street.  
☎ 01935 815261  
[www.jerramgallery.com](http://www.jerramgallery.com)  
**Michael Clark: Savour the Moment**; September 23 to October 11.

## STOW ON THE WOLD

### Fosse Gallery

The Manor House, The Square.  
☎ 01451 831319  
[www.fossegallery.com](http://www.fossegallery.com)  
**Richard Pikesley: New Light**; September 4 to 23.

## IRELAND

## DUBLIN

### National Gallery of Ireland

Merrion Square.  
☎ +353 1 661 5133  
[www.nationalgallery.ie](http://www.nationalgallery.ie)  
**It Took a Century: Women Artists and the RHA**; until October 22.

## SCOTLAND

## EDINBURGH

### National Galleries of Scotland: Portrait

1 Queen Street.  
☎ 0131 624 6200  
[www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org)  
**Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2022**; until September 10.

### Scottish National Gallery

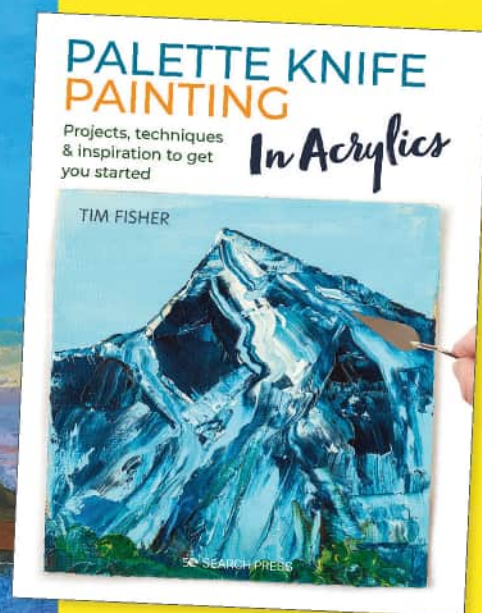
The Mound.  
☎ 0131 624 6200  
[www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org)  
**Grayson Perry: Smash Hits**; covering 40 years of Grayson Perry's career, the exhibition features pots, prints, sculptures and tapestries, until November 12.

### Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

75 Belford Road.  
☎ 0131 624 6200  
[www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org)  
**Alberta Whittle: Create Dangerously**; (Modern One), until January 7, 2024.  
**Decades: The Art of Change 1900-1980**; (Modern Two), until January 7, 2024.



# PAINTING COMPETITION



◀ **Tim Fisher** *Evening Light, Bamburgh*, acrylic on board, 12x16in. (30.5x40.5cm)

Enter your own original summer landscape painting, in any medium, for the chance to win

**T**o celebrate the launch of Tim Fisher's new book from Search Press in July, we have five copies of *Palette Knife Painting in Acrylics* to give away plus the chance for one lucky entrant to win a painting by Tim.

The winner will receive the original acrylic landscape painting, *Evening Light, Bamburgh* (above), painted by Tim as a prototype for the final project in his new book.

CLOSING DATE  
**1 October  
2023**

## JUDGES

**Dr Sally Bulgin**

editor *The Artist* magazine

**Dawn Farley**

online editor

**Ingrid Lyon**

editor *Leisure Painter*

GUEST JUDGE

**Tim Fisher**

Find out more by visiting **[www.painters-online.co.uk/competitions](http://www.painters-online.co.uk/competitions)**  
or follow this link: **<https://bit.ly/3Om2sRd>**





Mike Barr

is a Fellow of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. He has won over 80 awards, including 17 first prizes. You can find more of Mike's work at [www.mikebarrfineart.com](http://www.mikebarrfineart.com)

# THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

Energise your painting by injecting it with the rhythm of life, suggests **Mike Barr**, and take the first steps to being 'in the zone'

**T**here are many ways of appreciating paintings, like composition, mood, drawing, colour, perspective, drama, technical skill and more. There is one thing, though, that we often like in paintings, but we may not find the word for, and that is rhythm.

