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**Editor:** Sally Bulgin PhD Hon VPRBSA  
theartistletters@tapc.co.uk

**Contributing Editor:** Jane Stroud

**Online Editor:** Dawn Farley

**Design:** Brenda Hedley

**Digital & E-commerce Marketing Executive:**  
Emily Warner

**Digital Marketing Executive:** Rowina Caesar  
rowina.caesar@warnersgroup.co.uk

**Advertising Sales Manager:** Jayne Notley  
+44 (0)1778 391189  
jayne.n@warnersgroup.co.uk

**Advertisement Copy:** Sue Ward  
+44 (0)1778 392405  
production@warnersgroup.co.uk

**Accounts**  
creditcontrol@warnersgroup.co.uk

**Publisher:** Lucie Dawson

**FOR ALL SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES**

+44 (0)1778 395174  
painters-online.co.uk/store  
subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk

**DISTRIBUTION & CIRCULATION**

Warners Group Publications plc  
Nikki Munton +44 (0)1778 391171  
nikkim@warnersgroup.co.uk  
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Warners Group Publications plc, West Street,  
Bourne, Lincolnshire. PE10 9PH

+44 (0)1778 391000

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Sally Bulgin Editor

# WELCOME from the editor

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

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[www.painters-online.co.uk/forum](http://www.painters-online.co.uk/forum)

We kick start this month's issue with our In Conversation with Annabel Thornton, winner of *The Artist* Award in last year's David Shepherd Wildlife Artist of the Year competition, which we have been proud to support for many years. Selecting our award winner from the broad range and high quality of the works selected for this annual exhibition is never easy, but it's also a highly enjoyable process and an event I feel privileged to be part of. From the works selected for the various categories such as Animal Behaviour, Earth's Wild Beauty, Facing Extinction to the Human Impact category, I finally chose Annabel's painting *Lone Bee*, for myriad reasons. You can see this painting in the feature on her work in which she shares inspiring insights into her working practices. I especially love the mix of detail describing the hovering bee against the loose abstraction of the background, which for me adds a sense of dynamism and reinforces the graceful dance of this delicate creature, which is so critical to our eco system. Annabel's bold and daring use of colour sets the tone and atmosphere of the composition whilst inviting us to engage with the flight, and plight of the bee, drawing attention to its decline as the result of multiple threats including habitat loss, disease and climate change. For me it encapsulates everything the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation stands for ([www.davidshepherd.org](http://www.davidshepherd.org)). Last year's competition and exhibition raised £85,000 for their vital conservation work across Africa. Long may the DSWF Wildlife Artist of the Year competition continue to inspire future generations of artists to draw attention to and help support wildlife and environmental conservation.

We also celebrate the publication of a new book *Poetic Woods*, by renowned, award-winning watercolour and mixed-media artist Ann Blockley, with our peak into how she combines watercolour and collage to create intriguing images of the natural landscape. Her long-standing passion for nature drives her continual exploration of new ways to create art. Her artistic practice embraces a range of materials and techniques to enable her to express her personal interpretations of her subject matter. I hope Ann's explorative approach will inspire your own creativity over the coming weeks.

As always, we've packed this issue with insights into our professional artist-contributors' working methods, demonstrations, tips and techniques, covering a wide range of media and subjects, from how to paint a bird in flight in watercolour, create a floral still life in soft pastels, combine ink and coloured pencil to capture the textures of the landscape to exploring the forgotten medium of gouache, and much more, to help develop your own artistic practices.

Finally, for extra inspiration and to enjoy the company of like-minded creatives, why not consider joining a painting course or holiday? Check out some of the latest opportunities on offer from the providers in the middle of this issue.

Best wishes

Sally Bulgin Editor



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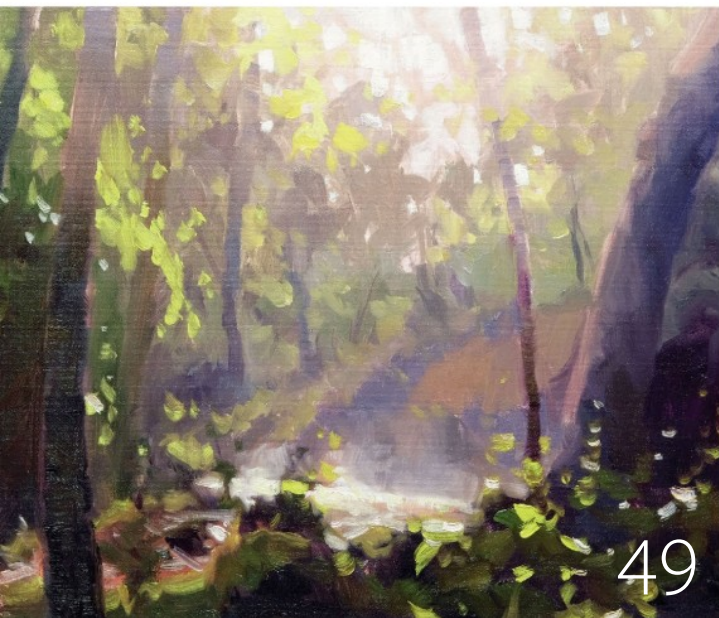


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### THIS MONTH'S COVER



Annabel Thornton *Mr Fox*, acrylic on canvas, 4x4in (10x10cm). See pages 14 to 17

### 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**  
ROI, RSMA  
has won many awards for her *plein-air* and *alla-prima* oil paintings. She is an elected member 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

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Barry Herniman



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Tessa Gwynne

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SCAN ME







Hazel Soan

JUNE 30  
to JULY 6  
2024

# Paint with Hazel Soan at Dumfries House, Scotland

Dumfries House. Photograph: Nacho Rivera

**A special one-off opportunity to participate in a tutored watercolour painting programme hosted by Hazel Soan at one of Britain's finest and most exclusive Royal country estates**

## Dumfries House

**H**is Royal Majesty King Charles III rescued the Neoclassical 18th century Dumfries House and its collection of Chippendale furniture from being sold in 2007 and has since lovingly restored the house and grounds. It is only in the last year that the gardens, arboretum and woodlands have matured and blossomed, making it the right time for artists to be in residence.

## Painting with Hazel Soan at Dumfries House

Hazel Soan is a versatile professional artist, who has written many instructional books and was one of the judges for the TV series *Watercolour Challenge*. On this semi-structured tutored painting programme Hazel will be working and teaching in watercolour each day. There will be lots of *en plein air* painting in the grounds and gardens as well as some still-life and portrait painting and group demonstrations. All abilities and media are welcome.



▲ Hazel Soan *Poppies, Gravetye*, watercolour, 30×22in. (76×56cm)

Your base for the week will be in the beautiful and expansive Queen Elizabeth II Walled Garden which will be full of colourful displays of roses and

delphiniums in early July and where there is also the vegetable garden and traditional greenhouse. You will have exclusive use of the Pavilion in the walled garden for indoor painting, teaching sessions and storing your equipment. You are free to paint anywhere on the estate which includes lakes and fountains, an arboretum and woods and a river, as well as bridges, pergolas and gates, and Dumfries House itself.

## Accommodation

You will be staying in the beautiful Dumfries House Lodge, which is on the Estate enabling you to paint from dawn to dusk. An event host will be with you at Dumfries House to take care of everyone and all the arrangements, and help you have the best experience possible.

## Details

- Dates: June 30 to July 6, 2024
- Number of students: 8 to 10
- Price per person: £3,325/US\$4,150 (no single supplement)
- Price includes: 6 nights' accommodation at Dumfries House Lodge, all meals, studio facility, private tour of Dumfries House, host artist and event host.

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



# YOUR VIEWS

## LETTERS, EMAILS AND COMMENTS

Email [theartistletters@tapc.co.uk](mailto:theartistletters@tapc.co.uk) or write to The Editor, *The Artist*, Warners Group Publications, The Maltings, West Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH  
Please note we may have to edit letters for reasons of space

## STAR LETTER

### Searching for books

I enjoyed Steve Hall's article about Edward Wesson in *The Artist*, October 2023 and would suggest that anyone wanting any of the books listed at the end of the feature could also try Abe Books ([www.abebooks.co.uk](http://www.abebooks.co.uk)) for the unavailable ones, or even the charity shops. I was lucky enough to find his book *The Paintings of Edward Wesson* in Bexhill for £1 (back in 2019). I also have a copy of his book on Winston Oh's paintings which I found in Hythe for £4, so they are out there.

Dave Gould, Kent

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



clever and sometimes very good but to me they depend too much on copying and geometry. Is this really what self-portraiture and portraiture is all about?

I agree that many commissions are dependent on photos and sometimes I have used them myself, though I much prefer to work live. Yet I have done hundreds of portrait sketches at community events and, apart from dogs and babies, they are always 'live'. And what a privilege to do a live impression of a person actually there in front of you! There is something incredibly special about the transient moods and expressions and these all feed into the heart and soul of the portrayal.

We marvel at the ageing Rembrandt and his brooding self-portraits or the agonising images from Van Gogh. What would they and other great artists make of the photo-image trend? How about a ban on all photographic aids for future self-portrait and portrait events?

William Mather, by email

### A digital world

Mike Barr, in his article Dare to be an artist, *The Artist*, September 2023, expresses beautifully the necessity for paintings to speak to our souls. We must all 'dare to be artists,' the exponents of analogue in a digital world.

Jill Elliot, by email

### Conversation pieces

I'm in my happy place when I'm out and about with my sketchbook and camera in hand, people watching. I'm a people painter, and in my work I want to capture body language, behaviour, or a moment that will feel familiar to the viewer. To describe my work I use terms like 'figurative artist' or 'contemporary artist' but they are very general terms and apply to all sorts of art. So, more recently I've used phrases like 'observational art' or 'candid moments'. But it has felt like so much blah, blah, blah! I've just never found the right description.

And then, of course, *The Artist* comes to the rescue. Jo Quigley's article in your July 2023 issue talks of 'conversation pieces' – a term that describes an informal group portrait. Wow! That was a Eureka! moment. How have I not discovered that term before? Huge, huge, fantabulous thank you to Jo, and to *The Artist* for helping me sort out a long-term frustration. Mwah!

Sue Ransley, by email

### The joy of a 'live' sitter

What exactly is a self-portrait? I've always thought it was a 'live' painting of a person by the person looking at their image in a mirror. Yet there seems to be a trend now for using a photo of yourself, sometimes taken years ago and copying that as a self-portrait. I love Sally Ward's self-portrait in her article, Learning to look, *The Artist*, July 2023, but that was squared-up from a reference photograph. It is a lovely representation

from a photograph but can you really call it a self-portrait?

Many of the Sky Arts competitors do the same, sometimes supplying an application self-portrait based on a photo. Often in the TV series they seem to work from a smartphone or tablet image despite having a wonderful model in front of them. Presumably most have an art-grid app on their device and then square-up their canvases. When artists are privileged with the joy of a 'live' sitter, why do some resort to a mechanical device? The results are often



▲ Sue Ransley, *Assume the Position*, oil on canvas, 15¾×23½in (40×60cm)



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# THE ART WORLD

NEWS, INFORMATION AND ONLINE EVENTS IN THE ART WORLD

*compiled by Jane Stroud*



▲ Rob Poynton *Visitors to the Royal Institute of Oil Painters*, oil on board, 15¼×19¼in (40×50cm)

## FEDERATION OF BRITISH ARTISTS

### Mall Galleries

The Mall

London SW1Y 5BD

☎ 020 7930 6844

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

**October 9 to 16**

## ART *for* ALL

Member artists of the **Federation of British Artists** have been pledging original works of art on an A5 postcard or small sculpture, which will be auctioned at the **Art for All** fundraising auction between October 9 and 16. All contributing artists from the FBA, including the **Royal Society of British Artists, Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, Royal Institute of Oil Painters, New English Art Club, Royal Society of Portrait Painters, Pastel Society, Royal Society of Marine Artists, Society of Wildlife Artists** and **Hesketh Hubbard Art Society**, will be acknowledged, but the artworks will be kept anonymous until after the auction, lending the event an element of mystery. All proceeds from the auction will go towards supporting the Mall Galleries' mission to empower artists through a not-for-profit programme of exhibitions and events, prizes and awards with a focus on figurative art. Bids will start from £40, and the public will be invited to bid from October 9 to 16. Find out more at [www.mallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk)





# Trees of LIFE

**Trees of Life**, presented in collaboration with the **Wytham Woods** team at the University of Oxford features the work of artist **Susan Neale** who is inspired by the natural world and the challenge of creating on paper and in paint the beauty and complexity of flora and fauna. Wytham Woods is maintained by the University of Oxford and has been the subject of extensive research programmes, many dating back to the 1940s. The site is exceptionally rich in wildlife, with over 500 species of plants, woodland habitats and 800 species of butterflies and moths. Conservator Nigel Fisher and marketing and engagement officer from Wytham Woods, Lucy Kilbey 'hope that the exhibition will attract new audiences to the woods, nurturing a heightened understanding of the vital role that diverse habitats play in preserving our planet's rich biodiversity.'

**Trees of Life** can be seen at **The Barn**, St John's College, St Giles, Oxford OX1 3JP, from November 2 to 17. For more information visit [www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk](http://www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk) or email the artist [susannealeartist@hotmail.com](mailto:susannealeartist@hotmail.com)

◀ Susan Neale *Herb Paris, Small Spider and Unidentified Fly*, watercolour and mixed media, 21×11in (53×28cm)

## South Hams Art Trail

This year's **South Hams Arts Trail** promises to be the largest yet. Seventy-four artists are taking part, opening their studios, homes and exhibition spaces in 35 venues across the South Hams, giving visitors the opportunity to talk to them and in some cases, watch them while they work. The event runs from **October 14 to 29**. Full details of all the artists, activities and venues taking place can be downloaded online at [www.shaf.org.uk](http://www.shaf.org.uk)

► Shirley Kirkcaldy  
*Bright Field*, oil,  
22¾×22¾in (58×58cm) at this  
year's South Hams Art Trail







▲ Roy Connelly's painting in a Stour Valley orchard

▲ TOP Tushar Sabale's painting of the Thames from Tower Bridge

# BRITISH Plein Air Painters

'Pioneered by John Constable and fundamental to the birth of Impressionism, painting *en plein air* has gained significant momentum in the UK over the past 150 years. With the introduction of paint in tubes in the 1870s, artists were suddenly afforded the freedom to take their work outdoors, no longer bound to their studios. A key factor in the technical development of naturalism, the process of painting from life immersed in the landscape became a widespread practice, adopted by artists including **Monet, Pissarro, Sisley** and **Renoir**, and more recently leading UK artists such as **Ken Howard** and **Fred Cuming**. The *plein-air* movement has gone from strength to strength since its birth, with many painters adopting the method as the only way to capture truly a moment in time, whatever the weather.

**British Plein Air Painters** was established in 2018 to celebrate the artists working in this way here in the UK, a cohort who share a passion for painting outdoors, in front of the subject, capturing the essence of their surroundings with freshness and energy. The group anticipates an outstanding collection of works for their third exhibition, taking place in London in October and November 2023. The exhibition will be an opportunity to see works from 27 of the country's most talented and established artists hanging together, showcasing the best of the UK's contemporary *plein-air* painting using a variety of media including oils and watercolour.'

Maria Rose

**A Plein Air Vision: British Plein Air Painters** takes place at the **Royal Watercolour Society Gallery**, 3-5 Whitcomb Street, London WC2H 7HA, from October 31 to November 5. For more details, including opening times visit [www.britishpleinairpainters.co.uk](http://www.britishpleinairpainters.co.uk)



# Royal Society of

## MALL GALLERIES

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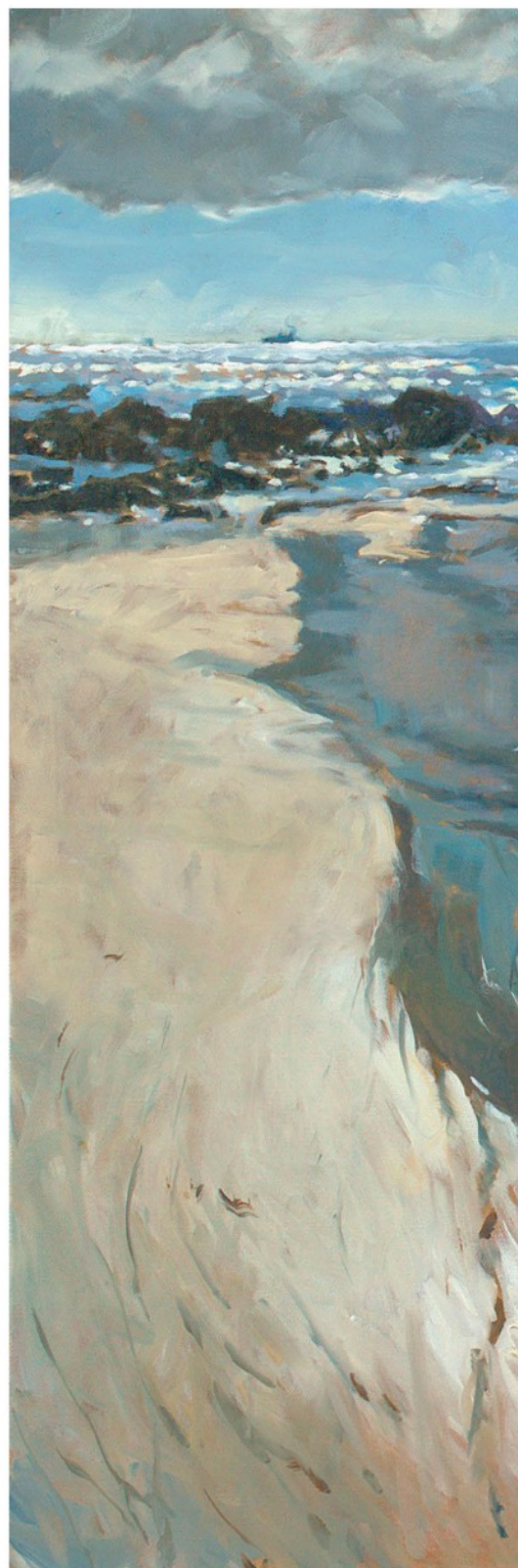
[www.mallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk)

September 21 to 30

**The Royal Society of Marine Artists** will be presenting its 78th annual exhibition this September at the **Mall Galleries** in London, featuring work by some of the best marine artists in the country. Established in 1939 as the Society of Marine Artists, the society was granted its Royal title by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in 1966. 'The UK has long been Europe's leader, and a constant inspiration when it comes to the discipline of marine art,' writes president of the society, **John Scott Martin**. 'Being an island, the coast and sea is an integral part of our national identity. Artists have never been too far from it and many of us are drawn to the sea and to artwork depicting it. Since the Royal Society of Marine Artists' inception in 1939, it has been focused on promoting the finest in figurative marine work. There is no other comparable society in the whole of Europe and, with its aim to bring together the year's best tidal and coastal artwork, our annual exhibition attracts both artists and buyers from across the world.'

To coincide with the exhibition various demonstrations have been organised to include: **Mark Buck**'s demonstration on how to capture reflections in water using pure watercolour on Thursday September 21, 10am to 12pm; **Srirangam Mohankumar**'s demonstration of his trademark transparent watercolours, from 2 to 4pm on Thursday September 21; **Tom Marsh**'s demonstration of his painting process while working *en plein air* from 2 to 4pm on Friday September 22; **Duncan Palmar**'s demonstration of a beach scene aided by an oil sketch and photographic reference on Saturday September 23, 2 to 4pm; **Roger Dellar**'s demonstrations of *alla prima* painting techniques on Friday September 29, 11am to 1pm and 2 to 4pm; and **Nick Grove**'s demonstration of his *plein-air* paintings on Saturday September 30, 2 to 4pm. For full details of all these events, visit [www.mallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk)

More information about the Royal Society of Marine Artists can be found at [www.rsma-web.co.uk](http://www.rsma-web.co.uk)



► Geoffrey Huband *Low Water, Contre Jour*, oil, 32×42in (81×107cm)



# Marine Artists





# Giving animals a voice

Caroline Saunders talks to **Annabel Thornton** whose wildlife pictures are alive with stunning colour and texture

**W**inner of *The Artist Editor's Choice Award* in the David Shepherd Wildlife Artist of the Year competition 2022, Annabel Thornton captures the character of an animal juxtaposed with unique backgrounds of pattern and texture. Sometimes the subject cannot immediately be seen; the audience must participate to spot a creature in its habitat, similar to the

experience of being at the zoo.

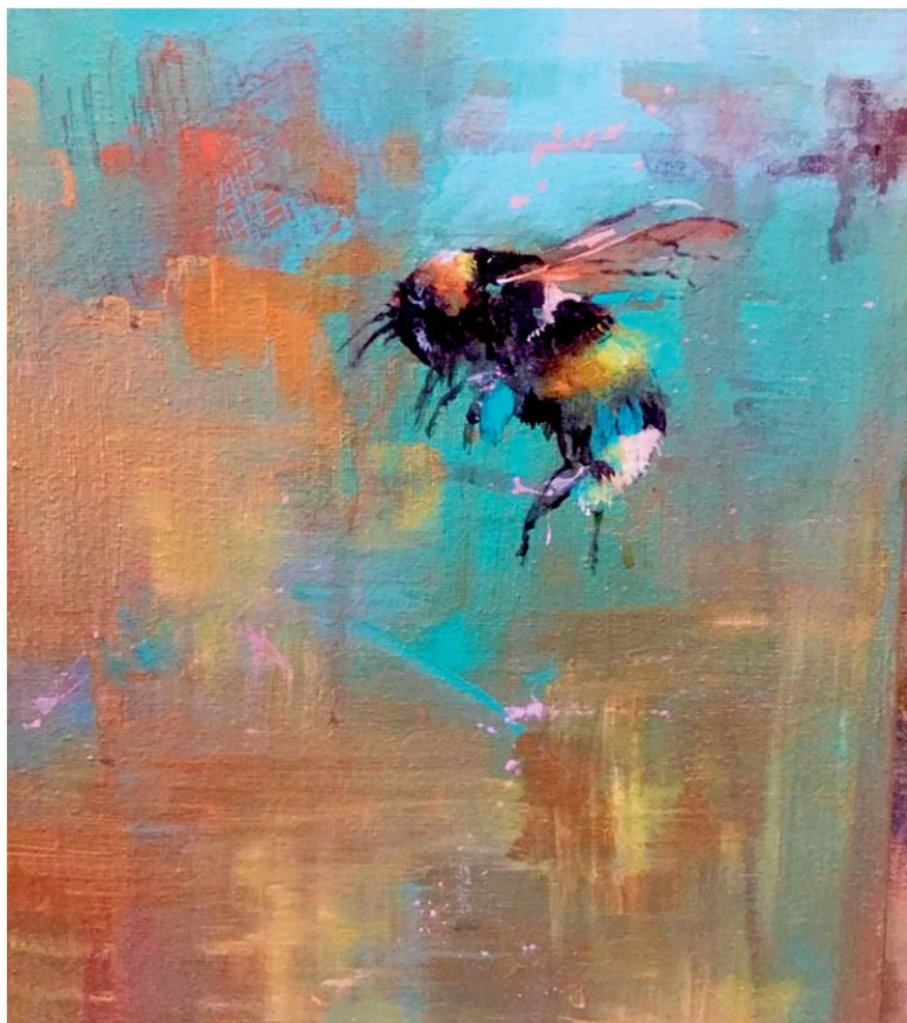
With a bold and often daring use of colour, coupled with a graphical treatment of the canvas, Annabel serves to set the tone and atmosphere of the piece whilst drawing attention to specific details, stirring the emotions of the viewer. Working mainly in acrylics and charcoal, Annabel will occasionally work over the acrylics in oils and, depending on the subject matter and the required effect, she might use collage. With a

firm understanding of her medium she employs both traditional and contemporary techniques, to reinforce the energy and strength of her subjects.

Annabel has always drawn from an early age. Her great uncle was a World War II photographer and her mother an accomplished sewer. 'Witnessing my mother at work may have rubbed off on me. Having grown up in the countryside surrounded by nature I developed an innate love of the outdoors. For as long as I can remember I have had a passion and fondness for animals, their habitats and welfare.