Rhythm, apart from being difficult to spell, is seen quite plainly in some famous works. The first one I thought of was Turner's *Snowstorm at Sea* painted in 1842. This grand impressionist portrayal of snow, wind and sea, looks as if it was painted under the guidance of the swaying arms of an orchestral conductor. The painting moves musically and it has caught the rhythm of real life with its swirling brush strokes and harmonious colour.

In some ways rhythm can be more apparent in good abstract work, where brush and colour are unhindered by reality. My own appreciation of this type of work is marked by the visual music it produces. Vincent Van Gogh was the master of rhythm. He caught the movement in swaying trees like no other and his starry nights blazed with atmospheric distortion as often happens on a hot summer night. Don McClean caught Vincent's rhythm in his song Vincent in 1971 – arguably the most beautiful song ever written about an artist and their work. Listen to it again soon!

Rhythm can also be found in the painting process. We know it when we find it; it's also called being in the zone. It doesn't happen all the time but they are truly wonderful

times when it does. The joy of painting is not always about the finished product, but can be found along the journey of each individual work too.

The rhythm of life is not always easy to catch in a painting, but it is worth thinking about. Often it will mean exaggeration of certain elements of colour and form and this will drag us away from being totally realistic, and this, I believe is the beginning of being an artist. Happy painting!

▲ *Red Towel and Seagull*, acrylic on board, 19¾×19¾in (50×50cm).

The rhythm of this little painting caught me by surprise with the swirling clouds, seagull tossed by the wind and girl's hair joining in with the music!





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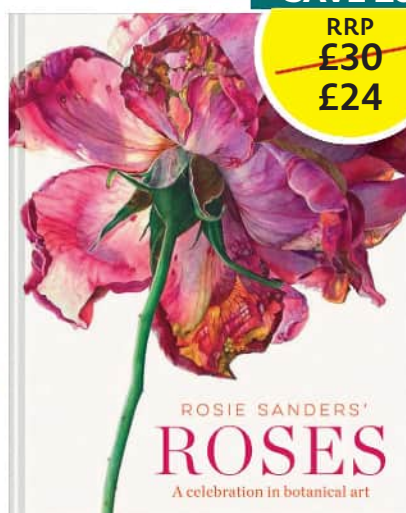
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# PaintersOnline editor's choice

Meet this month's editor's choice winner from our PaintersOnline gallery



▲ Elisa Trueman *Night Swimming*, acrylic, 16X20in (40.5X51cm)

**E**lisa Trueman has had a passion for art for as long as she can remember. 'Ever since I could first hold a paintbrush,' she writes, 'watching shows like *Paint Along with Nancy* wearing one of my dad's shirts back to front to catch the splashes. At 17 I was due to study fine art at Southampton but, at the last moment, I joined the Navy. My love of art never left me, however, and after several years painting superheroes for the children, I decided I wanted to go back to my art properly.

'I live in Cornwall which has such beautiful villages and coastal paths that

inspired me to paint the sea and wild flowers. I'm also lucky to have lived in other parts of the UK and abroad, which influences what I paint. Initially I hadn't decided to create naive-style work, but my paintings changed and developed with a natural progression towards that style. I found the Association of British Naive Artists and several incredible artists who are members and decided to join and exhibit my work with them. I also decided to create my own website (not an easy task for the least techno-minded person, and one I ultimately needed a bit of help with).

'I decided to paint *Night Swimming* after

one of my customers told me she swims at night with friends. I thought this was amazing! She said it was one of the best things she's ever done. I thought, perhaps I could add some swimmers to one of my night paintings and so it came about. I've now moved on to surfers as well and am looking forward to adding them to some of my paintings too. My work is on show at Colour and Space Art Gallery in Perranporth, Pure Art Gallery in Milford Marina and was in the front window of Sullys Framing & Art Gallery in Penryn for the month of July. For more of Elisa's work go to [www.elisatrueanart.com](http://www.elisatrueanart.com)

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# the artist

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### IN CONVERSATION

with **Annabel Thornton**,  
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competition

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### GOUACHE



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## PLUS

● **Jenny Aitken** reveals why  
she loves painting the magical  
effects of sunlight through  
woodland trees in oils

● **Tom Shepherd** demonstrates  
the importance of marks,  
strokes and washes as he paints  
a bird in flight in watercolour