'Animals are so important to humans and the environment. They are needed for the smooth running of our world. Unfortunately, species are disappearing. The loss of just one species can have a ripple effect on an entire ecosystem. It is so important that we teach our young children about nature, the environment and sustainability to prepare them in their role of combating climate change. It's so great to give a voice to animals by painting them, helping to highlight conservation and awareness of endangered species.

'I am passionate about bees. They have prime importance to the biodiversity on which we all depend for survival. Studies have found that about 25-per-cent of wild bee species have vanished since 1990. I love the colour, the shape and how they work so hard. It's amazing that their



◀ *Lone Bee*, acrylic on canvas, 10×8in (25×20cm).

'I chose a small canvas for this piece to complement the bee. I didn't want the size to overpower the image, as the bee is the significant focal point of the painting. Layers of gold, turquoise and a splash of pale pink adorn the canvas to show the beauty of the bee, which represents the jewel of the earth.'





▲ *Toucan*, acrylic on canvas, 11¼×9in (30×23cm).

'This piece is painted on board rather than canvas because I wanted the paint to create more of an uneven result suggesting foliage. The perspective of the toucan is from below to give the idea of looking up at the bird, surrounded by sky. The blue is Wedgewood blue, which is one of my favourite shades; it works with all colours and always gives harmony to a piece of work.'

► *Mr Fox*, acrylic on canvas, 4×4in (10×10cm).

'Mr Fox is a small study of the fox that visits my garden looking for my hens! The colours are all muted, which I achieved by mixing raw umber with different shades, to create overall harmony between the fox and the background.'



*'Animals are so important to humans and the environment. They are needed for the smooth running of our world'*

vibrating sound comes from beating their wings 11,400 times a minute!'

Before Annabel turned her hand to wildlife paintings, music, dance and movement were her primary focus. 'Portraying drama in dance I was concerned with the movement of the human form and transferring the graceful harmony and kinetics of the dancer onto the canvas.' She spent much of her time capturing a split moment in time; the action of the dance, the moment the conductor lifts his baton and the atmosphere in the theatre. To create movement she worked fast to capture visible shapes or the configuration of an object. The lessons learnt from this and self-expression taught at Cheltenham College of Art, have fuelled her wildlife paintings.

## Influences

Proud to have recently become a member of the Society of Women Artists (SWA)



▲ *Night Flight*, acrylic on canvas, 8×19¼in (20×50cm).

'I chose a landscape format to emphasise the shape of the barn owl's wings swooping over the field. I wanted the owl to jump out, so I painted the background a black/purple to enable the owl's colours to give a strong impact. The grass was painted in very quickly to give movement and texture. A gesture of colour over one wing gives the motion of flight. My palette was gold, black, magenta with raw umber and greys.'





◀ *Morning Chat*, acrylic, oil on canvas, 15¾in (40cm) diameter.  
 'This is one of my favourite pieces. I wanted to create the idea of looking in on a scene, so I chose a round canvas to give the idea of a window. The gorillas are relaxed leaning against tree trunks, giving the suggestion of having a conversation about morning events. The canvas was loosely painted with a flat-edge brush contrasting with the gorillas painted in more detail. I didn't want to overcrowd the painting with colours but create a calm feeling of a dense rainforest. I used a lot of different shades of greens and yellows for the foliage then added the gorillas using magenta, blues and orange tones. The bodies were drawn in white using a liner brush.'

Annabel says:

'The society was founded in 1857 and has introduced many famous names to the world of fine art including Dame Laura Knight, Mabel Lucie Attwell and Daphne Todd. It's a great honour to belong to such a group.'

Jenny Saville and Anselm Kiefer are among the contemporary artists that Annabel admires, enjoying their use of techniques and materials that are so very different from her own. Emily Lamb is a wildlife artist who has been incredibly inspiring for Annabel. 'I love Emily's use of scale, her incredible compositions and how she makes marks. The freedom and braveness of her use of colour and pattern

inspires my own creativity. Another artist I greatly admire has to be Robert Heindel. His

theatrical pieces convey atmosphere and presence. Synonymous with the world of ballet, his work is so diverse and memorable. He captivates the viewer with engaging visual narratives and interesting compositional shapes and ideas. A master at capturing the body in energetic motion, it is not just the painterly skill of portraying, for example, a swirling skirt, but the shadows and blending of the background with the figure that is so well executed. His painting, *Solitude*, featuring a lone ballet dancer in deep thought has to be my

favourite. The tension of the muscles in the leg as the dancer flexes her foot and the power in her other leg can almost be felt. The blue and mauve palette is so relevant to the meaning of the work, with the elegant dancer painted in such a way that translates her emotions through the shape of her body.'

The hardest part of the creative process for Annabel is coming up with an idea. Whilst on countryside walks with her dogs she constantly has ideas knocking around in her head. Anything will inspire her; it might be a colour or a shape. Walking provides a direct connection to wildlife. Using a Canon Ixus camera and iPhone 11, she takes a lot of photographs for reference. 'I have had my camera for many years; it's my faithful backup that never lets me down, but the quality of the phone image is now fantastic. By taking my own shots it gives me better understanding of how animals and insects move and fit into their environment. Occasionally I will produce sketches whilst out walking to gain knowledge and understanding of habitats.'

## Working process

Although an unusual format choice, Annabel is not afraid of working within a circle if the subject dictates. She most often uses a square, which she feels immediately creates a sense of the contemporary but she finds it brings its own challenges, more so than portrait



◀ *African Penguins*, acrylic on canvas, 23½×31½in (60×80cm).  
 'This is a larger painting, so it gave me the chance to use a large flat brush. I applied the paint in layers, very thickly, building up blocks of colour. The composition changed quite a few times until I found the right combination of penguins and stance. I wanted them to look like soldiers standing guard. I made almost geometric marks to give an abstract feel to the background and to achieve an open space. My palette is soft to give a calm effect to the surroundings, but keeping the penguins true to their natural colour, adding hints of the background colour to help unite them.'



► *Painted Dog*, acrylic on canvas, 9×11¼in (23×30cm).

'I've chosen to paint half of the African dog because I wanted the surroundings to dominate the canvas. Strong blocks of colours surround the image, with dabs of colour to create texture and camouflage. I love that the bright yellow/green helps lift the yellow ochre in the fur. My chosen palette was iridescent gold, iridescent verdi, blue, white and black with a magenta to outline the image.'

or landscape. She prepares linen with gesso or sometimes a thick layer of white acrylic scraped on with cardboard strips. 'I hardly ever do preliminary sketches. I tend to start by giving the canvas a loose colour first. Then a camouflage effect is achieved by working the subject and background together incorporating the same accents of colour in both. When starting the painting of an animal I will roughly draw out the image, but I always tend to paint the eye first, which helps me to connect with a piece.'

Annabel layers colour fast, so the quick-drying nature of Winsor & Newton Artists' acrylics is ideal. She finds the thick, buttery consistency is extremely versatile and suitable for all techniques whilst also retaining brilliance when dry. 'I am fond of Golden Acrylics for their richness of colour. In different lights the gold reflects giving the painting a unique depth.' She applies the paint with flat-edge brushes, rags, her fingers, or loads cardboard with a good amount of paint and scrapes to create surface texture. 'My flat-edge go-to brush has to be the one-inch Daler-Rowney'

The painting tends to develop through a process of mark making. Sometimes Annabel will work the painting up in thick layers, thick drips and short fat dabs; another time she will use light washes, in watery strokes. If emulating a grass-like texture, Annabel works into the paint with either a blade or pencil.

To convey atmosphere, Annabel's mantra is 'less is more' with regards to colour and detail. Colour combinations and background colour schemes develop from the colours and shapes of the subject matter. Lighter hues are applied first. Each picture is individual and takes on board a different treatment. 'To exaggerate certain parts of a painting I use strong colours. I want the colours to give excitement. Orange hues with soothing aqua or even zingy teal is a daring choice but one that will work every time.'



Painting every day for about six hours, Annabel finds working instinctively is exciting. 'The buzz from not being 100-per-cent sure of what will develop in a painting makes the process more gratifying. I see every piece as a challenge and don't worry if a form is over emphasised. The painting tends to change many times and takes as long as it takes for me to be happy with it. I often need to set the canvas aside and come back to it with fresh eyes.' Flitting between paintings and subjects Annabel says: 'All art requires courage; it is important to follow your passion, be yourself, mistakes happen for a reason, solving problems is all part of it, enjoy.'



#### Annabel Thornton

was born in Cheshire, and studied at Cheltenham College of Art where she gained a BA Fine Art honours degree. Her passion for art has led to many exhibitions. She is a full member of the Society of Women Artists and an associate member of the Society of Equestrian Artists. See more of Annabel's work at:

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



# Getting to know your materials

In the third of four articles on loosening up in watercolour, **Tom Shepherd** turns our attention to materials, mind-set and painting language

**T**he first two articles in this series have looked at how to visualise your subject as simple shapes and how to assign each shape with a tonal value, light and shadow, with the intention of encouraging a different way of observing, so that we are painting shapes, rather than things, leading to a more painterly result. This foundational structure gives us the creative freedom to play with our colours, washes and brush marks and the way we use a brush and pigment to create shapes is the focus of this article.

## Understanding your brushes

Since we are going to be using our brushes to create shapes, it is crucial that we become skilled with them, taking the time to practise, play and explore. Each of my brushes has a personality of its

own. Some are soft and floppy yet hold buckets of water, others are much firmer, with varying degrees of springiness and capacity. Some come to a fine point with a huge reservoir of water, others are blunt, and so on. I even have a selection of scruffy old brushes, each one perfect in the right context.

Given equal quality, no brush is better than another. But you should take the time to understand your brushes – what they can and can't do, their characteristics, abilities and limitations. Obviously the more time you spend painting, the better you will understand your brushes, but taking time to just play on scraps of paper is surprisingly beneficial.

## Paint consistency

Understanding paint consistency is the most crucial key to watercolour. It is the variable that separates this medium

from all the others. Shapes, composition, tones, edges, even the majority of colour mixing, is applicable across all media, but the way watercolour feels and behaves is completely unique. Getting to know how your pigment and water feels on your palette, how it behaves coming out of your brush, and then how it interacts with the level of wetness on your page is essential, but it's also where the excitement and joy of watercolour lies, and it's that attitude we should always have at the forefront of our minds. As I've mentioned before, a hands-off approach is so important to watercolour, so don't fiddle!

Paint consistency is tricky to explain, and theories abound, but the only way you will truly understand is to practise and paint. You need to build up your brush miles so that you develop your muscle memory. Practice and play, yes, but with a specific focus in mind.

There are some guideposts to help you along the way. When I first started out in watercolour I was in the dark on this topic, but then I came across the watercolour clock by Joseph Zbukvic (*Mastering Atmosphere and Mood in Watercolor: The Critical Ingredients that turn Paintings to Art* by Joseph Zbukvic) and it immediately clicked in my brain. It was a very logical way of representing the different paint consistencies on your palette and in your brush, the wetness of the page, and then the interaction of these two factors.

I definitely recommend looking it up; it is something I often talk about in my online watercolour school. In short, he has coined names for the different consistencies of paint – from watery tea, through milky, to creamy and eventually



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 were 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)

Email: [tom@tomshepherdart.com](mailto:tom@tomshepherdart.com)

Instagram:

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

## TRY THESE IDEAS

- Play with different pressures at different points, twisting, lifting, pushing, and pulling.

- Experiment with how fine a point a brush can make and what sort of line. How does it retain its shape?

What happens if I use it on its edge, or quickly skim it over the page?

- Play, play, play, and then play some more! I know, all too well, that when we want to produce a painting, these exercises feel like they are taking up valuable time, but they are so, so useful. Without the pressure of attempting to create a finished painting, you will find you get much more creative with how you use the brush.



▲ The photo above is of my playtime getting to know a couple of brushes. I am experimenting with how the brush holds and releases pigment and water when the paint consistency varies

When I convince students to do these exercises, really focusing on how the brush and pigment feels, there are always little lightbulb moments – and that's what we are chasing.



## BUILDING EXERCISE

Taken from a recent course, this is an example of these concepts in action. The three buildings are painted using exactly the same shapes, tonal values, colours and paint consistencies. The top right building was painted tightly, using a filling-in approach, avoiding wet-in-wet work (showing a lack of confidence in understanding paint consistency) and trying to capture all the details of the windows.

The two other buildings were painted using a single brushstroke for the roof, a couple more for the darks with an even darker colour dropped in whilst still wet; a single bold stroke or two for the foreground purple then a few flicks and marks for some suggestion of detail.

There's nothing wrong with the tighter approach, of course, but if we are chasing a looser feel, the result of the other two is much more exciting, and also much more fun to paint. This is a hard concept to put into words, so let's look at a few examples and then a step-by-step demonstration of a loose, colourful hornbill (over the page).



### ► EXAMPLE ONE

*Ready & Waiting*,  
watercolour,  
11¼×16½in  
(30×42cm).

I had so much fun painting this tractor, letting all the large light washes run together, creating free-flowing medium-sized shapes and washes for the shadows, and finishing off with exuberant flicks and marks, adding just enough detail to make it interesting



### ▲ EXAMPLE THREE

*Marloes Sands, Pembrokeshire*, watercolour, 22×30in (56×76cm).

This is a big painting created with a huge synthetic goat mop and a not quite so huge squirrel-hair mop. The sky was completely out of control for the most part, but look what the watercolour created! Something far better than I could ever have imagined.

I was a little more in my comfort zone with the sea and rocks but it was all about laying in large, flowing shapes for the lights, then lovely big juicy brush marks of shadow over the top with the rich velvety darker mixes brushed in whilst still damp.

As you can see, it's far from perfect, but I was thrilled with the end result as I felt it had so much life and energy. I focused on simple shapes, simple light and shadow and big simple marks – the medium took care of the rest

### ► EXAMPLE TWO

*Fairy Wren*, watercolour,  
8¼×11¼in (21×30cm).

Here there is a clear pattern of light and shadow, particularly the large shadow shape of the head and under the body. This created the structure that allowed for more dynamic and energetic brushstrokes for the wings, tail and background. A mix of paint consistencies provided interest and contrast



to thick paint (I've heard all sorts of words for this, from butter, to marmite/vegemite, peanut butter and more!) The wetness of the page is also on a sliding scale of dry, wet, moist or damp.

As time progresses I tend to think in a more fluid way, because in reality the wetness of the page and the mix consistency is not an exact science, and

the interaction between the two can be surprising, so it becomes more a case of playing and experimenting with what you have until you achieve some confidence in the result.

To get to know this relationship, without the pressures of trying to create a finished painting, I highly recommend an experiment session. Lay down some

big washes, then as these dry, brush and drop in different consistencies of paint and see what happens. Pay extremely close attention to how wet the page is, how the mixes feel in your brush and the resulting effects. On the whole, the interaction has become second nature for me, but I still fall back on the language and lessons learned from the watercolour



## 3RD OF 4: WATERCOLOUR

clock. It gave me a framework from which to analyse what I was doing, while both painting and experimenting.

So, how does this understanding help with our painterly approach? Knowing how the different paint consistencies behave and react with what is already on the page, will give you much more confidence to paint with washes and brushstrokes and removes some (not all) of the fear that so easily makes us tighten up. Over time this confidence will open up your creativity and bravery, and is far more conducive to happy accidents – another important part of loosening up with watercolour.

### Mindset

Now that we're painting shapes and tones, and we understand our materials, the final skill is how we lay down the marks, and this is all about mindset. Actually, it comes down to a problem-solving exercise. How few marks can I use to create the shape of my subject? Use the simplest brushstrokes possible without sacrificing accuracy, and without getting caught up in trying to paint 'the thing'; trust the shapes.

Using the right-sized brush for any given area will help. I always encourage students to use a brush that feels bigger than is comfortable. Imagine trying to

create lovely flowing washes and bold brushstrokes with a tiny brush – it's not going to work. Be bold and get that pigment flowing!

The act of creating a shape with a simple brushstroke or two seems to inject into it more character and energy. Even if the shape is not perfect, it immediately feels livelier, has more character and is looser. This leads me to the final point. I feel, when it comes to this looser, more painterly, approach, a painting that does not have perfect technique, or absolute accuracy in the shapes, yet is created with excitement, a joy for the medium, and energy, is always going to come out shining! ITA

## DEMONSTRATION *Hornbill*

This demonstration is taken from an archive video on my Online Watercolour School, and is a great example of taking everything we have explored so far and bringing it all together. I will show you how I see the subject tonally, then how I translated that into washes and brushstrokes that jigsaw together to give us an interpretation of our subject.



### ▲ TONAL SKETCH

The tonal sketch shows the simple pattern of light and shadow families that I am looking for. As discussed in the previous article, this pattern provides the structure of the painting. How we choose to create the shapes is up to us, so long as these shapes remain, holding the painting together and making it work. In this case we will be creating them out of simple, bold washes and lovely loose brushstrokes and marks.

### ► STAGE ONE

I applied watery new gamboge yellow to the beak, and dropping in more milky strength at times, I laid in the light family with a large brush, creating big bold shapes and washes. I left the white of the page for harder edges and highlights. I also happily splashed the colour into the background. This immediately helped me to loosen up, shifting my mindset away from 'filling in' and painting between the lines. I moved around the painting introducing milky phthalo blue to the yellow, creating some beautiful greens. I was more cautious with the body. I didn't mind a bit of green and yellow running into it, but generally I wanted it to remain in the purple realm.

As long as I didn't go too dark (keeping the paint consistency in the watery and milky territory) then I had the freedom to play at this stage. Whilst relatively quick and painted with a sense of urgency but also thoughtfulness, this layer laid the foundations of the painting, and was also my 'way in' to the painting. By approaching it with a carefree and loose attitude you will get into the right mindset from the start



### MATERIALS

- **Paper** Winsor & Newton Professional 100-per-cent cotton, 140lb (330gsm) cold-pressed paper.
- **Brushes** Winsor & Newton Professional Synthetic Squirrel Quill brush, medium size; Jackson's Raven synthetic squirrel Mop brush, size 0; and Winsor & Newton Professional synthetic sable Round brush, sizes 8 and 10.
- **Watercolours** Daniel Smith watercolours: phthalo blue (green shade); French ultramarine; quinacridone red; aureolin yellow; and new gamboge yellow.

### ◀ STAGE TWO

With the first wash still damp I stroked in some large areas of a darker green by adding a stronger consistency of phthalo blue. The damp page and the creamier paint consistency caused the tone to darken, resulting in slightly more defined marks, but still with a loose softness to them. The variety of edges, soft and hard, are the subject of part four of this series, next month. Next, I began the shadow family. I continued to work with as large shapes as

possible, creating a simple wash of milky yellow and red for the shadow shapes in the beak, and altering the colour by adding blue as I built up the face. Whilst still damp I began to drop in darker spots and to brush in smaller marks creating depth and softness within the large shadow shapes (remember the gentle shadow, deep shadow approach of the previous article)







### ▲ STAGE THREE

Reminding myself not to lose sight of the overall shape, I continued this approach for the rest of the face and beak with a simple wash of shadow, popping in small strokes and marks of stronger, darker mixes as it dried. Wherever possible I attempted to link these washes together and let colours gently flow. There is a balance between more control than the initial wash yet not getting caught up in details; continuing to think in terms of washes and brushstrokes. I chose to start in the focal point of the face as this would be the most refined area. Once it started working, I was far more confident in approaching the rest of the painting with even looser and broader brushstrokes

### ▲ STAGE FOUR

The back of the neck came next, the big bold shape first, then small strokes and flicks as it dried. I had a huge amount of fun with the brush at this stage, and it was this attitude that contributed to the lively feel of the marks. I then transitioned into the darker, cooler shadows of the body, starting with creamy quinacridone red, and adding more dark blue with every brushstroke to create a variegated wash from the neck down into the body

### ◀ STAGE FIVE

With face and head working I could really let loose in the body and background. I mixed the gentle shadow tone of the body with the blues and red, using big bold brushstrokes of the creamy mix. When these strokes hit each other, the colours mingled in a beautiful way. Whilst still damp I brought the consistency up to be much thicker and stroked in some final hits of rich, deep dark. Then I left it alone to do its thing. If you focus on simple shapes and tones, with nice clean colours, watercolour takes care of the rest. It is often said that watercolour is a joint effort between the artist and the medium – we are working alongside each other.

Into the background I went with a lovely deep creamy mix of aureolin yellow and phthalo blue. I was quite selective about where I put this darker green, using it as a negative shape to carve out and trap light on the bill and chest, while in other places to soften edges between the bird and background. The placement and use of the dark background was considered, but the application of the paint was bold and with a big brush, as always, tackling the largest shape first with lots of movement, energy and free-flowing paint. While the page was still wet, I dropped in even creamier mixes of the same colour to deepen and strengthen the shadows

### ► FINISHED PAINTING

*Hornbill, watercolour, 15×22in (38×56cm).*

The final touch was a little flick of extra detail in and around the eye area to make it pop! There we have it. If we compare the finished painting to the initial tonal sketch I hope you can see how the large and medium shapes of light and shadow do provide structure, but are created in a loose and free way with enjoyment of the medium. I deliberately used language to encourage a different mindset and looser approach. If you wish to pursue this painterly feel in your watercolours, thinking in terms of shapes, brushstrokes and washes, and changing the language you use with yourself will, I promise, allow you to start to see real progress in that direction

*The final article in this series is all about edges – the last part of the watercolour jigsaw puzzle and whilst a simple concept, edges will immediately take your paintings to the next level when considered in the right way. Until next time, happy painting!*





# Ten steps to painting flowers in pastel

Paint your own floral still life with **Sophie Ploeg** as she shares tips and techniques for using pastel on paper

**T**here is so much joy in painting flowers! In this demonstration I would like to share with you how I go about painting a floral still life in soft pastel. Pastel is one of my favourite art materials and I have been painting with it ever since I was a teenager. It is an incredibly direct material to work with, that does not require any other tools or preparation. Simple as a pastel stick may seem, however, it's not always easy to paint

with, and a few tips and tricks will help you conquer this beautiful medium.

For this still life I picked some flowers from my garden: a branch from the cherry tree and some freshly picked daffodils. If you have a garden, why not have a nose around for some suitable flowers to paint, or else head to a florist or garden centre to get some inspiration. Have a play around with different vases or pots, try different backgrounds and lighting situations (change room, or angle, use paper or fabric for

backgrounds) before you settle on a setup. As flowers can wilt more quickly than you can paint them, it's always a good idea to take some good photos of your still life. Make sure you take the photos from the same level as you would paint them from life so raise the camera to your eye level. If the still life gets accidentally moved or the flowers die, the photos will provide you with a back-up plan to continue working on your painting. I ended up using my photos for this still life too.

## DEMONSTRATION *Cherry Blossom and Daffodils*



### MATERIALS

- **Paper** Art Spectrum Colourfix Traditional sanded paper in aubergine. This paper is fairly rough to the touch, but will allow me to apply many layers of pastel without the tooth getting full. I try to paint very thinly (I always tell my students to just 'tickle' the paper) so that I can apply more layers of pastel to enhance the colour, add depth and variety, or simply to overpaint a mistake or two. I chose aubergine simply because I like the colour. The paper will be covered completely by the pastel so, in the end, it does not really matter what colour I choose, but in the early stages it is nice to work on a pleasant colour that matches the idea for the painting. I prefer to work with medium or darker-toned papers.
- **Pastels** I used a variety of pastels, some soft and some hard. The main brands were Rembrandt, Unison, Faber-Castell Polychromos and a few Schmincke and Sennelier.



### ▲ STAGE ONE

The first marks can often be a bit daunting. I used a light, hard pastel colour so I could clearly see what I was doing. I try to draw very lightly as I don't want these lines to be visible in the final painting. I kept things simple by marking out where the top and bottom of my still life would be. The whole still life needed to fit in between those two marks. I then looked at the still life and found some very simplified general shapes: the vase is a rectangle, the flowers are a diagonally-placed rectangle, and the daffodils a square. I measured that the top of the vase was around the halfway point. These shapes were simple to draw and making a first mark became a little less scary





## ▲ STAGE TWO

Next, I tried to adjust these basic shapes and started creating a very rough and simplified outline of the main elements. The vase got a rough vase-shape and the flowers became slightly more refined shapes. I double checked the proportions of all these shapes and the negative shapes in between the main shapes. The triangles that I could see in between the stems were long and slender, the widest point of the cherry blossom on the left was noted, and the widest point of the daffodils too



## ▲ STAGE THREE

I started working inside the shapes that I had created, sub-dividing these shapes into smaller shapes. I placed a few stems in the vase shape, for example, which created various triangles for which I could check the width and length and overall shape. I also sub-divided the blossom where I could see clusters of flowers and marked out the individual daffodils. I was still merely trying to place everything in the right place and to get their proportions correct. I wasn't drawing any details at this stage



## ▲ STAGE FOUR

My still life didn't have much colour and the values were very close together. The flowers were white, the background was off-white as well, so a value block-in was fairly simple. I put the lights and darks in anyway as it's useful to double check proportions and composition and it also ties the whole painting together. I covered the background with the flat side of a pastel, but I painted it very lightly so as not to fill the tooth of the paper

*'As flowers can wilt more quickly than you can paint them, it's always a good idea to take some good photos of your still life'*

### Sophie's top tips

- Paint lightly to keep the tooth of the paper open and allow for many layers of pastel – ideal to cover up mistakes, scumble, glaze and hatch.
- Gather the pastels you've used on a tray, or the edge of the easel, so that in the end you have a palette of colours for your painting. Only use these colours in the final stages of the painting in order to keep a nice colour harmony.
- Take some good quality photos of your still-life setup before you start. You might need to use these if your still life gets accidentally moved, the light changes dramatically, or your flowers wilt.
- Don't dive in with the softest pastels as they will quickly fill the tooth of your paper, after which you will not be able to add any more paint.
- Take your time; not all art needs to be finished in one sitting or even an hour. You'll be amazed how much you can achieve if you go slowly and take your time.

## ► STAGE FIVE

I added the darks (mainly the stems of the flowers) and pushed the lights a little bit more, double checking proportions all the time

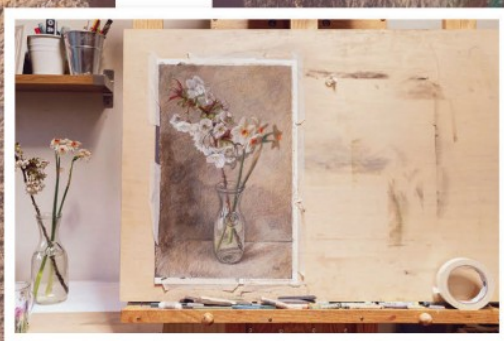




## PASTELS

### ► STAGE SIX

Although there was not much colour in my still life, there was some. I like to pull this colour out and make my painting full of subtle colour to avoid dullness, so, for my colour block-in I put in some simple 'average' colours for each element: the stems were brown or green, the daffodils received a yellow heart, the vase was blue-ish, and the background cream. It is important to include the background from the start of your painting as it should never be an afterthought. The background is as much part of the artwork as the subject matter and should get just as much attention



### ▲ STAGE SEVEN

At this stage I was building up the layers of pastel. The background got a variety of colours and values which created an interesting texture. I refined the shapes even more, but I stayed away from too much detail. Detail is best kept for last, when I am totally sure everything is in the right place and in the right colour and value. I like hatching as it helps keep the tooth of the paper open and also helps to create lots of layers of different coloured pastel, which creates depth and interest. With the tip of the pastel stick you can vary your stroke length and width to refine your mark. I prefer not to blend as it dulls and flattens the colours.

While I painted, I gathered the pastel sticks I was using on the ledge of my easel, which was helpful so that I didn't need to search for colours. Over the course of a painting, I will create a 'palette' of colours on my easel and in the later stages I try not to introduce new colours but to work with the palette that I've built up instead. This maintains a good colour harmony

### ► STAGE EIGHT

Although hatching is a slow process you can create beautiful and interesting textures and colour variations. I made sure I filled out the whole paper, from edge to edge, using a variety of oranges and blues in the background, two complementary colours that cancel each other out and create a varied beige-cream colour. The flowers received some individual attention and were more defined. I also worked on the negative space between the flowers to help them stand out here and there







## Art School

This demonstration was derived from the short course that I teach in my Art School, which is completely online. In the course there are five video lessons, taken over five days and students can paint along with each stage on each day. The school offers a variety of long and short pastel and oil video courses and can be found at [www.artschool.sophieploeg.com](http://www.artschool.sophieploeg.com)

### ▲ STAGE NINE

I began using the softer pastels as I was in the final stages of the painting, and was no longer afraid to fill the tooth. I still used some hard pastels to define the hard edges, creating a crisp line here and there. Softer pastels (Unison) were used to simplify the white flowers a little, as they had become a little fussy with all those marks. I needed to step back and stop painting now and think about where I wanted to take this and how much detail I wanted to create



**Sophie Ploeg**

is a Dutch-born artist and art historian living and working in the UK. She specialises in still life and portraiture. She has exhibited her work throughout the UK and the US, including at the BP Portrait Award (winning the Travel Award in 2013), the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, and the Pastel Society. She has an informative and popular blog full of articles on painting techniques, product reviews and art history. She is currently dividing her time between teaching and art historic research. She offers online painting courses via her website. To see more of her work, visit [www.sophieploeg.com](http://www.sophieploeg.com)



### ▲ STAGE TEN: FINISHED PAINTING

*Cherry Blossom and Daffodils*, pastel, 16×11 in (40.5×29 cm).

I thought the background was still a little busy and distracting so I blended the pastel in places and hatched with very little marks to even things out. I tried to make sure that I kept the rich variety of colour visible. I darkened the daffodils on the right (as they looked like this on day one, and I quite liked that, but the light changed later) and worked on the negative space between the flower clusters to enhance the openness of the setup. At the last minute I decided to add a tabletop line to give the still life a bit of grounding. I left the painting on my easel for quite a few days to double check it was really finished, before I finally decided that, indeed, it was



# A change in the air

**Grahame Booth** invites us to explore the colours of autumn with a step-by-step demonstration of an allotment scene in watercolour

**T**he start of autumn is usually quite insignificant. A chill in the air at the beginning and end of the day and condensation on the car windows in the morning don't really change too much for the *plein-air* painter. Apart from being able to ditch the suncream, life continues much the same as usual with the addition of a few extra layers as the weeks pass.

Autumn, of course, is all about falling leaves. Our American cousins definitely hit the nail on the head with the Fall but

the strongest colour in autumn takes quite a while to develop and indeed it's not until around the end of October in the UK when we see the best of it. The sun gradually lowers as well, leading to a general warming of the light and this combined with the leaf colour will create the warmest and arguably the most beautiful colours of the year in terms of our palette. Of course trees are not the only changes; autumn mornings are often accompanied by fog or mist and this too will contribute to atmospheric paintings. Just remember that all that moisture in

the air will lead to very long drying times for your washes.

## Autumn specifics

The longer drying times in the damp autumn air can actually be a bonus. Fog and mist will be rendered best with a wet-in-wet approach and the fact that our washes stay damp for so much longer really assists this, giving so much more time both to think about what to do and to actually do it. Colour is obviously a major change in autumn. Those awkward greens of summer gradually mellow to produce a huge range of warm browns, yellows and reds. But this means we can also use purples and greys to make the warmer colours really stand out. Indeed, autumn colour is so varied that this is a real opportunity to play with colour. Almost anything goes!

## DEMONSTRATION *Last Harvest*

Allotments are a great source of subjects, particularly in the autumn when the gardeners would probably consider them to be a little tired after the busy summer, but watercolour painters definitely like a bit of untidiness. This was a great opportunity to go for plenty of strong and varied colour. It's so important to paint really wet and this can be challenging when there are a number of mixes involved. You can see how my palette is swimming in colour (right) and this is after the washes have been applied!



## MATERIALS

- Winsor & Newton Artists' watercolours: burnt sienna; cobalt blue; French ultramarine; cerulean blue; Indian yellow; Winsor (azo) yellow; Winsor (pyrrole) red; and quinacridone magenta.
- White gouache.
- Rosemary & Co brushes: Series 402 sizes 14, 7 and 4 rounds; Series 770 1/4in swordliner; any large soft brush such as a mop or hake; and an old worn sable brush for lifting out.
- St Cuthbert's Mill Millford 140lb (300gsm) Not paper.

## ▲ REFERENCE PHOTO

The original subject was not particularly inspiring. The shed and barrels to the right dominated the subject and in these situations I find it best to play around with a pencil sketch where I can think of shapes rather than things. I decided to concentrate more on the background sheds, exaggerated the flowers and added a figure, see sketches right





### ▲ STAGE ONE

For my initial all-over wash, I began with some cobalt blue for the small sky area but continued with a range of yellows, oranges, reds and blues, pretty much everything in my palette. Painting very wet allows the colours to merge, producing more varied but more subdued colours



### ▲ ▼ STAGE TWO

Starting with the most distant trees I used a blend of Indian yellow alongside a purplish mix of French ultramarine, burnt sienna and quinacridone magenta. Again, I allowed the colours to mix together freely in order to produce a single interconnected but varied shape



### STAGE THREE

I decided to put quite a bit of clutter in front of the sheds but I wanted to suggest this without getting too detailed. Allowing little parts to blend together helps to achieve this. I painted around the shirt of the figure to keep it light but other than that I was happy to apply the colours with freedom, not worrying too much about what would happen. The finished result is okay. At this stage okay is fine. Don't put pressure on yourself in the earlier stages of a painting. I am constantly aware that a painting isn't over till it's over and I know I will still have time to change things. What I must not do is lose my light







## STAGE FOUR

I felt I needed to strengthen the middle ground area in order to pull it forward from the background trees. In the main shed and barrels I strengthened the cast shadows and shaded areas. For all the darks in this painting I used a darker version of the purplish mix in stage two



## STAGE FIVE

Flowering plants are always tricky. I find it best to strengthen parts of the flowers but not all of them. This retains the light and creates depth. The darker greens mixed from French ultramarine and Indian yellow allowed the flowers to glow but it was important that I didn't isolate them too much



## ▲ STAGE SIX

The painting was now substantially finished but I felt that the sheds were fighting with the flowers for dominance. If I dulled the sheds a little more with a weaker version of my dark mix that should have helped, but was this the right way to go? I was not entirely sure but there was only one way to find out





## ◀ STAGE SEVEN

Well, what do you think? I was pretty happy with the result. The sheds have been pushed back a little allowing the flowers to dominate, and with the bonus of highlighting my figure a little more

## ▶ STAGE EIGHT

Just a few little things left to do. I used my strong dark to indicate the fence wire and strengthen the seedheads



## ▲ STAGE NINE

I felt the colour of the path was a little bland. Keeping in mind the light of autumn I warmed this up with a wash of Indian yellow. It looked a little strong but I trusted it would do what it usually does and dry lighter



**Grahame Booth**

is one of Ireland's best known watercolour tutors. He has taught watercolour for over 25 years at workshops all over the world and his paintings have won many national and international awards. An elected member of the Ulster Watercolour Society and the Watercolour Society of Ireland, Grahame has written three books on watercolour techniques with a fourth on the way and has contributed to many others. He has a strong online presence with a series of popular online courses as well as close to 40000 subscribers to his YouTube painting channel. For more information about Grahame see [www.grahamebooth.com](http://www.grahamebooth.com)



## ▲ FINISHED PAINTING

*Last Harvest*, watercolour on Millford 140lb (300gsm) Not paper, 11×15in (28×38cm).

Once the path had dried the only thing left was to apply a few indications of leaves on the path as well as a few highlights using white gouache directly from the tube. Once gouache is diluted, even slightly, it rapidly loses its opacity



# GRAHAME BOOTH

## The colours of autumn

► Grahame Booth *Damp Morning, Ardess, Late October*, watercolour on Bockingford 200lb (425gsm) Not paper, 15×11in (39×28cm).

'This quick sketch was painted when I arrived too early one morning for a painting workshop. The background trees were simple indications, painted wet in wet and when they dried (eventually) I painted the gate and tree. Probably no more than half-an-hour's work, or should I say pleasure.'







▲ Grahame Booth *From Scrabo Hill, Early October*, watercolour on Milford 140lb (300gsm) Not paper, 14¼×20in (38×51cm).

'Although the early and middle days of autumn are not appreciably different from summer, strong greens are starting to fade and morning mist is a common feature. When I started painting this, I could barely see 100-metres in front of me, but I was pretty sure the mist would soon begin to disperse. The top half of this painting was basically painted wet in wet in order to give the suggestion of the retreating mist. The main problem with wet in wet is catching it at the right time. Too soon and the feature you have painted disappears, too late and you will get hard edges. Too soon is better as you can always try again.'

▲ Grahame Booth *Minnowburn, Early November*, watercolour on Bockingford 200lb (425gsm) Not paper, 14¼×20in (38×51cm).

'Minnowburn is an area close to Belfast, famous for its beech trees and in a good autumn, the colours are spectacular. The hot orange-reds are the most eye-catching partly because of the complementary purples all around but this is one of my few paintings that probably contains every colour in my paintbox (usually a maximum of 10).'



# Window on Colonsay

Capture the textures of the landscape with **Helen Hanson** and discover new ways of using ink and coloured pencils

**A**s I experimented post printmaking, a chance combination of ink and coloured pencil delivered a new look that was reminiscent of my work as an etcher. The stark black ink recalled the etched line, and coloured pencil could reproduce the velvety textures and tones of aquatint. I felt uninspired by landscape work in coloured pencil, and missed the 'bite' of etching; this combination allowed me to continue working in a way that suited my personal style. I started developing techniques for integrating the two media without drawing in ink and 'colouring in'. I had used a range of printmaking devices to interpret the landscape, so did the same for ink and coloured pencil, incorporating embossing, lifting out, and a range of mark-making methods in ink. Many artists use pen and wash, and some use watercolour pencils; my approach is different in that I use dry coloured pencils and work them in tandem with ink. There is no preliminary ink drawing waiting to be 'washed'.

For my second article (the first, in which Helen demonstrated a spring landscape in ink and coloured pencil, appeared in *The Artist* May 2023) I have chosen a more complex image, looking out to sea from the island of Colonsay. I was there in time to catch the first of the thrift and the yellow flag, and the last of the bluebells. Many of my etchings were of Scotland and the Isles, and I have continued to find inspiration there for my ink and coloured pencil pieces. Rough terrain and rocks and mountains offer opportunities for

more dramatic mark-making, lifting out and embossing.

The starting point when using ink and coloured pencil depends on the picture content, and each one is a new jigsaw puzzle. I try not to be too prescriptive, as the combination feels like my own invention, and I have no set rules other than to work in a way suited to each image. I always tell my students that the aim is not to produce a photo-perfect representation, but to interpret the landscape using both media and their associated techniques.

As an etcher, I was accustomed to working on separate areas and pulling the image together in the final stages. I still think like a printmaker rather than a painter, and work in sections. Establishing the background, as in painting, is not a consideration. Ink is for ever, and the most important question is always 'What's in front?' – a little reminder I always pin to the wall wherever I am teaching.

## Preliminaries

Thinking in two media is challenging, and involves asking a few questions before you start. How can you best convey a particular feature with the materials and techniques at your disposal? How will it relate to what is behind? Is there something else in front that you need to consider first? Does anything need to be left white, or the colour of the paper?

I always start with a very minimal sketch, having found with my students that a detailed drawing lures them into a similar pen sketch and the deep-seated desire to 'colour in'. I just plan out the lie



**Helen Hanson**

originally studied and taught Modern Languages, becoming involved in printmaking through Adult Education. She moved to a full-time career as an artist, specialising in landscape etchings for almost 25 years. Helen exhibited with Greenwich Printmakers for 23 years and was a founder member of South Bank Printmakers. She was a council member of the Society of Women Artists and a fellow of the Society of Botanical Artists for 30 years, receiving the President's Award for her etchings. She has exhibited in galleries and exhibitions throughout the UK and abroad.

She now tutors nationally, teaching landscape in ink and coloured pencil, and runs several local art groups in her home town of Deal. Her first book, *Landscape In Ink and Coloured Pencil* was published in 2022 by Crowood Press and a second, which will focus on nature in ink and coloured pencil, is in progress. **Email** [hjah@btinternet.com](mailto:hjah@btinternet.com)

of the land, making sure that it works compositionally, and will give me enough information to proceed using my chosen techniques. I do this in pencil, indicating horizon lines, mountain tops, rocks, clumps of trees, flowers or moss; I do not introduce any ink marks or detail at this stage. Once the guidelines are in place, I can assess what needs to be done first.

## Helen's top tips for ink and coloured pencil

- Always ask 'what's in front?'
- Start with foreground features that need white embossing.
- Think before you ink – do you need to work round other features?
- Lines are not the only marks, so be creative with mark-making.
- Use mark-making and colour to help establish distance.
- Layers add richness in coloured pencil.
- A good blend of colours is more interesting than just one.
- Practise creating good shadow mixes without using black.
- Remember tonal values – five different ones will inject life into your work.
- Use outlining and 'colouring in' sparingly and for effect.



# ROCKS AND PEBBLES

Rocks and pebbles suit ink and coloured pencil very well, and are probably my favourite landscape features. There are no rules, other than the basic ones relating to light source and shadow which are needed to create form. Follow this form with your mark-making, so that the rocks and pebbles look authentic. Once the shapes are established, you can be as inventive as you like with embossing tools, ink markings and colour combinations. All kinds of textures can be created on the surface of the paper, with or without a coloured base: barnacles, lichen, seaweed, chalk markings, mineral seams, crevices, etc. Enjoy using the larger, circular embossing tools to reveal curved shapes, and incise lines and scratches with the finer ones. When applying colour, the slightest change can make a difference. As I live by the sea, I have a constant supply of examples, but it is also fun to create your own.



## ▲ Barnacle rocks

Barnacles are easily made with a circular embossing tool, which can be pressed straight into the paper or twisted slightly. The resulting indentation will then pick up enough pigment to create a rounded shape; you can then work around them with darker colours and ink markings. Small ink dots are very useful for creating shade, and can be combined with coloured pencil dots or tiny embossed dots for additional texture.



## ▲ Seaweed rocks

Here it is important to capture the direction of the seaweed and its characteristic colour. I began with a series of wavy ink lines, then added streaks of vivid colour using very creamy, waxy pencils (Prismacolor Premier). These acted as burnishers, depositing rich colour with the glutinous look of slimy seaweed. In contrast, I made the underlying rocks grittier with a mix of broken colour and 0.05 dots, keeping the shadow areas between the rocks very dark in tone.



## ▲ Pebbles on wet sand

This close-up version of pebbles uses a range of shapes, colours and textures, all created by a combination of ink and coloured pencil. Their forms are established through use of light and shade, but the markings and colours are the product of different combinations of techniques. From pale and smooth to speckled and gritty, the possibilities are endless. They are linked and grounded by the wet sand, made up of tiny, embossed dots, 0.03 ink dots and a blend of colours that darkens in the centre.



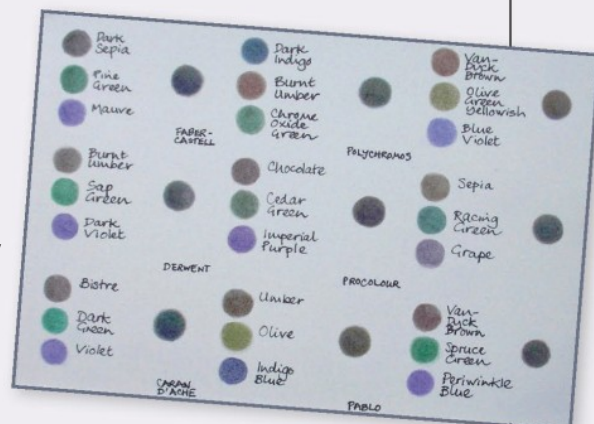
## ▲ Pebbles on seaweed

This companion piece shows a different selection of pebbles lying on seaweed. They have a range of markings, some made by lines that have been inked, embossed, or lifted out with an eraser, and some made up of embossed white dots, ink dots and blended colours. The seaweed was added last and woven between them; the final touch was the creation of very dark shadows at the base.

## SHADOW SHADES

I have written a lot about shadow in this piece and its importance. When I was learning botanical painting, I came across the practice of harmonious shadow – a shadow grey composed of the three primaries visible in a plant. Ever since then I have been interested, and find shadow mixing particularly rewarding in coloured pencil. I think this is because unless you use a blender, the mixed colours always retain some of their individuality. Many artists shun black as a dead colour, made originally from bones, and I have to agree that blends of brown, dark green and dark blue or purple have much more mystery and complexity.

I devised a chart for my students to show the shadow colours that could be created from some familiar shades in their colour sets. I have used examples from Faber-Castell Polychromos, Derwent Procolour and Caran d'Ache Pablo, but you can, of course, create your own. Over larger areas you can experiment, modifying your chosen mix and giving one shade slightly more dominance. This can be used to make a subtle change to the balance or the mood. For really deep shadow, I sometimes compromise by adding a little black to the mix, or enlist the help of tiny ink dots.







## ▲ REFERENCE PHOTO

The source image was cropped into a square format from a larger landscape photo. It was more or less how I wanted it, so I made minimal alterations. I also had a very strong visual memory of the place, which informed my decisions as I worked, especially in creating the mood

## MATERIALS

- **Surface** I use Strathmore Bristol Board 300 series (smooth) as my main surface. It delivers a reliable result for beginners and is compatible with many different pencils.
- **Drawing pen** There are many makes of drawing pen, but look for waterproof and pigment-based versions. I use sizes from 0.03 (very fine) to 0.8, and occasionally a brush pen. Staedtler, Copic, Pentel are all suitable, together with Faber-Castell Pitt Artists' Pens.
- **Coloured pencils** These vary in consistency from very hard (Derwent Artists) to soft and waxy (Prismacolor Premier). I chose Faber-Castell Polychromos pencils for this piece, as they are excellent quality, medium hard and very user-friendly. They have a wide range of greens, browns and greys that are well-suited to landscape work. For this summer image I used the following: 104 light yellow glaze; 108 dark cadmium yellow; 109 dark chrome yellow; 133 magenta; 119 light magenta; 157 dark indigo; 120 ultramarine; 140 light ultramarine; 146 sky blue; 167 permanent green olive; 165 juniper green; 173 olive green yellowish; 170 May green; 168 earth green yellowish; 172 earth green; 186 terracotta; 280 burnt umber; 283 burnt sienna; 177 walnut brown; 175 dark sepia; 271 warm grey II; 272 warm grey III; and 275 warm grey VI.
- Copic Multiliner pigment ink 0.03.
- Staedtler waterproof pigment liners 0.05, 0.1, 0.3.
- Embossers.
- Putty rubber.
- Derwent burnisher.

# DEMONSTRATION *Window on Colonsay*

## ► STAGE ONE

The foreground rocks were the starting point, as any plants and lichens would need to stand out against the background. I never use ink outlines to define mountain tops, rocks, and so on unless I specifically want a hard edge. I

began by partially embossing the heads of thrift to create a few white highlights, then added light magenta and magenta, tilting the pencil to scumble over the embossing. I added some stems in ink, introducing permanent green olive and juniper green for the leaf clusters at the base. Patches of pale lichen covered the rocks; I used embossed dots on the white paper and small 0.03 ink dots to provide texture, then applied a rough blend of earth green, juniper green and May green. For the bright yellow lichen at the cliff edge, I again used small ink dots, this time with dark cadmium



yellow, dark chrome yellow and a hint of terracotta. By not restricting myself with any ink outlines, I could allow plants, lichen or moss to show naturally just above the rock edge

## ▼ STAGE TWO

On the rock surfaces I made random markings using circular and linear embossing tools, carefully following the form and direction of the rock face. To create white indentations, work directly into the paper surface; for light coloured ones, lay down a first layer of pencil in a good neutral and work over it. I then added the first layer of coloured pencil, applying it in small ellipses to show up the earlier embossing, and skirting round the clumps of thrift and lichen. I began with a palette of warm grey II, III and VI, adding walnut brown, burnt umber, a little burnt sienna and finally a patina of sky blue. I applied them in different combinations, sometimes adding more layers and sometimes lifting out a bit with a putty rubber.