● Develop your figure drawing  
skills with **Adele Wagstaff**

● **Steve Griggs** encourages  
an experimental approach to  
watercolour painting

● THE ARTIST'S LIFE 11th of 12:  
It's time to make a plan,  
by **Sarah Edmonds**

● The studio and why it's so  
important, wherever it may  
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# REFINED PORTRAITS



*"Camila" by Hisako Tatiana Hoshino, Size: A3, Nitram Charcoal on paper.*

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~ Hisako Tatiana Hoshino



To watch Hisako Tatiana Hoshino working on this portrait with Nitram Charcoal at The Academy of Figurative Arts, please visit:  
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Hisako Tatiana Hoshino, a Bolivian-Japanese graduate in Architecture, studied at the Universidad Católica Boliviana (UCB) in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. Always passionate about art and painting, she decided to pursue a two-year diploma in Drawing and Painting at the Academy of Figurative Arts. Currently, she continues to specialize and devotes herself entirely to figurative painting.  
Instagram: @hisakohoshino.art



The Academy of Figurative Arts was established in 2021 by renowned artists Bezalel Maida (Director of the painting program) and Arturo Suman (Director of the Drawing program). It is a distinguished institution affiliated with the Roca Gravat Foundation, a prominent arts foundation in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

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ON THE FRONT COVER

**Winston Oh** *St. Benet's Abbey*,  
watercolour, 11x15in (28x38cm)  
See pages 12-15



**S**kies can make or break a landscape, and painting them with confidence, whether from photographs or *en plein air*, will take you to the next level. You don't always have to reach for the blues, says **Julie Collins**; think orange, green, pink and gold instead. From how to paint the effect of rain storms to colour mixing for a vibrant sunset, Julie's feature on painting summer skies is packed with colour-mixing advice.

**Tony White** follows with his approach to painting loose, interesting clouds as well as discussing essential flat and gradated wash techniques. His final tip says it all about his approach: 'Let it rip. Don't be timid. We're only painting!' And finally, **Winston Oh** inspires us with his look at painting skies on days when we don't see the sun. Try Winston's techniques and never worry about painting on a dull day again.

## 4 Summer skies

**Julie Collins** demonstrates how to mix and modify colours for a variety of summer skies, including blue and pink skies, rain, storms and golden light

## 8 Techniques for great skies

**Tony White** shares his methods for painting skies full of atmosphere and mood, including the washes he uses to great effect

## 12 Big grey skies

Skies don't have to be blue to be interesting. **Winston Oh** inspires with his renditions of grey-sky days





# Summer skies

**Julie Collins** shows you how to mix and modify colours for a variety of skies to use in your watercolour landscape paintings

It would be lovely to think of summer skies as endless expanses of perfect blue, but as we know the weather is very much more varied than that. However, this gives us huge scope for exploring summer skies in watercolour. Living by the sea, the sky will change many times just in one hour. Here, I will give several examples of how to modify your colours for summer skies. But please go outside or at least look from your window for many other

possibilities for this great subject. It would be good to spend at least a full week working on skies, as there is enough to learn about this to warrant studying and painting it over a long time. There is something very satisfying about filling two thirds of your paper with a watercolour sky and then waiting to see how it settles and dries. Experiment with the colour combinations I suggest and also try out different combinations from your watercolour box.

## Blue skies

There are so many different blues for us to consider here. I've included a few that I have seen during the summer months, but there are many more subtle and strong blues in a summer sky. The four examples of how to modify your blues are a good starting point. With watercolour skies, you need to think about the tone of the blue as much as the colour of the blue.

▼ This is a very subtle sky – the addition of the permanent rose gives a subtle warmth. I also chose Winsor blue (red shade) as it is a warm blue.



Winsor blue  
(red shade)



Permanent rose +  
Winsor blue (red shade)



▲ To achieve this cloudy effect, wet your paper all over before you begin painting wet-into-wet. Take care to leave some areas white for the clouds. Here the colours modify themselves as they settle on the watercolour paper. It is very worthwhile spending time practising this effect.