I strengthened the markings in the gullies and cracks, using both lines and dots and a combination of dark sepia, burnt umber and dark indigo to create deep shadow.

I also used this blend underneath the outcrops of rock, only introducing black in the very darkest patches. I

applied it sparingly, as I much prefer the more complex shadow mixes that can be made from greens, browns and purples.

I then worked on the bay in the middle distance using 0.03 ink dots, a few lines and small embossed rock shapes. I introduced olive green yellowish at the top, fading to earth green yellowish below and warm grey III along the shoreline. For the rocks in front of the bay I used 0.03 dots, warm grey III and burnt umber





### ► STAGE THREE

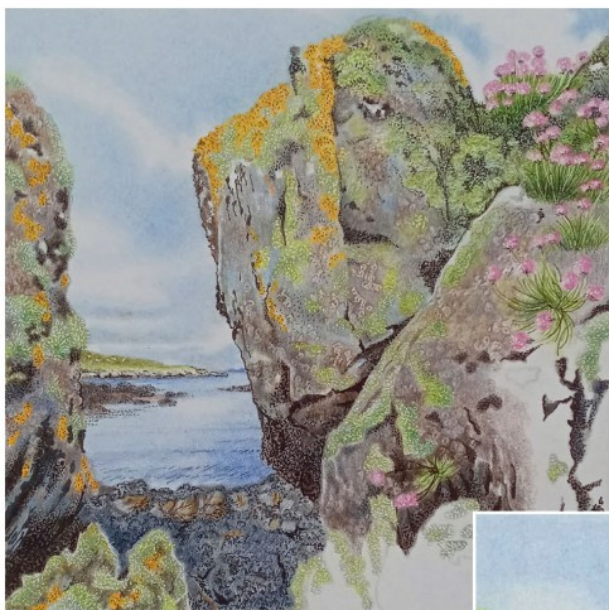
I wanted to create a landscape tightly framed by rocks, that opened out into a wider, lighter sea. I tried to make a clear distinction between foreground and distance, keeping the water calm around the outcrop with just a few ripples near the shore, indicated by slanting ink marks. I used a blend of light ultramarine and ultramarine, lifting out drifts with a putty rubber to show highlights. I chose to keep the sky simple and uplifting to reflect the day, and to create a window of calm against the complexities of the foreground. I used a clean blend of sky blue and light ultramarine, taking out just a few upward wisps of cloud with a putty rubber. I often finish the picture with the sky, but in this instance, I treated it as an extension of the sea.

The area leading down to the shore was covered with heavily indented grey rocks, mostly draped with dark seaweed. To interpret this, I used a combination of deeply embossed rock shapes, with random curls and blobs of ink. I chose warm grey VI, dark sepia, dark indigo and burnt sienna, adding black at the edges and more concentrated 0.05 ink dots. To echo the colour of the foreground rocks and give a slippery appearance, I added the same patina of sky blue



### ◄ STAGE FOUR

I worked on the remaining foreground rock in the same way as before, using the same palette of colours. I began by marking out the various cracks and gullies, filling them in with 0.05 ink dots, irregular lines and a mixture of dark sepia, burnt umber and dark indigo, plus a little black. I repeated the embossed dots and colours for the green lichen, and used the same neutral palette, embossing techniques and markings as before for the rock face, finishing with a light application of sky blue



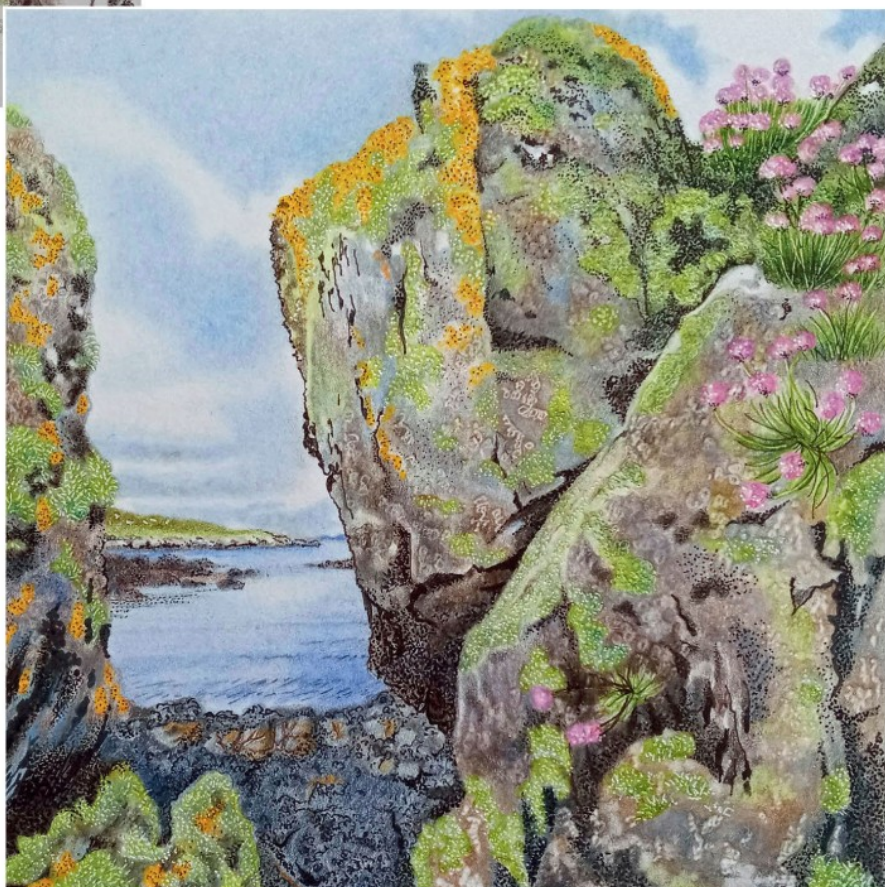
### ► FINISHED PAINTING

*Window on Colonsay*, ink and coloured pencil, 4¾×4¾in (12×12cm).

For the finishing touches, I looked at the whole picture to see how it all worked together. Essentially, it is a window view; I felt that the sky and sea needed to be as different as possible from the busy foreground in both colour and texture. They form a unit, merging in the distance and in colour; they also introduce a different mood, which I did not want to destroy by, literally, muddying the waters.

To create the illusion of mass in the foreground and also of distance, a wide tonal range is needed. The foreground goes from a few highlighted areas to mid-tones, then into very deep darkness. Beginners are often afraid of this, and have to be coaxed into deep shadows; be brave with the dark corners, and the result will be a picture that comes alive through juxtaposition and contrast.

Once a picture feels finished, it should click into place as if coming into focus. If it has a range of tones, works in terms of distance, has light, shade and (importantly) mood, it is probably ready for your signature





# INK & *Coloured Pencil*

HELEN HANSON

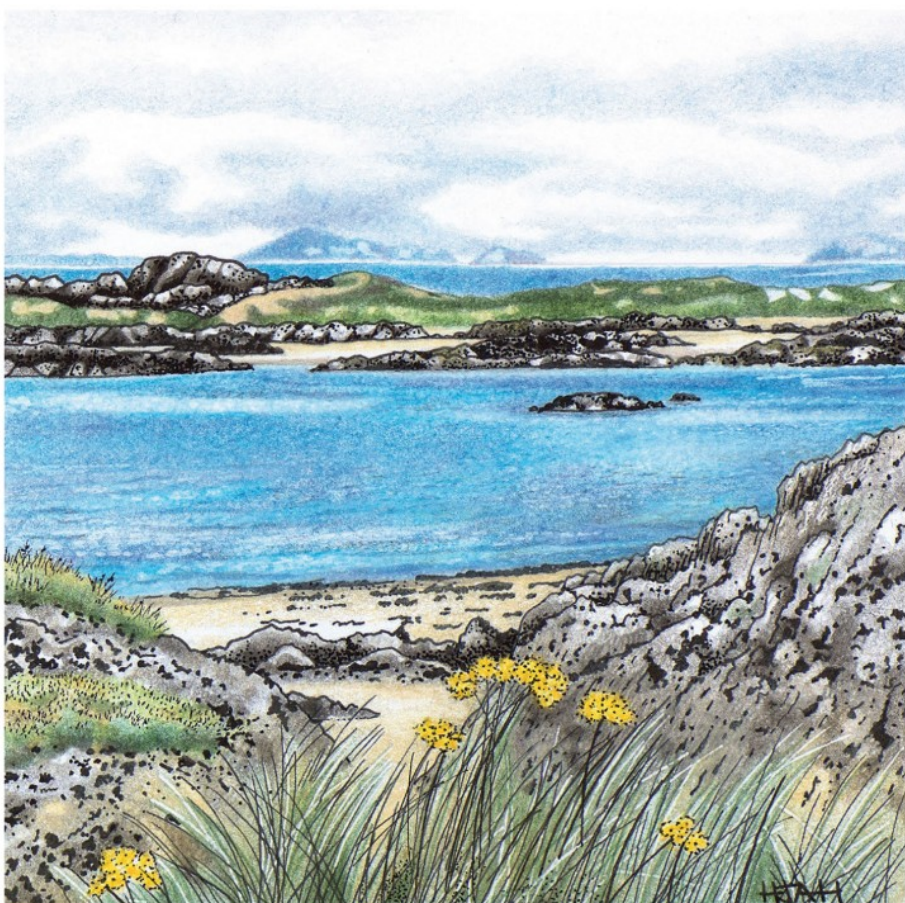


▲ Helen Hanson *Gigha Shore*, ink and coloured pencil, 4¾×4¾in (12×12cm).  
'This small image was from my first Scottish series in ink and coloured pencil. It was also my first attempt at interpreting a rocky shoreline using both media together. Once the flowers were in place, I just observed and let ink and coloured pencil do the rest. I used everything: strong and fine ink lines, random marks, dots, embossing, lifting out and layers of colour – whatever would convey the striking rock formations that made up Gigha's shore.'





◀ Helen Hanson *Western Isles*, ink and coloured pencil, 4¾×4¾in (12×12cm). 'From the same series, this image included curving rock formations and two distinctive island masses. I used embossing and ink marks for the rocks, lifted highlights from the water and used a smooth ultramarine blend for the islands. The foreground was a mass of grasses and locally abundant flowers; I used both media to create their shapes, filling in the spaces with inked grasses, changing drifts of colour and soft shadow.'



◀ Helen Hanson *Singing Sands*, ink and coloured pencil, 4¾×4¾in (12×12cm). 'This image describes a panoramic stretch of coastline with many rock formations in the foreground, a series of bays and several islands. I chose the same square format to enclose it and make a definite decision about content. I built up the rocks using lines and random marks in ink, adding colour but also leaving some almost white areas. I kept the sandy areas very pale, and added grasses and ragwort in the foreground using fine lines, embossed lines and a green base.'





# The forgotten medium

Explore gouache with **Kevin Scully** and discover its many beauties and benefits

**A**s a painting medium gouache is not at the forefront of everyone's mind and many people are unaware of exactly what it is. It is a rather forgotten medium, but one with endless possibilities. Different forms of opaque water-based paint have been in use for longer than people realise, and the process of adding various forms of gum to pigments so that they adhere to different surfaces is ancient. It has been in use for centuries and experienced something of a revival in the 20th century when artists such as John Singer Sargent used gouache in conjunction with watercolour in many of his paintings. It was also favoured by other artists including

Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, and Paul Klee.

The best gouache available today is usually termed Designers' or Artists' gouache, an artists' quality medium with a similar structure to watercolour. A finely ground pigment is suspended in gum Arabic but with the addition of inert chalk-like materials to make it opaque. Because of its 'designers' labelling it is often dismissed as a medium that should only be used by designers and illustrators, but this is not the case.

## So, why choose gouache?

Gouache can be considered as having some of the painting processes used in both watercolour and oil painting. It can be approached in much the same way as

▲ *Anemones*, gouache on canvas board, 12×16in (30×40cm).

This still life on oil-painting board was first given a coat of acrylic gesso to prevent the gouache from being absorbed into the surface. The image was drawn in coloured pencil and initial washes were then painted in thin acrylic. Further washes of gouache were added before some of the colour was scrubbed back with a stiff hog hair brush to reveal some of the underpainting. Detail was added with semi-opaque and opaque gouache

that of a watercolour painting and initial washes can be applied with the paint thinned to a pale consistency without worrying too much about any small blemishes. Subsequent applications of paint containing more pigment and less



water can be tackled in a way similar to oil painting, slowly adjusting the tonal intensity as the painting progresses.

One of the reasons that many artists like to use gouache is that, unlike watercolour, it can be used to paint over mistakes! Colour can be tweaked, and mistakes corrected without too much drama, either by painting over with another colour or carefully washing out with a brush containing a little clean water. Any of these areas can then be repainted once dry. It is more binder-heavy than watercolour, and the pigments aren't as finely ground, which makes the paint thicker and heavier. The gouache produced by the higher quality brands use a greater proportion of pigment and less inert white fillers. The cheaper brands produce paint that has a distinctly 'chalky' appearance once dry.

Gouache has many properties similar to watercolour, but it has the distinction of being in essence opaque, although when thinned with water it can be used in transparent washes not dissimilar to watercolour. The main difference however is its lack of luminosity. The semi-transparent nature of watercolour allows light to shine through it, which is then reflected back from the white paper. Unlike watercolour, gouache tends to sit on the surface of the paper rather than sinking into it. In appearance a gouache painting can sometimes resemble a cross between some of the more widely used media, such as acrylic, oil, and pastel.

Gouache dries quickly, like acrylic, but since it is water-soluble it doesn't ruin your brushes, is a lot easier to clean-up and can be re-activated on your palette with a little water. Unless you want to produce thin washes of colour, gouache should be mixed with water to the consistency of single cream. Colours can be applied in layers, but each layer must be completely dry between applications. This is a different technique to applying thin diluted layers of colour used in watercolour glazing techniques.

Gouache is generally used on paper that isn't too rough producing a fairly smooth and matt finish as the paint sits on the surface of the paper. However, as there is not much of a purist tradition associated with gouache as a medium there aren't really any hard-and-fast rules to follow. So, in one sense you have carte blanche to experiment with the capabilities without worrying about whether or not you're doing the right thing.

## Supports

Gouache can be used in tandem with watercolour to produce paintings that have areas of both semi-translucent passages as well as those of opaque colour. It is also excellent for creating mixed-media work and will sit comfortably alongside collage and any dry or water-based medium. There is no reason why you need to restrict yourself to using gouache on white watercolour paper; mountboard, coloured paper, pastel paper, MDF board and any other number of suitable surfaces will support gouache.

One surface that lends itself to the

application of gouache is oil painting or acrylic painting boards. Many of these are available as compressed cardboard panels with a fine canvas-like finish, or as an MDF board with a fine cotton canvas glued to the surface. These often come ready-primed, which prevents the paint from being absorbed into the support. The primer seals the surface of the board and enables the gouache to slide over the surface more easily. Using a robust support like this allows you to be more adventurous with your painting technique where the gouache can be scraped back, sanded down, and washed-out time and time again.

*'One of the reasons that many artists like to use gouache is that, unlike watercolour, it can be used to paint over mistakes!'*

### Kevin's top tips

- Only use paint from the most reputable manufacturers. Don't be tempted by cheap brands.
- Don't be too ambitious with your first efforts: keep the subject matter simple and work at a manageable size.
- Don't leave the tops off your tubes of colour for too long as the paint will begin to dry out.
- As with oil painting, first use the paint thinly before adding thicker paint.
- Be sure your paint is completely dry before adding another layer.
- Don't build up your painting with layers of thick paint, as it is likely to crack.
- Have two pots of water – one for mixing paint and the other for washing your brushes.
- Change your water often to keep your paint mixes clean and fresh.
- When overlaying colours, do this quickly to avoid reactivating the underlying colour, which can cause the painting to become muddy.
- Use a reasonably large palette and don't be too frugal when mixing your colours, particularly your washes.
- Test your colours first to see if they change slightly when dry.
- The smooth surface of HP watercolour paper is excellent for fine detail. Not watercolour paper is ideal for most other work.
- Experiment with different papers, boards and panels.

Pastel paper is an excellent choice for painting on but because it is usually rather thin it will need to be stretched as you would do with thin watercolour paper to prevent it from buckling. With a little care this can be done successfully by just slightly dampening the reverse side of the pastel paper before applying the gumstrip. This stops it from tearing.

Unlike acrylic paint, gouache can be re-worked once dry. As it is water-soluble this means that it is vulnerable to the elements, so if your work is to be framed it will have to be framed under glass as you would a watercolour.

One of the trickier aspects of using gouache as a medium is the tendency for some of the colours to dry slightly lighter than they appear when first applied, and some others do dry slightly darker. As a general rule, the lighter colours can dry a little darker, and the darker colours a little lighter. With a little practice this can easily be compensated for. With gouache you have the luxury of time, which isn't always the case with watercolour, so you don't have to worry about leaving white spaces within washes, or fiddle about with masking fluid, but you still have to think a few steps ahead just as you would with any other form of painting.

When you reach the stage where you feel comfortable with the medium and your natural tendency is towards a much looser style of painting you can let rip with your creative side and disregard any preconceived ideas about how you use gouache and just go with the flow!



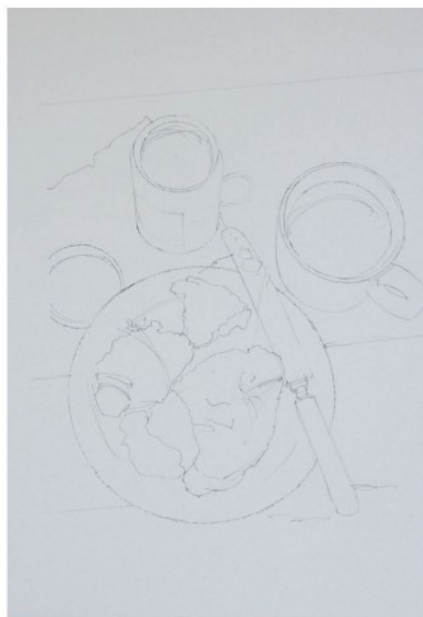


## DEMONSTRATION

### *The Breakfast Table*

#### MATERIALS

- **Paper** Bockingford 90lb (190gsm)  
Not watercolour paper.
- **Gouache** Daler-Rowney Designers' gouache: permanent white; raw sienna; burnt sienna; cobalt blue; and lamp black. Winsor & Newton Designers' gouache: cadmium red; cadmium yellow pale; and cadmium orange.
- **Brushes** Jackson's Studio synthetic Series 505, sizes 10, 8, and 3; Pro Arte synthetic size 5.
- **Other materials** HB pencil; compass; ruler; gumstrip.



#### ▲ STAGE ONE

As the watercolour paper was fairly thin, it was first stretched onto a drawing board using gumstrip. The image was drawn in careful detail, taking care to get the perspective and particularly the ellipses to read in a convincing way. The plate was drawn with a compass, the knife with a ruler, and everything else by eye. The viewpoint was directly above the plate, so this was seen as a circle. As the jar was a little further away this was seen as a horizontal ellipse. The cup was positioned to the right, so the ellipse is at a slightly different angle



#### ▲ STAGE TWO

The background and individual elements of the composition were laid-in with a thin wash of their local colours and with the suggestion of shadows in certain places. No attempt was made to create nice smooth blends, as much of this underlying colour would eventually be covered. A few areas were left as untouched white paper as these were to be highlights or simply areas of very pale colour



#### ▲ STAGE THREE

The joints of the pine boards of the table and some areas of deep shadow were painted with a mixture of burnt sienna and lamp black. The lines were painted using a ruler and further colour was added to the table with broader brushstrokes, again using a ruler. The croissant, knife, and jar of marmalade were painted with a little more detail. The marmalade in the jar appears to be redder than that on the plate because the red material is reflecting back into the glass jar. At this stage the paint is still being used rather thinly



#### ◀ STAGE FOUR

For the time being the marmalade was left in thin washes of colour to retain its semi-translucent nature. The complicated surface of the croissant was built up slowly with layers of thin washes consisting of varying amounts of cadmium yellow pale, cadmium orange, raw sienna, and burnt sienna. The fold in the red cloth was painted before some of the white polka dots were added. The star on the mug was drawn carefully before the red was painted around it. The reflections on the steel knife blade were a mixture of cobalt blue, lamp black, and permanent white, and the bone handle received a thin wash of raw sienna





## ▲ STAGE FIVE

More intense colour was introduced into the croissant and the plate, and the shadows were strengthened with more opaque colour. In a couple of places on the plate the shadows appeared a little greener where the colour of the croissant was reflected. A few highlights were added to the croissant and the marmalade on the plate using a mixture of cadmium yellow pale and permanent white. The grain of the wood was painted in greater detail using a small brush and semi-opaque colour



## ▲ STAGE SIX

The shadow on the mug was painted a darker red and this colour was blended into its shadow on the table. To the white polka dots in shadow I added a little cadmium red. Further highlights were added throughout the painting, some of them tinted with a little of the underlying colour, whilst others were pure white. In some places highlights were painted on top of more subtle highlights to add a more three-dimensional look to the painting



## ▲ FINISHED PAINTING

*The Breakfast Table*, gouache on Bockingford Not 90lb (190gsm) watercolour paper 13×9in (33×23cm).

The blade of the knife was now painted with a bit more care and I gave some richer colouring to the marmalade in the jar using cadmium red and cadmium orange, whilst still trying to retain its translucency. Some lighter spots were added to the side of the jar where the polka dots were reflected back from the red cloth. On the side of the mug some lighter colour was added where the end of the knife reflected some colour onto it. Once the grain of the pine table had been finished the rubber band was completed with some careful detail



**Kevin Scully**

trained at Wimbledon School of Art and spent many years as an illustrator in advertising and publishing. He has written several books on painting including *Still Life in Gouache* for The Crowood Press. He runs workshops and painting holidays at home and abroad and will be running a one-day workshop, *The Cornish Coast in Watercolour and Gouache* at Pegasus Art in Stroud, Gloucestershire this October. See more of his work at [www.kevinscully.co.uk](http://www.kevinscully.co.uk)  
On Instagram @kevinscullyart and on Facebook /kevinscullyartist/



# KEVIN SCULLY

## Exploring GOUACHE

► Kevin Scully *Dawn Reflections*, gouache on Saunders Waterford High White Not 140lb (300gsm) watercolour paper, 9×13in (23×33cm).

'This was painted entirely in semi-transparent, and opaque gouache.'



► Kevin Scully *Seascape, Cornwall*, gouache on Bockingford blue-tinted Not 140lb (300gsm) watercolour paper, 10×13in (26×33cm).

'This was an experiment using tinted watercolour paper. Although white is usually the preferred colour on which to paint a watercolour, it is, of course, not compulsory, and some good effects can be achieved by using it on other coloured surfaces. For a seascape in opaque gouache, a blue base can be regarded as a fairly logical starting point and much of the blue colour of the paper can be seen untouched throughout the painting.'







▲ Kevin Scully *The Italian Jug*, gouache, soft pastel and pastel pencil on Bockingford Not 90lb (190gsm) watercolour paper, 18×16in (46×40cm).

'A colourful still life created with a mixture of thin gouache washes with detail added in pastel and further marks of opaque gouache. The large display of flowers was cropped to add focus to the jug.'





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 STUDIO

Cupboard or palace, **Mike Barr** muses on how a studio should provide a sanctuary where magic can take place

Artists can worry unduly about having a studio, and while it is a lovely thing to have, a palatial studio does not always equate to grand work. I have only recently acquired a studio – a granny flat that has been occupied by quite a list of family inhabitants but now dedicated to paintings and storage of such. Storage really is the big thing! Before this, it was done on the front or back porch, the shed or dining room.

My best award-winning painting was produced on the front porch on a hot windy day. I'd already had a painting marred by it blowing off the easel and was aware of the conditions while I painted the next one. I was engrossed in the process when my neighbour decided to take a look and I didn't see him coming up the path until his head appeared from behind the canvas. His quiet 'hello' had me jumping out of my skin. It made me think though, that the small distance between artist and canvas is all important. This applies to working in a spacious studio or on the porch, this connection between the artist, the palette and the work is intense and

private, it becomes a kind of sanctuary.

The very mention of the word studio though, somehow conveys the idea of a public place of worship. Some just want to drop in, hang around, chat and be a co-inhabitant for an afternoon or two. The artist's workspace, wherever it happens to be, is best utilised when there are no distractions. The process involves the whole person, body, mind and spirit. A disruption to any part of this will be a loss to the artist and the work. Background noise that is unavoidable can be blocked out, but another person demanding friendly attention can spoil any creativity.

Many of us have to set up our equipment every time we want to paint. I know how arduous this can be, but at the same time, the setting up is preparing our minds for that which is to come and painting time is even more precious. Of course, there is a lot to be said for a space that we can just walk into and start painting, but in the end it's the magic that takes place mentally and physically in and around your easel that counts. While we might dream enviously about some of the pristine large studios we see, it's worth considering that some of the best works have been produced in less-than-ideal surroundings. TA

► Ten years ago I painted in the shed at the back of the garden for a while. There was barely enough room for storage, but the little space between easel, artist and palette was all that counted





# Art Courses & Holidays Showcase



Painting at Dolygaer Reservoir Brecon, Alpha Painting Holidays



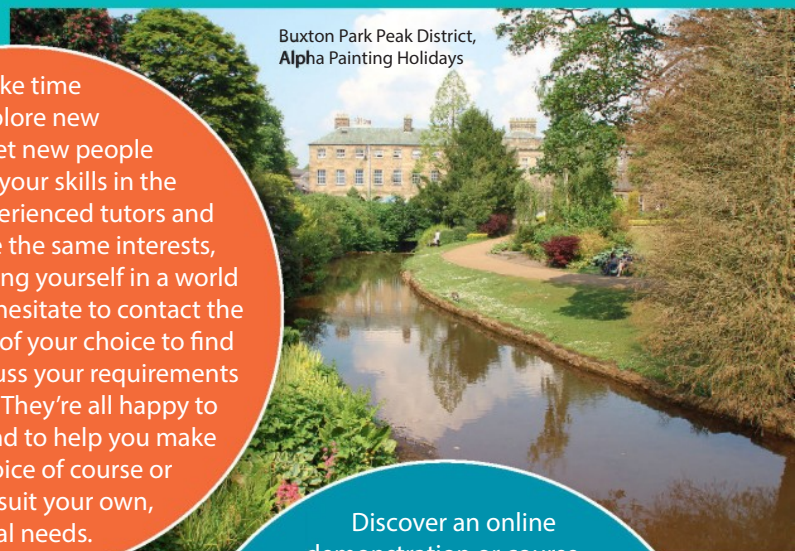
Hotel Leone, Italy:  
Julia Morgan  
demonstrating at  
Montedinove

Whatever your preferred medium, subject matter, skill level, or years of experience, you'll benefit hugely in myriad ways from joining like-minded people on a structured course, all-inclusive painting holiday, one-day workshop or an online demonstration. Even if your motivation is simply to try something new, you'll find plenty of ideas and opportunities within the following pages.



Painting en plein air on a course tutored by Peter Cronin for Alpha Painting Holidays at Pont ar Daf nr Pen y Fan

Take time to explore new places, meet new people and develop your skills in the company of experienced tutors and artists who share the same interests, and enjoy immersing yourself in a world of creativity. Don't hesitate to contact the company or tutor of your choice to find out more and discuss your requirements and preferences. They're all happy to hear from you and to help you make the right choice of course or holiday to suit your own, personal needs.



Buxton Park Peak District,  
Alpha Painting Holidays



Students learning from a demonstration by Grahame Booth at Porthleven Harbour during an Alpha Painting Holiday



Joseph Zbukvic's watercolour course at Big Sky Art – his first ever workshop in the UK

Discover an online demonstration or course that works around your own timeline, or perhaps a dream holiday to a magical painting location at home or overseas, there's something to inspire everyone amongst the art course providers we showcase here. The following organisations have built excellent reputations over many years for the quality and expertise of their carefully selected art tutors, hospitality and understanding of their students' needs, whether a complete beginner, or those with more experience.



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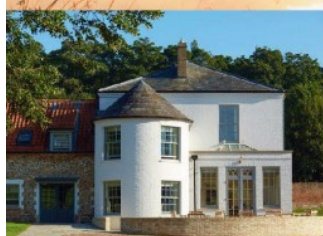
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### 2024 PROGRAMME

Helen Dannelly	Palettes of the Italian Landscape	12-19 April
Justin Ogilvie	Creative Portrait Painting: Expressive Realism	3 - 10 May
David Shkolny	Plein Air for Colour Lovers	10 - 17 May
Oksana Zhelisko	Capturing the Italian Countryside	17-24 May
Richard Claremont	Colours of the Landscape	24 -31 May & 31 May - 7 June
Eli Cedrone	Sketching, Watercolours, Oils	7 - 13 June
Anthony Barrow	Italian Light using Water-based Media	14 - 21 June
Terry Jarvis	The Wonders of Watercolour	28 June - 5 July
Christopher Cole	Make Art in Le Marche	12 - 19 July
Tracy Verdugo	Paint your Wanderlust in Italy	9-16 & 16-23 August
Lori Siebert	Adventures in Mixed Media Collage	23 - 30 August
Jennifer Bonneteau	Life in the Landscape	30 August - 6 September
Gaye Adams	Catching the Light en Plein Air	13 - 20 September
Jenny Aitken	Painting Light	20 - 27 September
Samantha Williams-Chapelsky	Capturing Italy in Textured Acrylics	27 September - 4 October
Julia Morgan	Watercolour: An Essence of Place	4 - 11 October
Debbie MacKinnon & Mike Stanford	Fast & Loose Drawing & Painting	11 - 18 October
Karen Bishop	Go with the Flow	25th October - 1st November



FEBRUARY  
2 to 12  
2024



Peter Brown

# Paint with Peter Brown

PPNEAC, RBA, PS, ROI

## 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

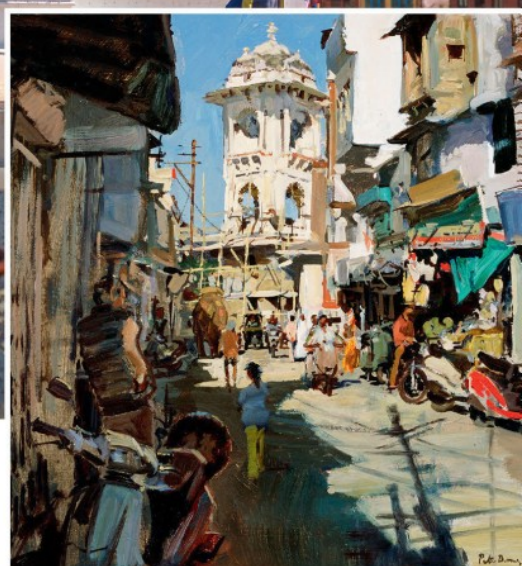
### Painting with Peter Brown, aka 'Pete the Street' in Nepal

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





▲ *Evening Wander, Cairngorms*, oil on canvas, 19¾×30in (50×75cm)



▲ *The Dove in Flood*, oil on board, 11¾×15¾in (30×40cm).  
A recent oil demonstration, which shows the way warm, light colours can represent silhouettes against the sun

# Turning on the light

In the penultimate article in her series on capturing special effects in your paintings, **Jenny Aitken** demonstrates how to put the warmth into woodland light

I know, we really should avoid looking into the direct sun. When we do, our natural, protective reaction is to squint. But it is an endlessly attractive subject, given the effect it has on the landscape: sparkly water; vibrant, transparent colour; endless depth; a hazy, magical atmosphere. It will always draw my eye, in life and on the canvas, as a subject that never stops giving.

In the woods, the haze accentuates depth and drama. The backlit pines in *Evening Wander* (above left) are just warm, monotone shapes, as objects are when silhouetted against the sun. They seem further away than they are, grander; providing a wonderful foil for the detail and colour in the foreground.

Composition can be challenging when there is so much potential detail. In *Evening Wander*, the zones are quite distinct. The background is mostly against a bright, evening sky (especially at the focal point on the left) so is all warm, desaturated and detail free. The midground brings a little more colour, as well as a strong lead into the focal point where the path disappears. The foreground contains the cool colours,

more chroma and stronger angles, pulling the eye in.

In *The Dove in Flood* (above right), the off-centre sun and temperature contrast controls the eye. But what to do when your painting is all foreground and dense detail? Try to organise the painting loosely into three zones, where A has the focal point, B supports and C is peripheral. These zones can be treated differently for a sense of movement and atmosphere around the focus. In *Sunlit* (right), A is at the base of the tree on the right: the area of sharpest detail and strongest contrast. B is the immediate surround, softer in both but still pronounced. Brushwork in area C is looser, less descriptive, with the colour a touch desaturated.

Colour temperature and chroma/grey contrast are our allies in the visual story of a dense woodland scene. If everything seems cold and green, look for and accentuate any warm tones to make those colours glow. Often tree trunks are not just dark, non-descript colours. Reflected light in *Sunlit* warms up the right of the tree trunk to a gold, which sings against the cool blues and purples. The orange/grey distance in *Evening Wander* pulls



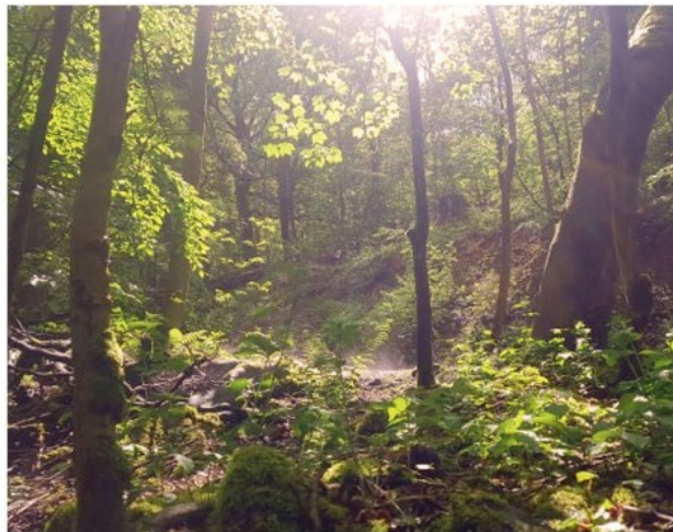
▲ *Sunlit*, oil on board, 11¾×9½in (30×24cm)

at the saturated phthalos greens of the closest pines. There is always a colour opposite to find, if you look, and a grey for a vibrant colour. Their inclusion can transform the light in your work.

Brushwork can differentiate between big, transparent leaves and dense, needled pines, even if the colours are similar. Explore the effects you can achieve with your brushes before you start a painting. Don't just use one.







## DEMONSTRATION

### *Grin Low Woods, Buxton*

#### ◀ REFERENCE PHOTO

So much green... but is there? Turn the image upside down and take a second look. Hold a green object up to the photograph to compare. You'll see all the different warm colours emerge from the photo. Always engage your analytical and observational skills as much as you can. Otherwise, what you 'think' you know takes over!

#### MATERIALS

- **Oil paints** Titanium white; bright yellow lake; scarlet; dioxazine purple; ultramarine; sap green; and phthalo green.
- ½in synthetic flat brush x 2.



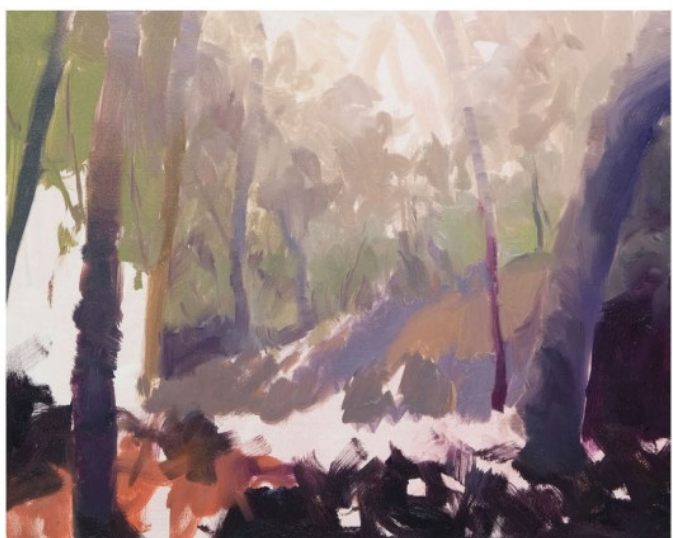
#### ▲ STAGE ONE

Starting upside down, to force that 'it's-all-green' voice out of the equation, I put in some loose marks. These warm greys – a mix of red, sap green and white – were very thin, so I could lay more paint over later. The tree shadows turned purple as they darkened



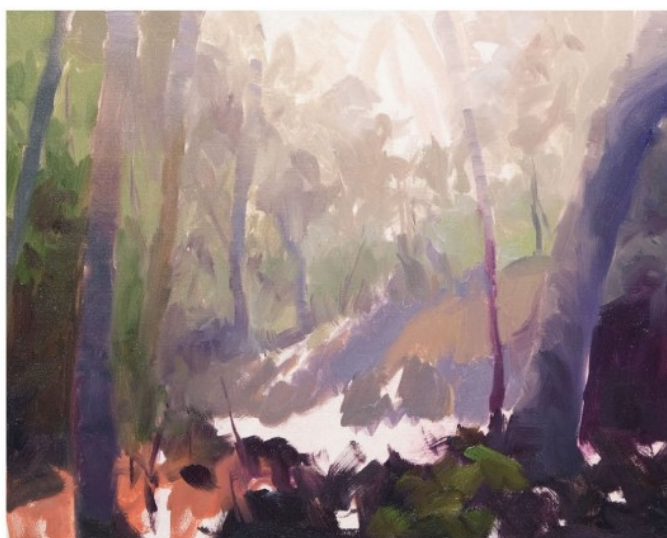
#### ▲ STAGE TWO

I continued with loose brushwork, the colour becoming slightly more green and shadows more purple as they neared the foreground. I used a mix of dioxazine and sap green for the deepest tree shadow, keeping the paint thin but opaque, with a touch of solvent



#### ▲ STAGE THREE

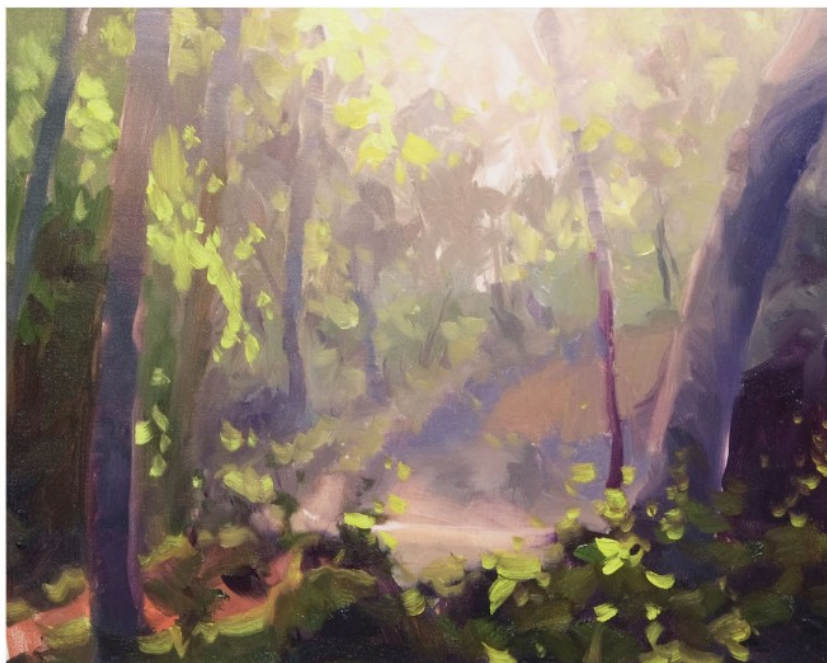
My eye was keyed in to the colours, so I turned my painting up the right way to start shaping the scene. I added more red and yellow into the red/green/white mix, for some contrasting warmth. The deepest darks were now a red and phthalo green mix, still thin



#### ▲ STAGE FOUR

I started adding a thicker mix of sap green, yellow and a touch of red. I scrubbed this in on the left, then placed it with the face of the brush in big leafy shapes in the foreground



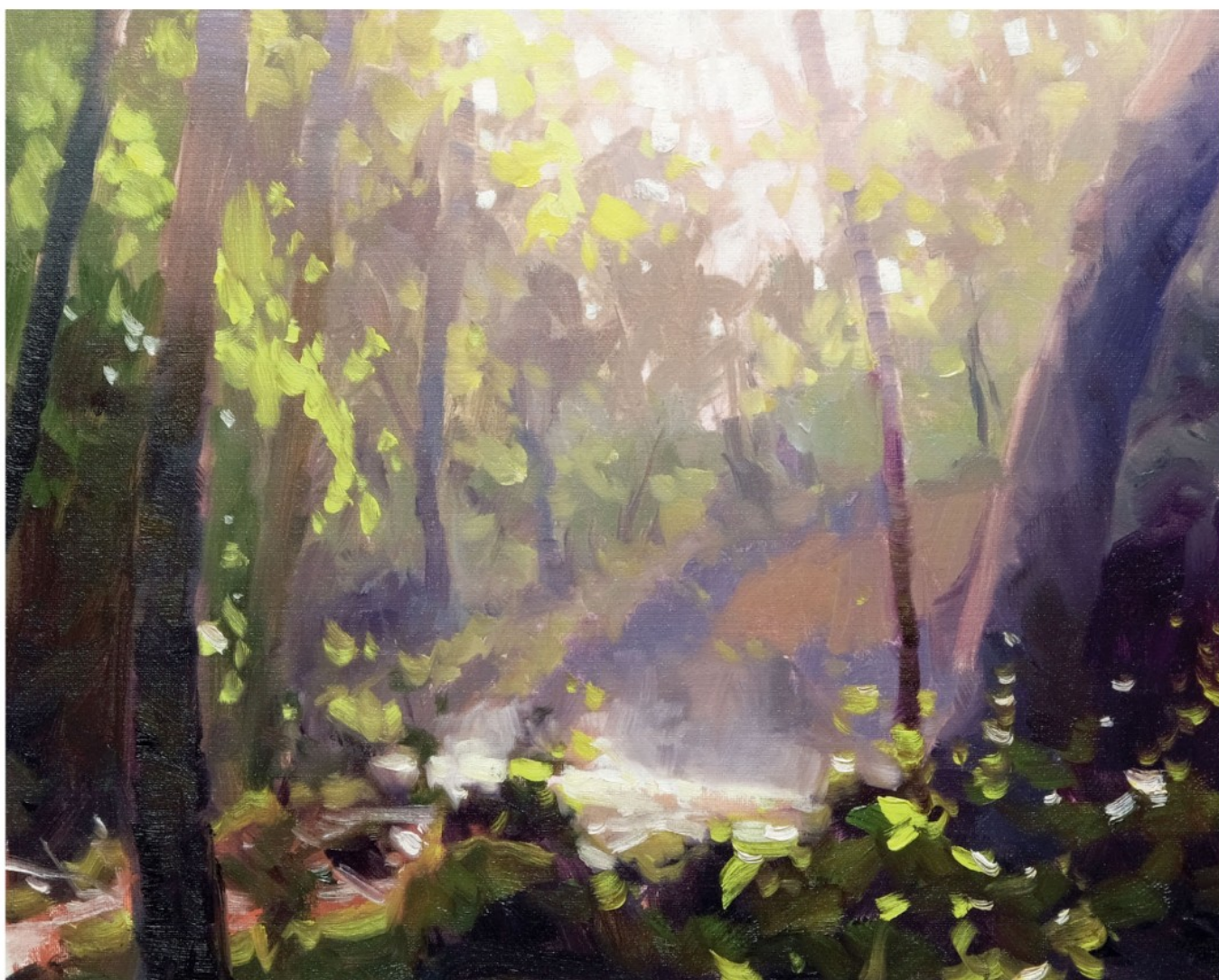


**Jenny Aitken**

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@jenn yaitken.co.uk](mailto:jen@jenn yaitken.co.uk) or through her website [www.jenn yaitken.co.uk](http://www.jenn yaitken.co.uk)

## ◀ STAGE FIVE

With the clean flat brush, I added colour and light in thicker, opaque paint – yellow with white and a touch of red near the light, less white and a touch of sap green further out. I placed these brights on rather than brushed them about and added a peachy tone around the path, blending it into the greys of the bank. I then laid on a lighter, yellowy highlight to the path



## ▲ FINISHED PAINTING

*Grin Low Woods, Buxton*, oil on board, 9½×11¾in (24×30cm).

For the finishing touches, I placed some white tinted with yellow into the negative space of the light through the trees. You can make it up; if you add too much white and lose the trees, just add more back in. I added a little of this on the path, and a few outlying marks for sparkle. I strengthened the darks with some thicker paint, to match the thicker highlights. It is a back-to-front way of working, which results in the illusion of real light filtering through the canopy, warming your face



# Feeling the form

In the second article of her three-part series on drawing the human form, **Adele Wagstaff** focuses on directional mark-making, continuous line and contour

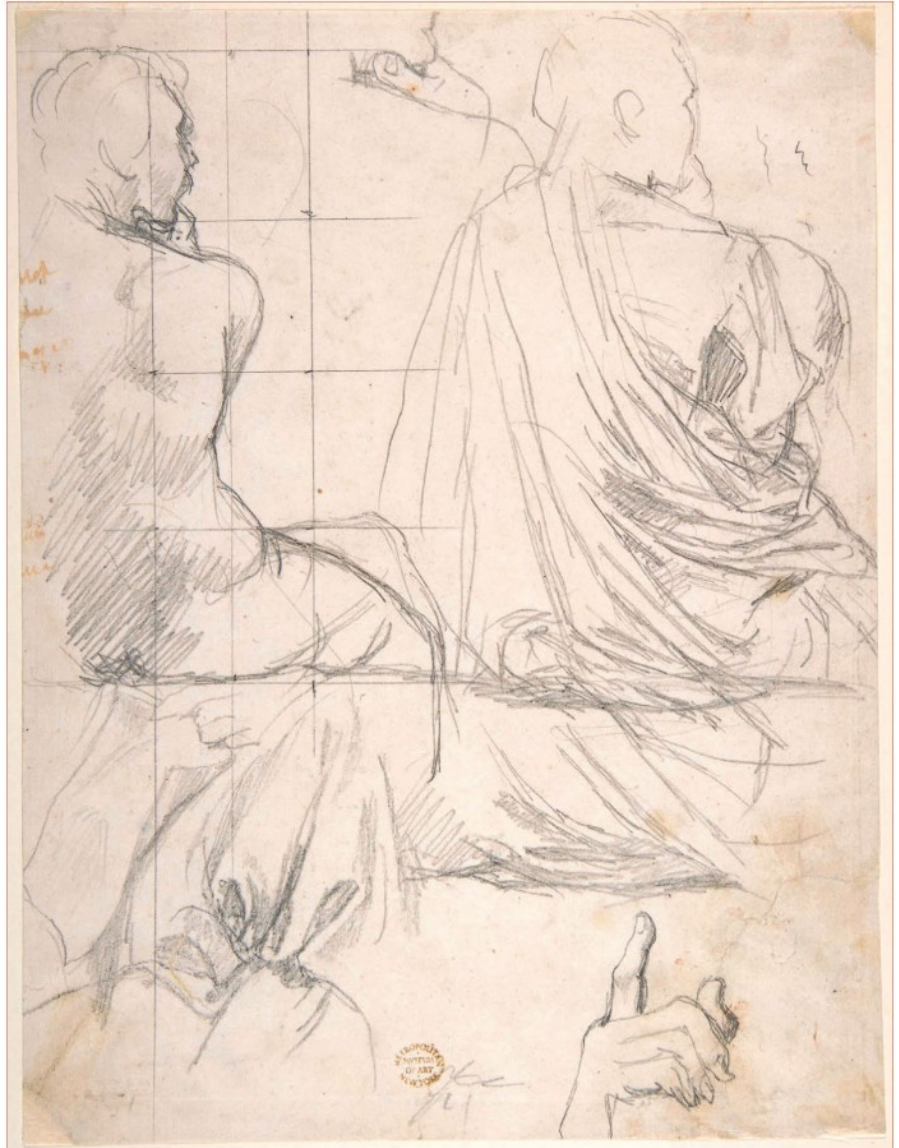


**Adele Wagstaff**

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)  
@adelewagstaff.artist

In this article we will explore how drawing with line, including continuous line exercises and directional mark-making, can help us to describe and understand the volumes, rhythms, and relationships within the human body and to gain a sense of 'feeling the form' as we observe the figure. Although focusing on the many different qualities that we can achieve with line and the responsive nature of media such as Conté and graphite, as you begin to observe a new pose continue to analyse the angles, negatives shapes, using diagonals between two or more points and consider the vertical and horizontal axes when drawing to gather information as you draw.