Cobalt  
blue



French  
ultramarine  
blue



Cobalt blue + French  
ultramarine blue  
50/50





FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

## Pink in the sky

Both these sky examples were painted wet into wet by wetting the watercolour paper evenly first and then dropping in the colours. Figure 1 was painted on NOT (Cold-pressed) watercolour paper and Figure 2 on HP paper. You can create different effects by using different paper surfaces. The medium texture of NOT/Cold-pressed or Rough paper adds interest to a sky landscape painting. The smooth surface of the HP paper can be a lot more challenging but creates a lovely light effect to the paint.

### COLOURS USED

French  
ultramarine and  
permanent rose



◀ Cerulean blue is a real summer blue as it has a turquoise hint, which always makes me think of a perfect summer day, especially if you're lucky enough to be in the Mediterranean. This can be modified simply by altering the tone of the blue. Here I have used only a medium and pale tone of the pure colour.



Cerulean blue –  
medium



Cerulean blue –  
pale

### MIXES

► Again wet your paper with clean water before you start painting. Add the pale mixes to light areas and some very strong colour for the darker areas.



Cobalt turquoise light 75%  
+ cerulean blue 25% -  
dark and pale mixes



Cobalt turquoise light 25%  
+ cerulean blue 75% -  
dark and pale mixes







## A summer sunset sky

Sunsets are always extremely popular with landscape painters. This is an example where I have used a limited palette of four colours to make a graded wash. Experiment with your modified colours to create a graded wash for sunset skies. You can take photographs of skies for inspiration and these will also help you to simplify the colours that you use.

### COLOURS USED

Permanent magenta, cobalt blue, cadmium orange and Winsor red

### MIXES



Permanent magenta + cobalt blue = violet



Cadmium orange + more Winsor blue = pink-orange



Cadmium orange + less Winsor red = brighter orange

## Rain in summer

Although I'd like to think of summer as wall-to-wall sunshine and endless days of good weather, this is rarely the case. I've included an example of rain in a summer sky that can be so typical of our British weather. In stormy weather the sky can look slightly green and here I have used pure terre verte and the two mixes shown below



### COLOURS USED



Terre verte



Raw sienna



Burnt umber

### MIXES



Terre verte + raw sienna = pale brown-grey



Terre verte + burnt umber = dark brown-grey



## Storm on the horizon

For a more dramatic sky it is still good to use a limited palette of three colours. I regularly see skies like this on the south coast. They are so inspiring to paint, although challenging as stormy skies change so quickly, but this gives us the great opportunity to paint very spontaneously.

I mixed a pale blue-grey and a darker blue-grey from French ultramarine blue and burnt sienna. The sky was wet almost all over before I added the colours, leaving some white areas in the sky and sea.

### COLOURS USED

Cerulean blue,  
French ultramarine  
blue and burnt  
sienna



## Golden light over the Purbecks

I find the Purbecks in Dorset so inspiring. As they are almost on my doorstep, they feature in many of my paintings. The wild landscape there gives me huge scope for working outside, which is a vital element in my painting. There is nothing like seeing the colours first-hand as the sun moves across the hills. This is a very simple sky painted swiftly on NOT/Cold-pressed surface watercolour paper, which has given a good granular effect.

### COLOURS USED

French ultramarine blue and lemon yellow



**Julie Collins** studied painting at the University of Reading. She is an associate member of the Society of Women Artists and won first prize for watercolour at the Royal West of England Academy of Art exhibition in 2019. Her work is exhibited widely in the UK and her sixth book, *Colour Demystified* was published in November 2020.

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# Techniques for great skies

**Tony White** shares his methods for painting successful skies that will establish the mood and atmosphere of your watercolour paintings



Who doesn't love a good sky? Skies are a fundamental part of landscape painting and play a very important role in the overall success of a piece. Most of the time, the light and luminosity in a painting comes from how strongly the sky is painted: it can make or break a painting and can transform an otherwise boring scene into one that is strong and lively.