▲ Attributed to Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres *Study of Figures*, no date, graphite, 10¼×7¾in (26×19.5cm). Collection of the Metropolitan Museum

## Examples of master drawings

This sheet of figure studies by Ingres (above), demonstrates a beautiful fluency of line as the painter makes studies of both the nude figure and corresponding draped figure in preparation for a painting. The page shows us how a number of drawings on one sheet can create a dialogue and tension between the individual studies. No part of the paper's surface is wasted, as beneath the nude and draped figure there is space to make more close-up details of drapery and a sketch of a hand. The graphite allows a great contrast in mark-making; from the softness of the parallel lines describing tone over the back, to a dark and clearer delineation of the contour around the figure.



► Second figure drawing

In this second sheet of figure drawings (right) by an anonymous 19th-century British artist, we see numerous figures placed over the surface, a larger seated male figure, a group of smaller draped figures and the working out of a figure composition in the lower section. The soft-edged quality of the marks made with graphite gives a lightness and sensitivity to this sheet of sketches, and it is possible to see how the first marks have been laid down very lightly, and further weight has been given to accent lines which are made over the top.

This curious small drawing (below) of a human-like creature is interesting in the way in which the artist has described the powerful musculature of the shoulders, back and arm with a series of short arcs that have been layered. The focus is firmly placed on the information within and of the surface of the body; working from the inside to the outer contour lines. It's as if the artist has felt his way around the form, making the lines in ink and charcoal change direction over and around the musculature to give a very sculpted result.



▲ Anonymous, Spanish, School of Seville, *Figure of Fantastic Human-like Creature with Long Tail (recto)*, 17th Century, pen and brown ink with brush and brown wash over black chalk underdrawing (recto) on ivory paper, 5×6½in (12.5×17cm). Collection of the Metropolitan Museum

Graphite is used to depict these two duelling figures (right) with rapid soft lines which adds a tremendous sense of movement to this drawing. As the title tells us, one figure is lunging towards the other and the way in which Rops has made short repeated contour lines placed next to the longer contour lines to delineate the form creates a feeling of the two figures moving.



▲ Félicien Rops, *Study of Two Figures, One Lunging at the Other*, c.1870, graphite, 7×4½in (18×11.5cm). Collection of the Metropolitan Museum



## TECHNIQUES TO DEVELOP OUR MARK-MARKING WHEN EXPLORING LINE

### Warming up, using a continuous line

As you begin a life-drawing session, whether with a group or working with a model individually, you will often begin the session with a few quick poses as a warm-up. Using a continuous line approach for these exercises is very useful to build hand-eye coordination and to begin to make quick decisions about the angles and rhythms we observe in a new pose. This sketch of a male torso (right) uses this method of drawing. The first marks made picked out the internal lines; along the central line of the sternum, around the abdominal muscles which lead to the contour lines of the body. The line moved continuously to describe the information from the inside to the outside, and back to the inside. When using a continuous line try a pencil or graphite stick, grade B or 2B which isn't too soft or smudgy.

#### ► Weight of mark: dominant v non-dominant hand

Once you begin to get the feel of drawing with a continuous line and the flowing motion of the hand and arm with your dominant hand, you may like to experiment and try the same approach but this time switching the pencil or graphite to your non-dominant hand. This may feel rather awkward and clumsy to begin with as the movement will be very different but persevere as you continue to explore the quality of line and its weight as you draw. You will observe that the resulting line will be much lighter, and although it will feel that you don't have the same element of control while drawing, the line will have more movement and rhythm. This quality of line can be very useful as an underdrawing as you begin to map out the shape of a pose.



▲ Adele Wagstaff *Male Torso, Mariano*, sanguine Conté pencil on smooth watercolour paper, 11¾×8in (30×20cm)



▲ Adele Wagstaff *Sheet of Short Poses, Mariano (detail)*, sanguine Conté pencil, 23½×16½in (60×42cm)

### MATERIALS

The drawings here focus mainly on graphite, colour pencil and Conté crayon. These drawing media allow us to create a wide variety of marks, both in the weight of marks and the soft to harder-edges of lines made. Some of my own drawings have been made with a sanguine Conté pencil, a beautiful and rich colour, which is very sympathetic when drawing the body.

- **Pencils** graphite, charcoal/charcoal pencils, coloured pencils, pastels/pastel pencils and Conté pencils.
- White pencil or chalk.
- **Sketchbooks** A4/A3 size, including a sketchbook with toned pages, such as Strathmore tan or grey tone paper.

#### ◀ Movement and rhythm of mark, and layering of drawings

During short pose sessions I have begun to experiment with layering drawings, all on the same sheet. The first warm-up drawings are barely visible, continuous line drawings of between three and five minutes in duration which aim to capture the essence of each pose. Even at this stage I intend to draw over the top of these initial sketches. As poses lengthen in time from ten, 15 and 20 minutes in duration, subsequent drawings are placed over the top, their shape and rhythms often responding to, or in dialogue with the rhythms of the lines already there. Some very interesting sheets of drawings have resulted from these sessions as the type and weight of marks being used, even with the same medium, have to be made with a bolder and heavier line to be visible enough over the earlier sketches.



## ▼ Contour and cross-contour

This quick sketch in Conté was made during a 15-minute pose. The main focus of this pose as I began was the triangular shape made by the knees and toes of the right foot. The outer contours or outline create the main shape of the figure, whilst the lines moving around the form in the opposite direction, the cross contour, can be seen around the base of the knee joints and around the thigh to suggest volume.



▲ Adele Wagstaff *Mariano Seated*, sanguine Conté pencil, 11¼×8in (30×20cm)

► Adele Wagstaff *Adrian Contrapposto VIII (detail)*, Faber-Castell Polychromos bistre, 25¼×16½in (64×42cm)

## Feeling the form and bringing it all together

This drawing of a curled nude, brings together a number of observational and drawing techniques explored during the first two articles. Initial lines were placed very lightly, while observing the rhythmic movement of shapes connecting the surface anatomy. The negative shapes here were key in the positioning of the body in this compact and tight pose, in particular the angle which runs along the side of the torso to elbow, and the structure of the shoulder were the main focus.

*In the final part of this series, we will identify some of the major structures of the torso and other landmarks that we can observe within the body as an introduction to the anatomy of the human form.*



## ◀ Directional mark-making

This small drawing was inspired by the pose of a painting by Euan Uglow. Within the drawing there is a great contrast in the weight of mark being used to describe light and dark across the form. Darker lines, laid down as parallel hatching with a subtle curve around the side of her breast and abdomen depict the shadow, whereas the outer contour line of her back and the suggestion of the structures around the back of her rib cage are much lighter and softer in tone.

◀ Adele Wagstaff *Seated Female Nude*, Faber-Castell Polychromos bistre tint, 11¼×15¾in (30×40cm)



◀ This is a detail from a larger full-figure drawing showing how directional mark-making is used to describe form and surface detail. Parallel lines were used, which when placed closely together and layered began to describe the direction of the muscle-groups beneath the skin and the contours of the structures around the torso. These lines were placed very lightly when starting and then made darker by layering lines and adding more weight. It is possible to see how these lines change direction depending on their position on the body, moving around the cross-contour of the upper arm, moving out from the spine in the direction of the rib cage, or round the curve of the hip.



▲ Adele Wagstaff *Curled Nude, Mariano*, sanguine Conté pencil, 11¼×16½in (30×42cm)



# Nature printing

In this abridged extract from her latest book, *Poetic Woods*, **Ann Blockley** explores how to connect artwork with place using experimental watercolour and collage



**M**y painting life constantly evolves, and it has been a natural and instinctive progression for me to move towards tree subjects, as if I am going back to my roots. When I was born, my father had a house built at the edge of a wood on Beechwood Lane. My childhood was spent playing among the beech, oak, rhododendrons and horse chestnut trees. I now have a house with a magical, wild-wooded garden. It feels like living within a folkloric fairy tale and that I am still breathing my childish dreams. I would love to think that by sharing them with you it might inspire you to express your own fantastical ideas. Woodlands are inspirational places and I think most of us feel a strong connection with these primeval sites. Underground, in the hidden mystical world of the forest, roots and fungi connect and spread, helping each other in ways that we can only begin to understand. Earth is full of wonder, so let us celebrate it through art in the kaleidoscope kingdom of the trees.

Developing the theme of connecting artwork with place, try printing directly from natural, flat materials, judiciously

gathered from the landscape. In the woods there are many subjects suitable for such experiments. I have tried leaves, simple flowers like snowdrops or primroses, and flat evergreens such as conifers and sprinklings of pine needles. Be careful to gather only a limited



▲ *Rescued from the bin*  
A piece rescued from the bin. Sometimes we can be too hasty in throwing artwork away without allowing time to consider how it may be re-used.

quantity of material, even when it appears to be abundant.

Make prints by generously painting your surface with ink, watercolour or both. Smooth paper works well or even a board covered with flat gesso. A very rough texture can hinder you making a sharp impression. Randomly place materials onto the wet paint, or more carefully if you have a composition in mind. Be prepared to be flexible though as the printing is often wayward in its results. Cover it while still wet, in craft tissue paper or recycled plastic. You can introduce more colour, or spray water under the edges or through torn holes in the coverings, if you need more liquid or pigment. Press flat under a heavy board, leave it until almost dry and then peel away the materials to see what you have. The result can be developed into a picture or the best sections added to your collage collection.

Lay flat woodland goodies on a board with thin paper on top and rub the side of a crayon over them to pick up any raised marks and edges. These were made on translucent paper scraps, (above) which if used as collage will seamlessly blend into the background.





*‘Collages are like visual poetry made using image fragments’*

## Collage

Collages are like visual poetry made using image fragments. Piecing these together can help us to be more inventive and open to the unique or unusual. Some poets stimulate creative ideas for their writing by making a habit of collecting words everywhere they go. This medley is then placed or jumbled to create poetic relationships that might not normally have been conceived. In a similar way, you need to collect a range of potential

visual material before you begin to collage them together. You will find some already in the studio, but look also in the bin, kitchen cupboard, garden shed, sewing box or bookcase. You can look in charity shops, craft fairs or on the forest floor too. In particular, collect papers of different weights and textures and think twice before discarding any paintings.

Remember: any art, bark, bracken, collagraph, doily, doodle, dried leaf, envelope, fabric, feather, frottage, gift-

### ▲ *Moonlit Leaves*

Wild rose leaves were used to make this watercolour print. The moonlit effect was a lovely, serendipitous ‘accident’. I worked into this to create a more defined moon and a landscape horizon

wrap, hair, label, lace, litter, magazine, map, music, newspaper, packaging, poem, print, recipe, remnant, seed-packet, sun-print, sketch, thread, watercolour, X-ray or



## COLLAGE



◀ **Auditioning**  
I spend a long time moving collage pieces around, repositioning them, tearing or cutting bits away, adding paint, diving into my ragbag pile for that perfect addition. This version includes the whole piece of rusty metal, which was deemed too heavy to be practical. I constantly reassess until making a final choice of layout. It helps to photograph each potential composition to reach that decision. This is also an indispensable reminder of the chosen design when it comes to the gluing and assembly. Even then, further pieces can be added, or areas painted or drawn over. Such unrestricted fun!

zodiac – might turn out to have a collage purpose! It is helpful to collate these materials into categories to make it easier and quicker to find suitable combinations for inclusion in a particular piece. You might file according to colour, texture, surface, season or mood.

### Accidental mark-making

Pieces of 'accidental mark-making' can be added to your collage materials library. By accidental I do not mean the unintentional but gorgeous happenings that sometimes occur in a painting. These should often take precedence over the original plan and are moments to be relished. However, in the context of collage, I mean the overlooked and incidental auxiliary pieces made as part of other processes. These are the leftovers that you might discard unless you look at them with refreshed wabi-sabi eyes. It may be humble ephemera, but there is beauty in the textures and patina that might otherwise be seen as stained rubbish. They were probably not intended to be 'artwork', but viewed afresh for their imperfect but tactile qualities, colour and marks, some of these make valuable contributions to a collage. It is a truly rewarding, ecologically sound and efficient use of wastepaper, which I think our trees would approve of!



1



2



3

### Poetic collage

In the making of *Rusty Moon* (bottom right) I had amassed an array of material that shared organic, textural qualities that mirrored and reverberated with each other. The sum of the parts lent an air of pale fragility, complemented and warmed by golds and soft teal hues. Frail, handmade washi paper was made less translucent by adding diluted washes of sepia. A piece of torn tissue paper left over from a printing session contained the unintentional, white, negative shapes of a ghostly tree. These and further scraps of handmade paper sat comfortably beside an old paint experiment in which tree trunks had been scraped out of turquoise watercolour and old bronze paint used up, before it dried out. I pasted the varied collection onto heavy watercolour paper.

When this was dry, I realised that

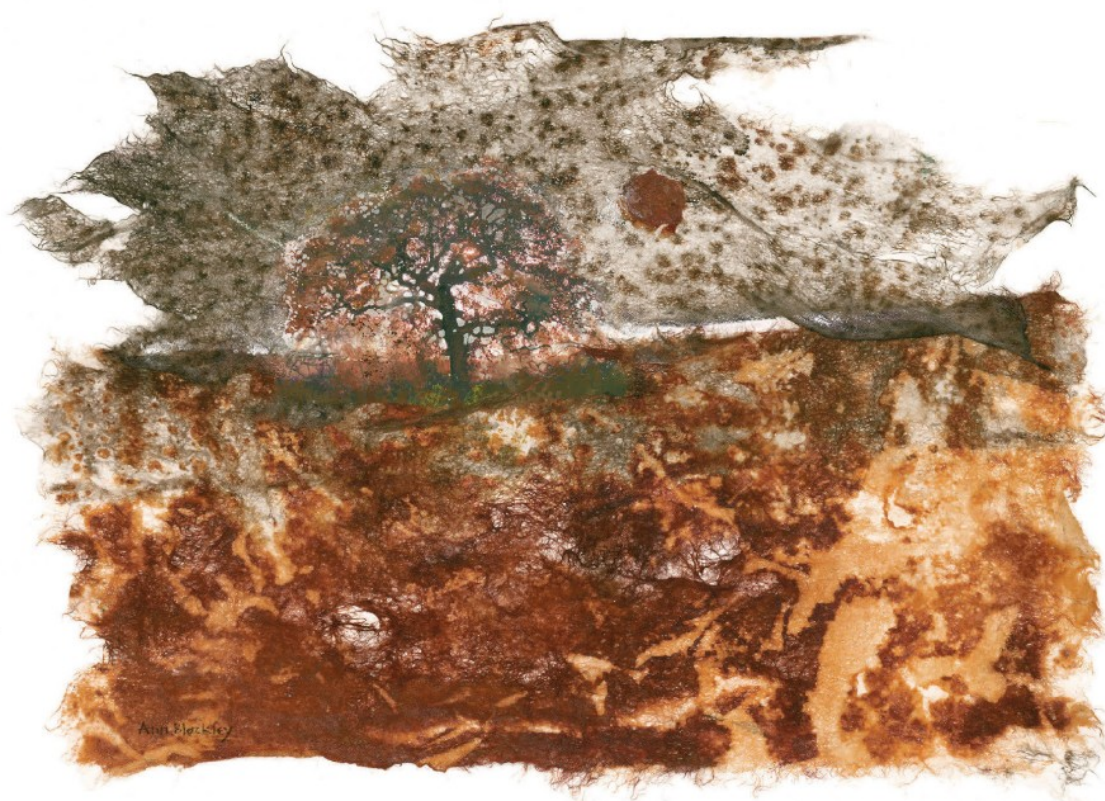
### ◀ Accidental mark-making

1 Tissue paper, in the process of printing leaves, has itself absorbed traces of the print

2 Newsprint used to protect the table has acquired quirky paint marks. The text beneath the paint adds a further dimension but can be partly obscured if needed

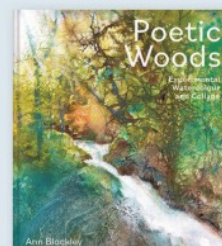
3 Paper used to lift gesso into textures has gained interesting marks of its own, which I have emphasised with paint





#### ◀ The Oak Moon

This collage used for the conclusion of my previous book *Creativity Through Nature* contained gauzy papers, which were rusted by placing them on wet, corroded metal to develop mottled patterns. The image felt incomplete – like an empty stage set – so I added an oak tree using colours and textures that fit the existing theme



#### *Poetic Woods* by Ann Blockley

Blockley explores innovative techniques in painting woodlands and includes easy-to-follow demonstrations, techniques and practical advice.

Published by Batsford, the book is available now from our online bookstore at [www.bit.ly/ARTIBOOKS](http://www.bit.ly/ARTIBOOKS)

although there was a twilight woodland theme, there was no strong focal point. That evening, I wandered into our wooded garden where the moon began to peer between the trees. I looked at the moonlit ground and saw a small piece of eroded metal. Its rusty powdered surface reminded me of the unfinished collage. I broke off a circular fragment and used it to play the part of moon in my collage tale. TA

#### ▼ Rusty Moon

I always stick pieces onto a sturdy surface like this, or mount board which will stay flat. PVA is good for gluing heavy material, but wallpaper paste is an option for fragile ephemera. Layers can be covered and weighted down to avoid cockling, and to ensure they adhere properly, but do ensure there is no excess glue along edges



#### Ann Blockley

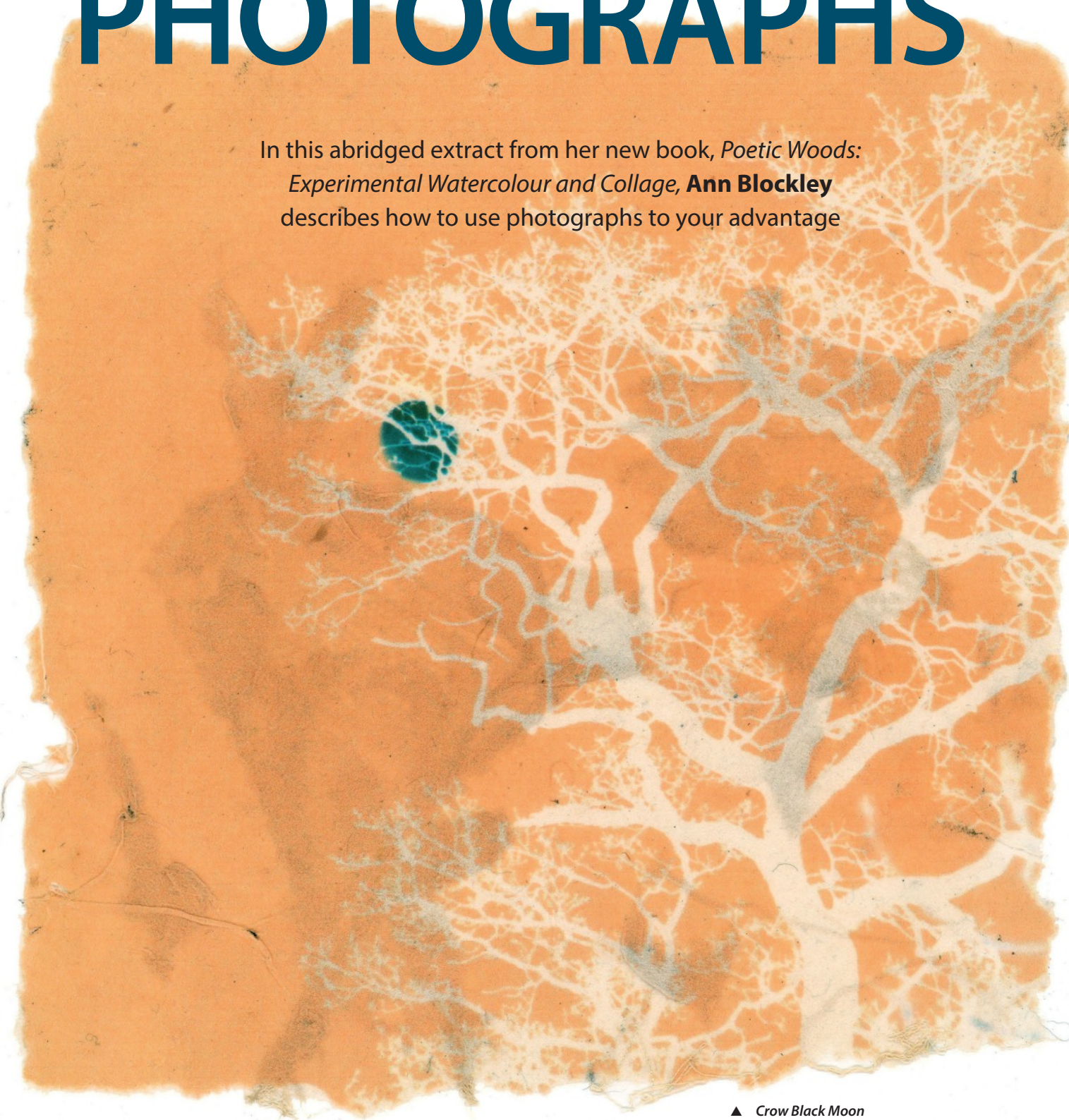
is an internationally acclaimed watercolourist. She is a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours (RI) and the author of seven practical art books, including *Experimental Flowers in Watercolour* and *Experimental Landscapes in Watercolour*, both published by Batsford. Ann runs her own watercolour courses, teaches at international workshop, has made three DVDs of her painting techniques and regularly writes for *The Artist* magazine.

Ann will be exhibiting original paintings from *Poetic Woods* in her Devon studio at Wastor Park, near Modbury, South Devon, from September 19 to 23, 11am to 4pm daily. For further information and directions visit [www.annblockley.com](http://www.annblockley.com)



# Manipulating PHOTOGRAPHS

In this abridged extract from her new book, *Poetic Woods: Experimental Watercolour and Collage*, **Ann Blockley** describes how to use photographs to your advantage



▲ *Crow Black Moon*  
Negative printed on handmade paper  
with lace inclusions embedded

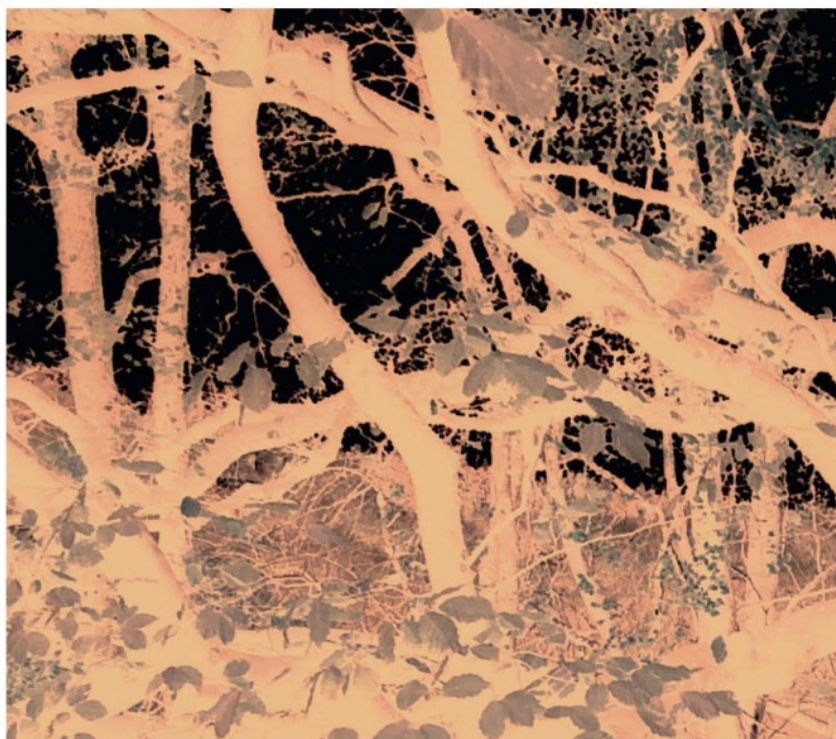




I am not someone that feels at home in front of a computer and would far rather be outside playing in the woods! However, on the inevitable English indoor days, I find it stimulating to browse through my personal library of digital images for ideas. Although my technology skills are appalling, even I discovered that I could be inventive with some of the editing tools available on my computer. Cropping, changing colour and tonal balance, blurring edges and reversing are all things that can be done in the painting process, but sometimes we need a helping hand to boost our creativity – and I say ‘anything goes’. All it took was the simple press of a magic button to discover the transformative power of being ‘negative’. In other words, changing the darks to light and *vice versa*. Where colours are involved in this process, the most extraordinary, fantastical and unexpected combinations appear. White moons are eclipsed. Bluebells mutate to emerald green and grass metamorphoses into shades of blue. Skies turn black and foregrounds are edged in violet. The woodland floor is washed in turquoise. It is the stuff of dreams and poetry.