## The flat wash

To have the flat wash technique in your repertoire is essential and it will always do its job for you as long as you paint it quickly and with confidence. It is a great way to establish the light and what kind of day and time of day you're dealing with. It is also a very good sky to choose when the focus of the scene is busy. Remember to balance out the composition. A busy scene with a busy sky can be overwhelming to the eye and lead to an unsuccessful and confused piece of work. Whatever colouring you choose, err on the side of lighter tones, rather than heavy, to ensure the scene won't lose its luminosity and lustre.

► *Lonely*, watercolour, 6×14½in (15×37cm). A deserted train car makes for a nice composition. I used a loose sky with a warm horizon – the loose clouds approach really works here. The sky is busy enough without overtaking or dominating the scene, which is balanced out by the simple foreground. Colours used in the sky were cobalt blue, a touch of burnt sienna to create the grey and a little yellow ochre at the horizon.

◀ *St John's, Hobart*, watercolour, 14¾×10¾in (37×27cm). I painted into the light to produce this unorthodox sky, in which warm and cool tones mingle. Don't be scared to play around with colours in your skies – remember you are creating art, not decoration, so if you're feeling a green sky, paint a green sky. These skies can often become very striking, especially when accompanied by a strong silhouette. Here I used transparent orange, lavender and yellow ochre.





◀ **Big Sky**, watercolour, 10¾×14¾in (27×37cm). Sometimes it is good to flip the script – a dark horizon and a big, bright sky. This can work well, especially when the sky is a feature element of the scene. The brightness in the sky would not be anywhere near as effective if I hadn't left a lot of white paper showing. This effect is essential when wanting to create that blinding light. Colours used in the sky were yellow ochre, cerulean blue and lavender.

The way I paint a flat washed sky is to spray the paper a little first to help the wash take effect and, more importantly, to alleviate some of the harsh straight lines that can develop on bone-dry paper. Next, just attack it! Go crazy! While the paper is wet you can paint in whatever direction you like, as long as it is done quickly and with confidence and you do not go back over anything once it has started to dry. The end result will be a nice, flat, subtle sky that will serve as a great source of light.

### The graded wash

We paint this with the same approach that we use for the flat

wash. The big difference is we lighten the tone as we get closer to the horizon by using clear water instead of paint.

You can also use a different colour towards the horizon of course, but please make sure it is lighter in value than the top of the sky. This is a great one for dawn or dusk work. The light-valued horizon makes for a great backdrop for into-the-light silhouette scenes with buildings and figures.

### The loose clouds

Loose clouds are a favourite to paint because you just let loose! While I adhere to the ► p11

## TONY'S TIPS FOR INTERESTING SKIES

I hope these tips encourage you to be more adventurous and freer with your skies

**Don't make your skies too strong.**

**A mixture of cool and warm is always good.**

**Leave white gaps; use the paper's texture.**

**Let it rip! Don't be timid.**

**We're only painting!**







▲ *Hawks Nest*, watercolour, 10¾×14¾in (27×37cm). This was great fun to paint. It's an example of painting the stronger clouds over the underneath wash. A patch of pure white paper can give us that effect of blinding sunlight. The initial sky wash was subtle and soft, then once it was bone dry, I went in with the stronger tones around the white section to really push it and make the sky quite intimidating and full of life. The colours used in the sky were ultramarine, yellow ochre and neutral tint.

▼ *BHP54 Newcastle*, watercolour, 10¾×14¾in (27×37cm). This is a good example of a benign, loose sky complemented by a busy subject. Notice how I haven't worried about a few 'cauliflowers' here and there in the sky? It is watercolour and they are a part of our unique and unpredictable medium. For the sky I used cobalt blue, washed in parts with clean water.



▲ *Chapel Street*, watercolour, 14¾×10¾in (37×27cm). A flat, simple wash gives us all we need to represent a moody, miserable day. A grey, dull sky is important for a rainy day where the middle ground is very complex. Keep the wash nice and smooth and paint it quickly and with confidence. Big brush, lots of water. There was no colour used in the sky, simply dirty water from the water jug.







‘rule’ of tone being lighter at the horizon, I apply clean water to random sections of the sky area, then proceed to add colours to those wet areas, which in turn leaves the dry paper as our clouds. I finesse any unnatural looking edges with clean water and let it dry. Grey, blue, orange – a mixture of all three or of anything you want, really.