### • TRY

cropping details out of a whole image and enlarge them. Change colours; reverse, fade or enhance the contrast; turn it into a negative or convert the shape to a thin vertical. Make photo transfers out of images. Alternatively, print onto textured papers using archival ink and leave them as they are, or experiment with drawing or painting on top. Stick experiments into sketchbooks of explorations. See how these manipulated photographic images influence subsequent paintings or collages.

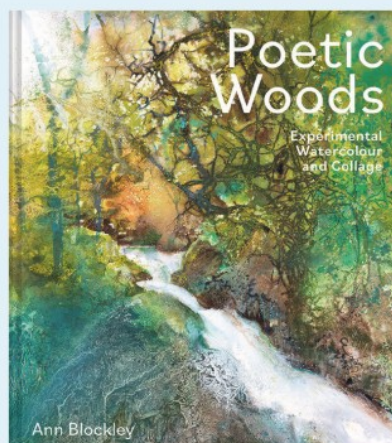


◀ I cropped a section from a pleasant but rather dull photograph of an autumn beech tree (above) to give less recognisable, more abstract patterns. These were turned into a negative in which the colours mysteriously transformed to fairy-tale hues



## Poetic Woods: Experimental Watercolour and Collage

*Poetic Woods: Experimental Watercolour and Collage* by Ann Blockley draws inspiration from forest poetry, birdsong and folklore to create striking and intriguing paintings of natural landscapes in watercolour and collage. The book is published by Batsford in hardback, priced at £25, available from our Painters Online bookshop at [www.bit.ly/ARTIBOOKS](http://www.bit.ly/ARTIBOOKS)



### ► PHOTO TRANSFER

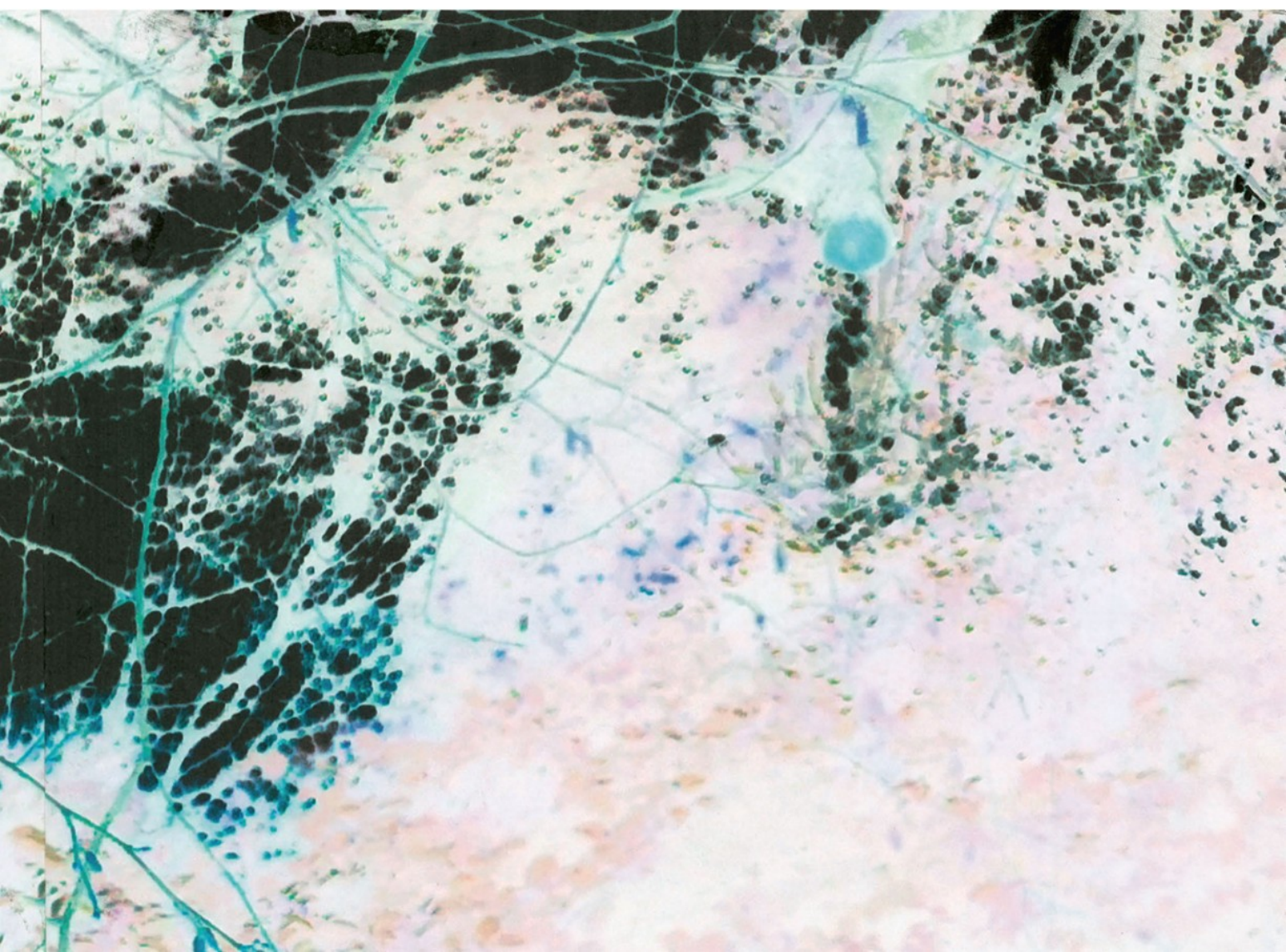
Printed images can be transferred onto another surface that has been coated in white gesso, acrylic paint or special transfer medium. Place the image to face the wet layer and leave to dry. Re-wet and gently rub the back paper away to reveal the slightly distressed image on the new surface

### ▼ MANIPULATED PHOTOGRAPH

*The Entangled Hedge*











**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)

# Don't forget the mid tones!

In the second article in his two-part series on counterchange, **Barry Herniman** stresses the important role tones play in between the lights and darks

**I**n my last article I concentrated on the lights and darks of counterchange within a landscape scene. In this article I will still be capturing the lights and darks but

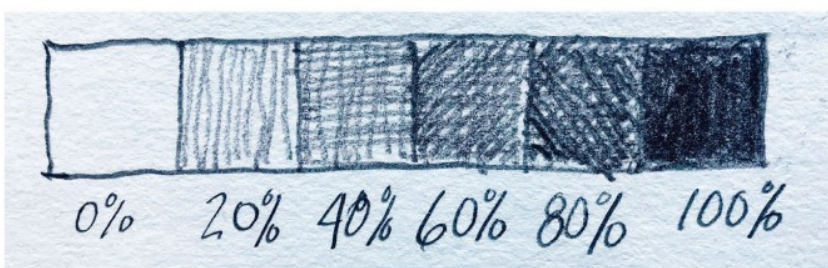
focusing more on the in between – the mid tones. For my subject I have chosen a French courtyard where half the scene is in shadow, creating myriad different tones within it. Buildings are rather different from landscapes with their sharp lines and architectural features, such as doors and windows, each with their own specific tonal values.

## Tonal study

In my tonal study of the scene (above) you can see the obvious lights and darks but if you examine it closely, you will see all the various mid tones within the shadow areas. When trying to get to grips with all the tones, I suggest squinting at the scene to blur the detail so that you are left with a basic tonal picture to work from. A tonal sketch really does sharpen the perception of the view.

## A QUICK TONAL GRID

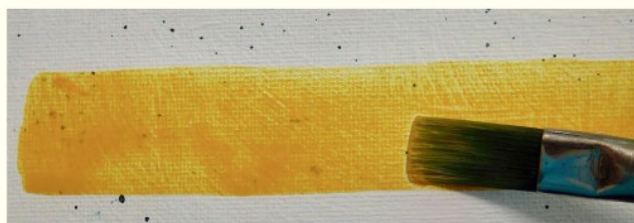
Using a 2B pencil I hatched out a very basic tonal grid which can help in assessing the different strengths of tone within certain areas.





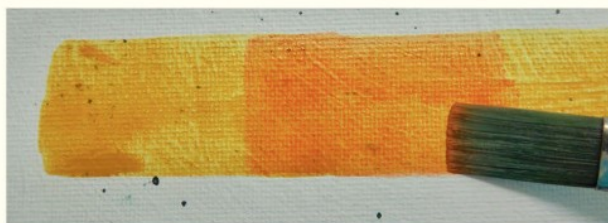
## EXERCISE TO BUILD UP TONAL COLOURS

Before we start, try out this simple exercise to get the feel of how mixing and overlaying transparent colours gives you some lovely nuances of tone.



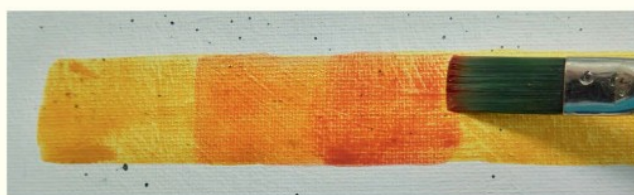
### ▲ EXERCISE 1

As most of the stonework in our painting will have a yellowish tint to it, I started by laying a fairly wet wash of Indian yellow over the canvas. I let this dry before the next stage.



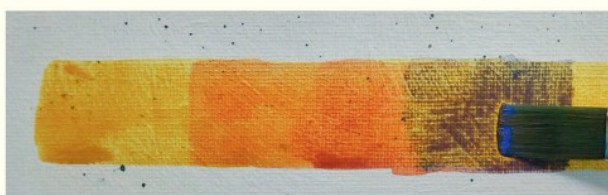
### ▲ EXERCISE 2

With my brush loaded with orange, I laid another wash over the yellow. Notice how some of the underwash shows through.



### ▲ EXERCISE 3

Whilst the orange was still wet, I dropped in some madder brown, so there are now three colours that are influencing this last passage.

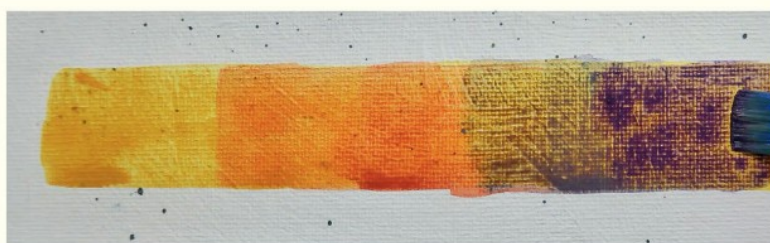


### ▲ EXERCISE 4

Adding cobalt blue to the mix changed the dynamics but the yellow wash was still there.

### ► EXERCISE 5

Lastly, I added some violet for another darker tone. Can you see how laying washes of different colours over a basic underwash can produce a lovely variety of tones? Obviously this only works this way when painting transparently and not with thick, opaque paint.



## DEMONSTRATION

### *French Courtyard*

### MATERIALS

- Schmincke PRIMAcryl 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 4 and 2; and rigger No 2.
- Canvas board.
- White gesso.
- Clear painting medium.
- HB pencil.



### ◀ STAGE ONE

To prepare my canvas board prior to painting I coated the surface with white gesso, applying it fairly randomly to produce a rough surface. This is my preferred surface, but if you prefer, you can work straight onto the canvas. I roughly drew out the main components with an HB pencil and established some of the basic stone colours as an under wash. I diluted Indian yellow, orange, madder brown and a touch of cobalt turquoise with water to make a watercolour wash consistency, then applied the colours quite loosely with a flat brush letting them merge together on the canvas



## ACRYLICS



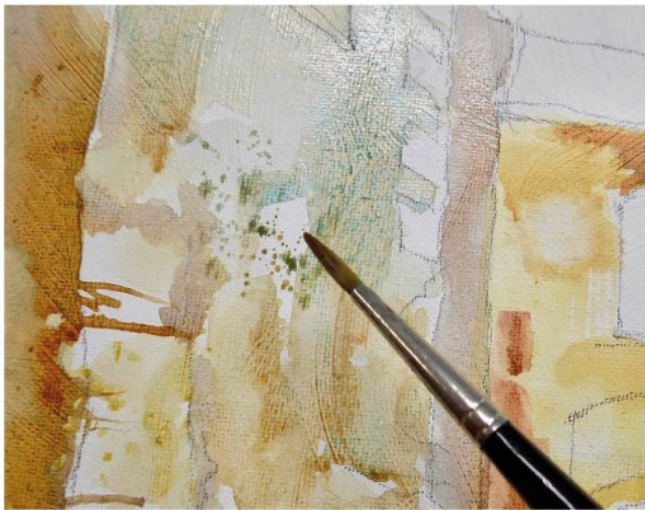
### ▲ STAGE TWO

As the large corner stones on the right-hand buildings were quite light, I used some brilliant yellow in the mix. This was a preliminary stage of the painting so I didn't take too much time painting around the specific details of the buildings



### ▲ STAGE THREE

Whilst the shadow area of the left-hand wall was still wet, I tilted the board sideways and pulled down some of the paint to form some joints in the corner stones



### ▲ STAGE FOUR

I kept the washes on the sunlit side of the left-hand wall very dilute and then flicked in some slightly creamier paint to add texture



### ▲ STAGE FIVE

Here you can see my first basic stone underwashes which gave me a good grounding on which to build up subsequent layers of colour

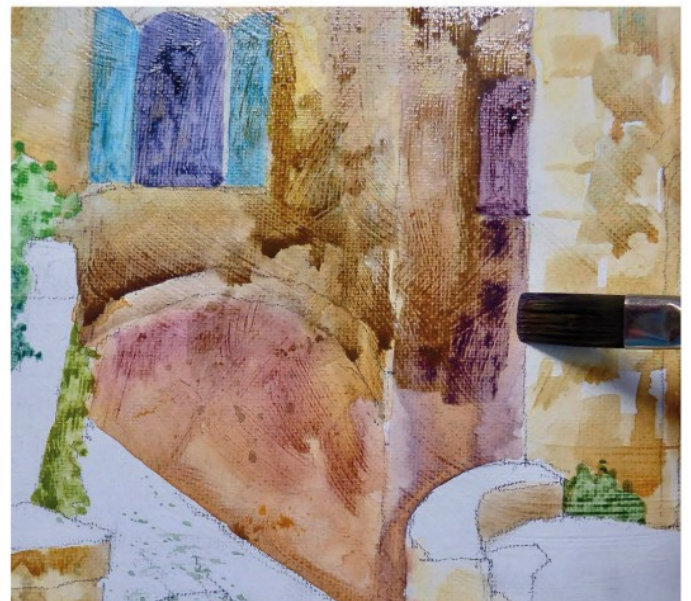


### ▲ STAGE SIX

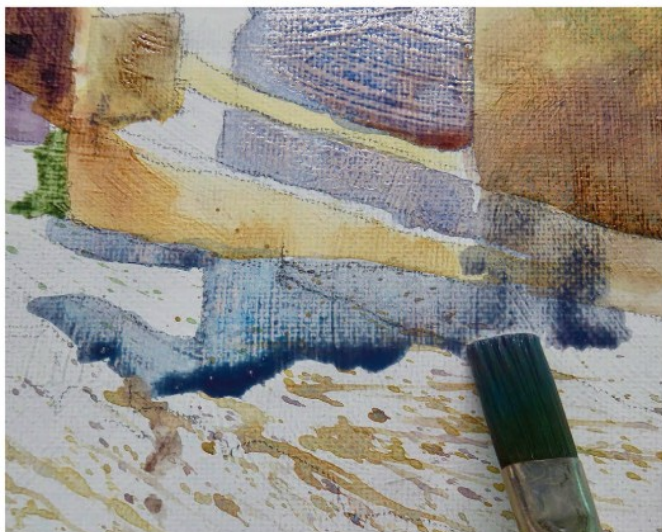
With a mix of my yellows and blues plus a touch of phthalo green, I started to plant some greenery around the stonework. These were mostly medium to dark tones where I would paint in the highlights later on

### ▶ STAGE SEVEN

Using my flat brush I started to carve out some of the darker areas in the walls with a mix of madder brown and violet







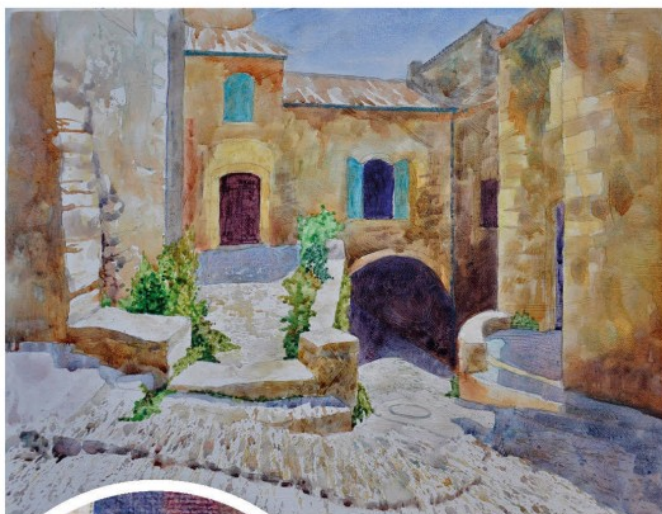
### ◀ STAGE EIGHT

Mixing my blues with a touch of brown, I laid some fluid washes into my shadow areas. Notice how the colour pooled at the bottom of the stroke



### ▶ STAGE NINE

Flicking colours into the cobbled stones really gave them a lovely random-textured effect



### ◀ STAGE TEN

The painting had all the main areas covered and I was ready to go in with the final details that would bring the scene to life



### ▶ STAGE ELEVEN

Using my rigger and a mix of white and turquoise I added the window frame details



### ▲ STAGE TWELVE

I then mixed yellow with my white to add all the highlights to the foliage that were catching the sunlight

### ▶ FINISHED PAINTING

*French Courtyard*, acrylic on canvas board, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ ×17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in (35×45cm).

All that was left was to add all those lovely bits of 'jewellery' to the scene, taking care not to overdo it by leaving some of the areas quieter to emphasise the detailed areas. The lights and darks obviously give drama to the scene but just look at how much colour and tonal quality there is in the mid tones, which light up the painting





# Light and dark

In the penultimate article in his current series **Steve Griggs** explains how experimenting with developing motifs will help you discover new ideas and creativity

**W**hen you hear the phrase 'light and dark,' what do you think of? Opposites? Contrasts?

Juxtaposition? A couple of years ago one of the gallery owners who represents my work asked if I would participate in an upcoming show based on the theme 'light and dark'. The artists were given freedom to create art in whatever way they interpreted the subject. How, I thought, will I produce paintings that embody the phrase but have a cohesive

feel. Certainly, I could paint one painting with light colours and another with dark but I wanted to explore other ideas to see if I could come up with something that represented light and dark differently. Using my sketchbook, I began generating ideas through motif development until I came upon one that captured my imagination.

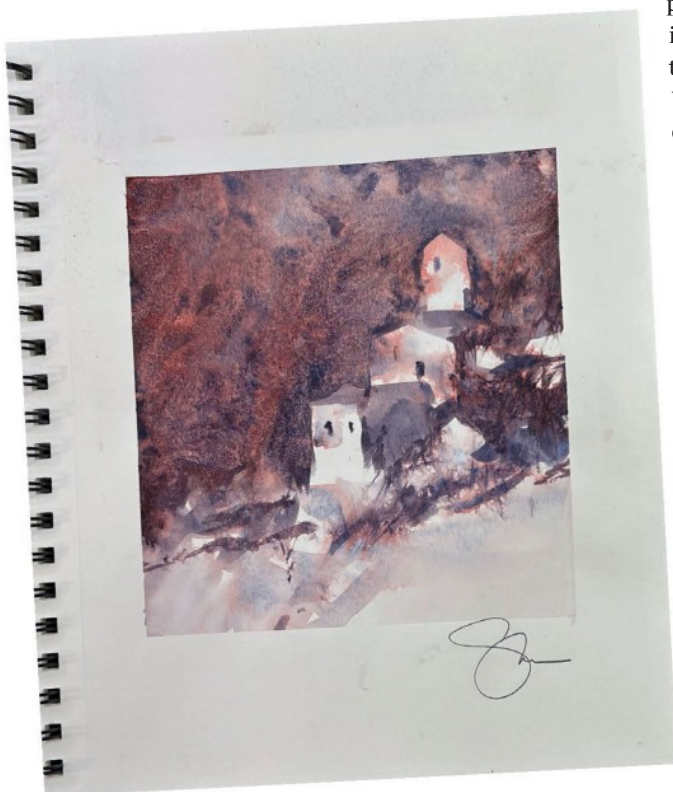
Motif development, in the broadest sense, is a systematic way of thinking about a subject, that opens the artist up to new ideas and creativity. It is a way of looking at an idea from a variety of points of view. For me, it is closely related to the question, 'what if?' What if I flatten texture, or add texture? What if

I use contrast between two elements? Or, what if I make one shape larger, or repeat this shape over and over? What if I paint with an unusual colour, or change format, or paint transparently? The questions are endless, but the process allows me to develop a whole range of possibilities quickly and efficiently. It allows me to create a family of related ideas.

Sometimes I work in a motif that is based solely on a technique, such as wet into wet, or I may work in alternating positive and negative shapes, to explore pattern or rhythm. The process of motif development keeps me from getting locked into one set of ideas, subjects, scenes, or techniques and instead, allows for exploration and seeing new possibilities.

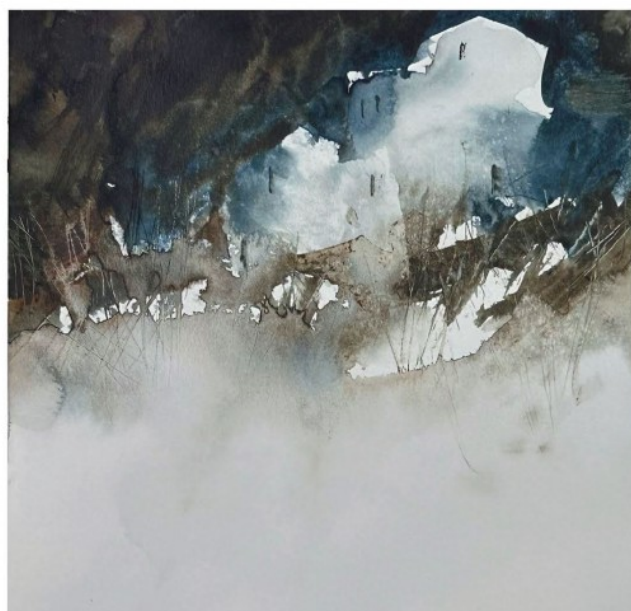
## ◀ SKETCH ONE

I introduced the idea of man-made structures in contrast to nature, and light shapes against dark shapes



## TRY IT FOR YOURSELF

Experimenting with opposing ideas such as hard/soft, up/down, near/far, and so on, use your sketchbook to experiment with motif development, following the same process I did for the 'light and dark' assignment. When you've completed several iterations, choose one or two new ideas and create a new painting or a series of paintings from them.