The most important part with this is to work quickly and make sure that you are left with a good variety of edges and that any straight lines or arrow shapes that may have formed are softened. This will make life easier when you’re looking at the finished product because, I assure you, those clumsy hard shapes in the sky will haunt you for the rest of your days.

### The stormy normy

When needing a big, forbidding cloud shape, I like to do it in two stages. Usually the sky is painted

in a set and forget kind of way. You do it first, you do it quickly and then you move on. For my kind of stormy clouds, I paint my initial sky with the loose clouds approach, then when the entire scene is completed and perfectly dry, I mix up my big, dark cloud colour. I like indigo here but use whatever you like.

I wet the area of the sky where my dark cloud will be with clean water, then just float my brush around and get plenty of that dark stuff on there. Let it flow and run. Keep a tissue handy to mop up any unruly drips – no-one likes an unruly drip! Flip the board up and over and side to side.

Remember that to get maximum depth and distance, you should ensure the cloud shapes that are close to the horizon are smaller than those at the top. Work it for as long as you like, as long as it is all still wet, you’ll be fine.

▲ *Typical Day in Franklin*, watercolour, 10¾×14¾in (27×37cm). This is a good example of a one-and-done approach: a few brushstrokes, a bit of water, a bit of dry paper and some slightly stronger pigment here and there. It’s interesting without being over-powering. The main focus of the piece is quite busy, I didn’t want to confuse that compositionally by having the sky take over from the main event. I used the little bits and bobs from the corners of my mixing wells for the sky colours – these little bits often create the best greys.

**Tony White** is an Australian watercolour artist. Tony has established a following with collectors and students, selling work in Europe as well as Australia. He tutors workshops for art societies, the Bathurst School of Arts and Brisbane Painting Classes. View more of Tony’s work on his YouTube channel and his website: [www.tonywhitewatercolour.com](http://www.tonywhitewatercolour.com)



# Big grey skies

**Winston Oh** reveals the techniques he uses to paint interesting scenes in watercolour even when the skies are persistently grey



▲ *Horsey Windmill, Norfolk*, watercolour, 11×15in (28×38cm). On the first day we drove out to Horsey Mill, which is near the coast. The subject was great, but it was dull and grey. However, the clouds appeared to be breaking up and presented an unusual appearance resembling sheep's fleece (left). Sadly, the sails of the windmill were missing. We decided to have a go, sketched the composition, and painted the sky, after photographing it. Armed with a brochure from the adjacent National Trust shop showing the mill in full sail, I finished the painting in our lodging, using a photograph and my sketch.

Setting off for three days' painting in the Norfolk Broads with an artist friend last October, the forecast was for rain with occasional dry patches. Before we left the conversation went: 'Shall we call it off?' 'Of course not. I like painting grey skies,' I said, not wanting to miss my first visit to the Broads. After all,

I have painted big grey skies in East Anglia for many years. I returned home with half-a dozen *plein-air* paintings with interesting grey skies.

I am pleased to report that my sceptical painter friend was convinced. I share this experience to encourage others to paint outdoors on dull grey days.





▲ *View of Windmill and River Ant from How Hill, Norfolk, watercolour, 11×15in (28×38cm).* The view of another windmill and River Ant from the foot of How Hill had a vast uniformly grey sky, which if rendered plain grey would have resulted in an exceedingly boring painting. Therefore I improvised with sweeps of grey clouds of various colours to make it interesting, colourful, and with a hint of movement.



▲ *Autumn Mist, Coltishall, Norfolk, watercolour, 11×15in (28×38cm).* On the second morning, we stopped off at Coltishall, where my friend wished to paint the pub by the river, but I preferred to paint the landscape beyond (right), which was draped in morning mist and had lovely autumn hues. The sky was a uniform grey, but I applied a range of greys and cloud shapes, adding faint raw sienna near the horizon to hint that the mist and clouds were lifting, and to justify my brightening the foliage tones. Painting the mist effect simply involves wetting the space representing the mist with a small brush, and then painting the trees and foliage down to the wet edge and allowing the paint to diffuse gently into it. That boat was transposed from where it was moored behind me.







▲ *Windpump on the River Ant, How Hill, Norfolk*, watercolour 11×15in (28×38cm). At How Hill, on the bank of the River Ant, I was attracted by the stand of trees in their golden autumn hues, and the windpump in the distance, whose sails were supported by a clutch of wooden beams painted black (left). I invented the sailing boat, and when painting the grey clouds, created an upward sweep to suggest wind and movement. Because the composition is dominated by the large trees with strong tones, it was better to keep the sky quiet and maintain a balance in the painting.

## Winston's tips for painting outdoors on grey days

**1** Take a dollop of imagination, inventiveness and confidence with your morning coffee before you set off. If you find your chosen subject lacking a sparkle, think in terms of livening up the painting with an interesting sky.

**2** The most exciting grey skies are to be seen before the rain and just after the rain has stopped. These are the transitional stages where brighter skies are being engulfed by rain clouds, and when the rain clouds part to reveal glimpses of brightness and blue. Do sketch them quickly if

you are adept at it, but my preference is to record these transient sky images on a digital device, so that they can be recalled instantly for reference when you are ready to paint the sky.

**3** Take a few moments to look closely at grey skies. You will often see faint cloud shapes, brighter spots or suggestion of movement. If you compare one segment with another, it is possible to discern different tones of grey, and different colours in some areas, such as a tinge of pink, light red or raw sienna, especially near the horizon. Drop a little of these colours in where you can. In the two

paintings *Moorings* and *Windmill on the River Thurne, Norfolk* and *Windpump on the River Ant, How Hill, Norfolk*, I simply took what was already there and exaggerated the colours, tones and shapes in my composition.

**4** If you are not familiar with the technique of painting wet-on-wet skies, I would recommend that you practise doing so to gain confidence before setting off. It will provide you with a method of painting skies swiftly, using some imagination and improvisation.





▲ *St. Benet's Abbey, near Ludham, Norfolk*, watercolour, 11×15in (28×38cm). St. Benet's Abbey is much favoured by East Anglian artists. It consists of a disused redbrick windmill built within the ruins of the main gateway of the abbey. It was misty with grey skies. After composing and sketching this unique subject, I decided I was not going to waste this special view with a plain grey sky, so I scrolled through my recent photographs to find a stunning sky that I had snapped in Thurne the previous day. It captures the moment the rain clouds parted. I felt that this sky fitted in the abbey composition perfectly. It was an eye-catching sky, which provided many colours, a striking visual centre of focus, and a sense of drama and movement. It compensated for the relatively plain foreground.

▲ *Moorings and Windmill on the River Thurne, Norfolk*, watercolour, 11×15in (28×38cm). As I sat down to paint this scene the clouds parted behind me, unveiling a brilliant white cloud peeping out behind a very dark one. I snapped it, hoping to use it, but before starting to paint, I felt that this striking, strong toned sky would overpower the windmill and the many boats in the foreground. Instead I created my own grey cloudy sky with a gentler patch of blue breaking through.

**Winston Oh** teaches watercolour at Dedham Hall, Dedham, Essex. A past student of James Fletcher-Watson and John Yardley, Winston is an elected member of the Pure Watercolour Society and is represented in the Singapore National Art Gallery collection. He has held solo exhibitions in the UK, Switzerland and Singapore, and taken part in mixed exhibitions in Sydney and London. [www.winstonoh.com](http://www.winstonoh.com)



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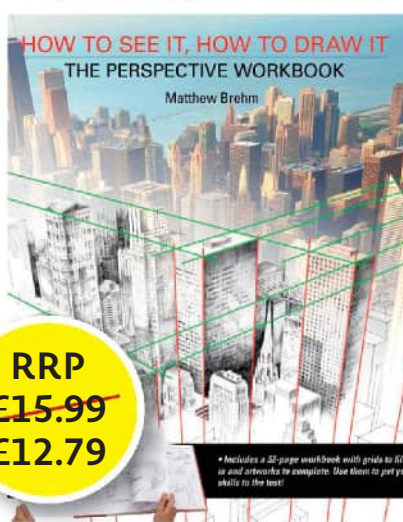
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