## ▲ SKETCH TWO

Staying with the same basic shapes, I explored what would happen if I changed the colour palette and simplified the man-made structures



## Working with the idea of opposites

For the theme 'light and dark' I worked with the idea of opposites. I started my motif development by integrating the contrast between light and dark and the further contrast between natural and man-made shapes. Additionally, I used texture to emphasise the natural shapes, but I minimised texture on the man-made shapes. My intent was to keep the elements the same but to experiment with how the elements were expressed in colour, texture, format, scale, and which of the elements I emphasised.

### Steve's tips for motif development

- Use your sketchbook to experiment with new ideas.
- Keep asking 'what if?'
- Be free; don't limit yourself.
- Try different colours, formats, scale, abstraction, and so on.
- Keep going. Turn the page and try more ideas.
- If you find an idea you like, keep developing it.
- Have fun!



### ▲ SKETCH THREE

In this sketch I used the same elements, but I elongated the man-made structures, putting more emphasis on them, which heightens the contrast between the shapes



### ▲ SKETCH FOUR

Working with the same elements, I inverted the values of the sky shape and the foreground shape, keeping the man-made structure elongated. Notice this changes the sketch from a nighttime scene to a daytime scene



### ▲ SKETCH FIVE

In this sketch, I isolated the man-made shapes, breaking them up and creating a rhythm or adding movement to the shapes. This gives them definition and emphasis but changes the context from unified shapes to individual shapes



## INSPIRATION



### ▲ SKETCH SIX

By eliminating the mid-tones the shapes become high contrast. This creates more of a focus on the contrast between light and dark than on the shapes themselves



### ▲ SKETCH SEVEN

In this example, I kept the emphasis on light and dark, but changed the format to elongated portrait. This was the idea I ultimately developed into two paintings for the project



### ▲ SKETCH EIGHT

Maintaining all the elements I'd used previously, I asked, 'what if I abstract the shapes?'



### ▲ SKETCH NINE

In this sketch I changed the scale of the man-made shapes and put the emphasis on them while keeping the elements abstracted



*The process of motif development keeps me from getting locked into one set of ideas, subjects, scenes, or techniques*



**MAJOR**

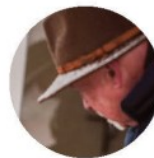
For the final project I painted these two paintings on 30×15in (76×38cm) gesso canvas. Major was painted with Daniel Smith sepia and Minor was painted with Daniel Smith sepia and a touch of phthalo blue

In the end, I landed on the idea of two paintings. One of a house in daylight and the other, the same house at night. I used an elongated portrait format which changed the scale of the shapes. By using high contrast I was able to capture the theme of 'light and dark.'

Sometimes, even if you aren't completing an assigned project, you'll find motif development helps expand your artist repertoire and moves you away from a pattern of set ideas, scenes, or subjects. Use it to enhance the way you explore new ideas. New ways of seeing will often lead to new ways of expressing. Not every idea in your motif development will work as a painting, but many of them will!

**Steve Griggs**

is a Colorado artist best known for his loose watercolor 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.



**MINOR**



# Autumn glow

**Paul Talbot-Greaves** relishes painting in autumn, when rich colour and low light abounds. Here he demonstrates why acrylics are the perfect medium for capturing autumnal colours

**A**utumn is a lovely season to paint as it brings about a warmer colour palette for the landscape painter and makes a refreshing change from all the greens of summer. Sunny days are full of long cast shadows with a golden light quality that is quite unique. Autumn mists and damp, overcast days lend opportunities for low-light paintings, where beautiful tones can be incorporated into rich colour schemes. Acrylic is a great painting medium to use for this, especially where there are multiple shapes involved, such as grouped

trees or fragmented leaves in a woodland that give a painting a busy feel. Paintings can be built up in quick layers using broad brushstrokes and loose marks to suggest the main blocks of value masses then, working with semi-opaque layers on top, allowing them to overlap and create shapes and patterns.

## Brushwork

Acrylic paint lends itself to brushwork. I often choose acrylic where there are multiple shapes and dynamic changes where brushmarks will benefit the overall look of the piece. I use Winsor & Newton



**Paul Talbot-Greaves**

teaches watercolour and acrylic painting in workshops and demonstrations to art societies throughout the UK. He has received many accolades and awards including *The Artist Award* in 2017 and 2021 at Patchings Art Festival, and The Chaoshan Watercolour Award at the 2021 RI watercolour exhibition.

He can be contacted by email [ptgart@outlook.com](mailto:ptgart@outlook.com) or through his website [www.talbot-greaves.com](http://www.talbot-greaves.com)

Artists' quality acrylics, which have a nice buttery consistency, they don't present unusual colour shifts as they dry, and they are super opaque. I begin with solid, fully opaque paint, roughly blocking in with broad sweeps of colour using a large flat brush, usually the larger the better. I don't



## DEMONSTRATION *Down by the River in Autumn*

### ◀ Supporting image for demonstration

*Through the Damp Autumn Woods*, acrylic on paper 8×8in (20×20cm).

I began with an overall coverage of violet to help tie the painting together and allowed it to dry. I started with the basic shapes of the dark tree trunks followed by roughly blocking in the foliage behind and the rough strewn loose leaves in the foreground. I then refined the tones, values, and shapes to bring a sense of definition to the painting. Finally, I added the branches and spattered leaves to refine the detail



### ▲ REFERENCE PHOTOGRAPH

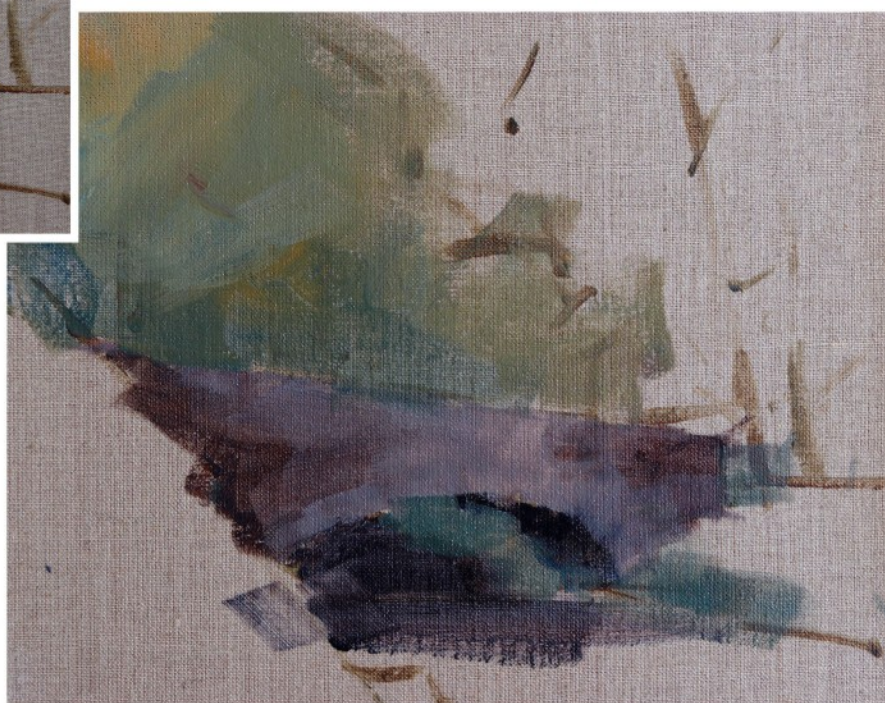


### ▲ STAGE ONE

On a piece of clear primed natural linen board, I sketched out the main shapes using a size 2 synthetic round brush with a mix of cerulean blue and burnt sienna

#### MATERIALS

- 10×8in (25.5×20cm) linen board.
- Winsor & Newton Artists' acrylics: French ultramarine; burnt sienna; yellow ochre; cobalt blue; cerulean blue; titanium white; and alizarin crimson.
- Matt medium.
- Brushes: ¾in synthetic flat; ½in synthetic flat; and size 2 synthetic round brush.



### ▲ STAGE TWO

I placed the darkest values under the bridge and into the water with an intense mixture of French ultramarine and burnt sienna. In the background trees I freely applied loose blocks of yellow ochre, cobalt blue, and cerulean blue with a ¾in flat brush. Keeping the painting flowing, I added a small amount of titanium white to the French ultramarine and burnt sienna mix to raise the value of the bridge slightly

attempt to make the painting too soon and instead focus on achieving the main building blocks of colour, shapes, and values.

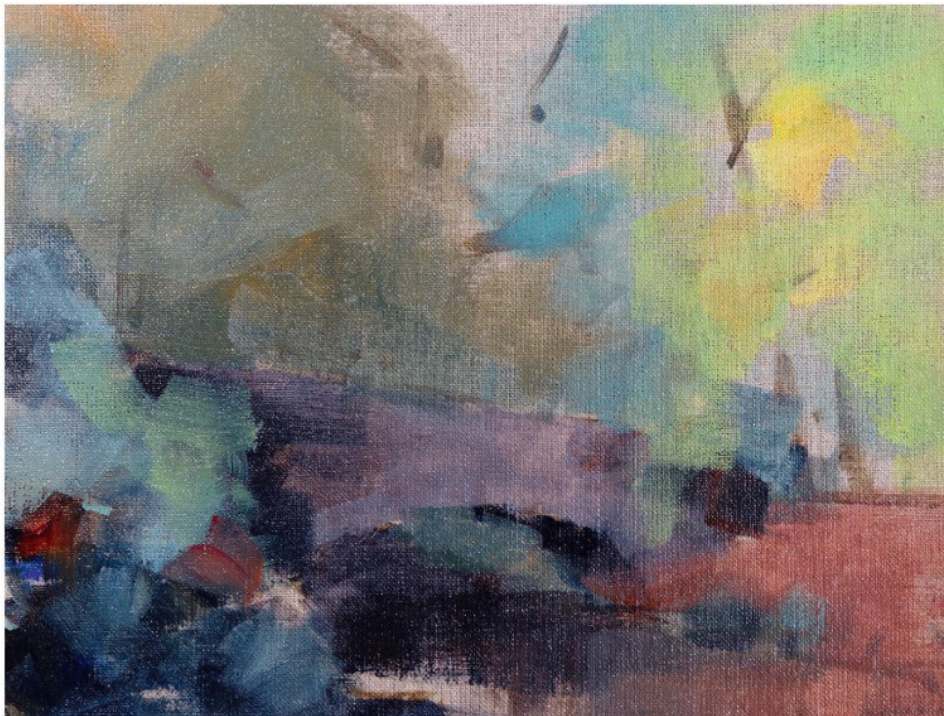
It's often possible to work a lot of the painting using only a big brush in this way, utilising the corner for smaller, sharper details and the chisel edge

for stamping lines. For more control, however, it's better to reduce the brush size gradually as you work your way through layers of the painting. Working loose and focusing only on the building blocks and not the finished painting helps me capture energy on the paper through the use of animated brushstrokes. I begin

with the darkest values and work my way towards the mid values. In this early stage I don't usually involve white, so the painting can take on a dark appearance and, coupled with the loose brushwork, can make the painting look as though it has lost its way, but this is only the foundation of the piece.







## ◀ STAGE THREE

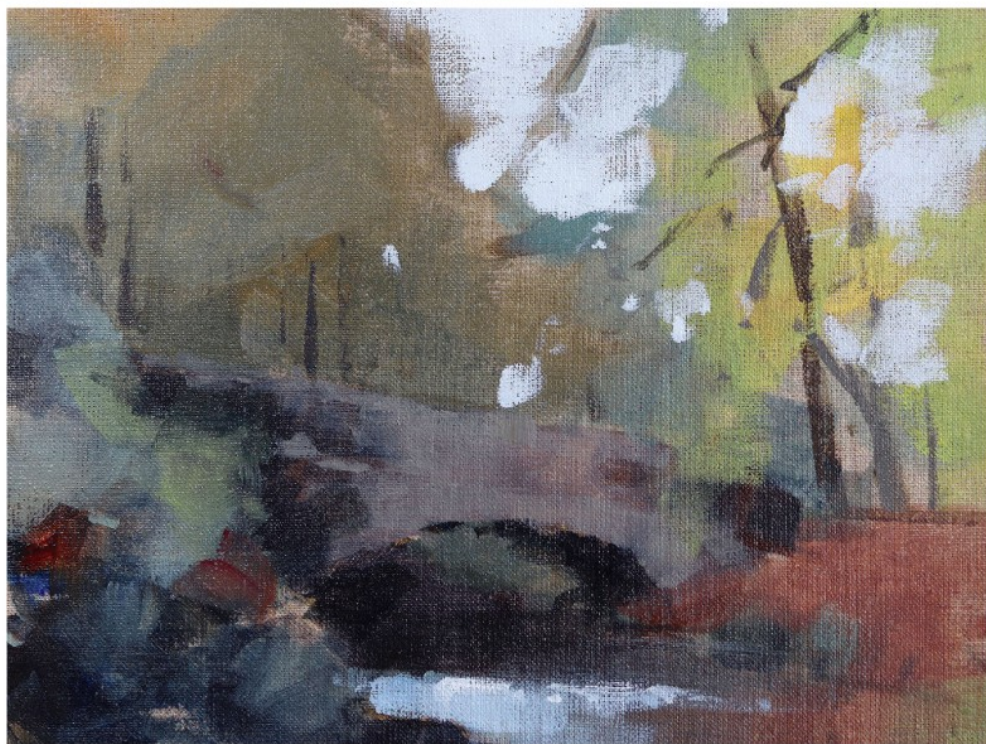
I continued working loosely with the 3/4in synthetic flat brush, speedily blocking in the shapes without focusing on accuracy or any detail. On the left-hand bank, I began with the French ultramarine and burnt sienna dark mix, then added varied mixes of cobalt blue, yellow ochre, and titanium white. On the right bank I used burnt sienna, alizarin crimson, and titanium white, then moved into the trees with cerulean blue, cadmium yellow medium, and titanium white. I kept to the 3/4in brush throughout to generate large, loose brushstrokes

## Refining the building blocks

Once the first layer of large blocky brushwork is complete, I refine the shapes further, adding matt medium to the colour to create transparency. Adding medium maintains the viscosity of the paint but also thins the colour depending upon how much you add, which then allows the shapes from underneath to show through. Using this approach allows me to vary the paint from full opacity down to a thin glaze whilst still maintaining brushstrokes in the colour. I continue to use expressive brushwork, gradually adding white to the mixes to bring out the lighter passages of the image. When I'm happy with the shapes, values, and colours I bring the painting to a finish by adding any refining brushmarks, highlights, and details.

## Making tones

Tone refers to how grey a colour is, whilst value refers to how dark or light the colour is. There are numerous ways of making tones from adding complementary colours, to adding black to your paint. I prefer to add complementary colours, for example to



## ▲ STAGE FOUR

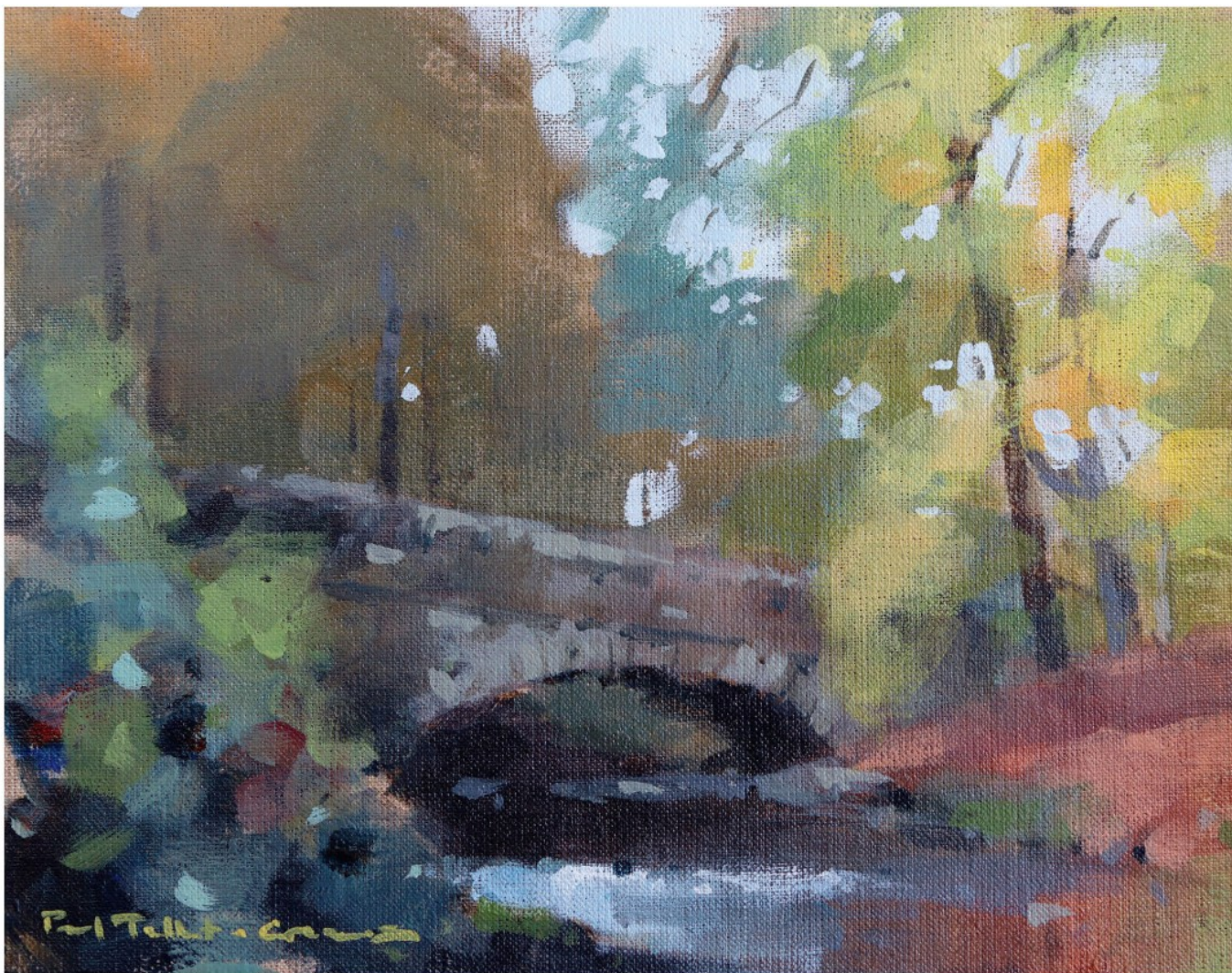
I refined the darks of the bridge and added some tree trunks and branches with cobalt blue and burnt sienna. I used the 3/4in flat brush again, drawing finer lines with the corner and making thicker tree trunks using the chisel. I finished the blocking stage using a mix of titanium white and a tiny amount of cobalt blue for the sky holes in the trees and the reflections on the water

tone burnt sienna I might choose to add cobalt blue, and to complete the grey, I add titanium white. This is a super strong white, so only a small amount at a time is needed until I reach my desired tone and value.

When mixing the tones of autumn, it is important to maintain colour identity, so try not to overdo the grey. In the case of

burnt sienna you should aim for a brown grey not pure grey. Tones can make a painting appear flat and sometimes drab unless you include either some saturated colour or some white. On flat, grey days I look for water, reflections or bright sky colour to give the tones some light value reference, to avoid the painting appearing monotonous.





## ▲ FINISHED PAINTING

*Down by the River in Autumn*, acrylic on board 10×8in (25×20cm).

To tighten up the brushstrokes I switched to a ½in flat brush. I applied a few more layers of colour and texture to the left-hand bank, mixing cobalt blue, yellow ochre, and titanium white with matt medium. I did the same with the bridge, using layers of varied grey values mixed with matt medium to generate transparency and allow colours to show through from underneath. I added some more colour to the right-hand trees and refined the sky holes. I just love the way acrylic can be overlaid, manipulated, and layered to develop interesting effects



## READER EXERCISE

Begin the painting on a grey or neutral covering such as natural linen or a mixture of yellow ochre and ivory black. Begin with loose blocks of colour working from dark to light, then gradually refine the shapes mixing matt medium into your colour and working towards the light. Make sure your mixes are toned to reflect the flat light of the day.

Email a copy of your finished painting to [dawn@tapc.co.uk](mailto:dawn@tapc.co.uk), no larger than 2MB, with **Working from Photographs** in the subject line to see your work shared in an exclusive PaintersOnline gallery.





### 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)

# NO PLAN?

## It's time to make one

**Sarah Edmonds** explains why structuring your art practice is so important to success

Structuring your art practice is so important in helping you to maximise creativity and effectiveness. Putting a schedule in place may sound counterintuitive, but it will actually free up time and allow you head space for original thought, visual and mental preparation, without being bogged down by administrative tasks.

You will probably already know how and when you work most efficiently – are you a morning person or do you work best during the twilight hours? Are you an introvert requiring quiet time to replenish and self-soothe, or do you prefer the company of others to inspire and enliven? Do you know your target audience and who you are painting for? What helps you to focus and get the work done? Knowing how you operate is significant in structuring your day, week, studio space and working patterns so that life as an artist is as enjoyable and fulfilling as possible – and lucrative!

**This month's case study, Sarah Elder**, has worked hard to craft a good living selling paintings. Following an early career as a journalist and editor, her breakthrough came later in life. Combining the skills she learnt in the workplace, her early years growing up in exotic locations, proximity to the natural world and her creative flair have resulted in a life as a professional artist.

Now firmly established as a successful travel and wildlife artist with several awards to her name, including BBC Wildlife Artist of the Year, her work is held in many public and private collections worldwide. Movement has become part of her signature, as seen in galloping zebras, cheetahs, gazelles on the plains of Africa or leaping hares in the English countryside. Sarah paints subjects that move her and this has formed the essence of her 'brand.' 'Hard work, persistence and staying true to my passion has helped me through challenging times. I've always taken myself seriously as an artist

and plan two years ahead in order to give myself the chance for success.'

Key to her painting practice has always been having a studio away from home. Making a commute to work puts her in the right headspace, helping her to carve out the time she needs for painting. She is also fastidious in her routine, keeping to the same days and working hours. 'It is a commitment to my work, as it would be with any other job. I have to be very motivated.'

Sarah is organised and strategic with diarising her monthly goals on a wall calendar. Having several income streams maintains a sense of balance and security. Building relationships with particular galleries, events and fairs, she is able to create selling opportunities whilst promoting them well in advance. It is the time-management, consistency, strategy and implementation that translates into sales – a formula that takes a while to hone but is well worth the effort.



▲ *Sailing*, oil on canvas, 12¼×16¼in (31×41cm)



▲ *Boxing Hares*, oil on canvas, 47¼×39½in (120×11cm)





▲ *Cheetah*, oil on canvas, 39½×47¼in (100×120cm)

## Here are a few tips to set yourself up for success

- **Understand how you work as an artist, what makes you happy and how you can thrive** Where do you work best? In the chaos of the family home, garden shed or quiet private studio? Do you prefer to work in solitude or in a shared community of other artists?
- **Who is your target audience?** What are you painting, what is your 'brand' and how can people find you?
- **Put a schedule in place – even if it's a loose one** Setting aside time for creativity, admin tasks (including visits to printers and framers every month for example) and marketing is important.
- **Make time for marketing** Whether it's networking, nurturing contacts, updating your gallery, social media, website, printing postcards, greetings cards or flyers, timetabling competition entries and so on!
- **Try and stick to this schedule** Monitor what works for you and improve on it each month. Need more time for marketing, social media, advertising, teaching? Find time and diarise it, otherwise it won't happen.
- **Be strict in your studio time** Obviously there should be a degree of flexibility around family life, but try and stick to a routine.
- **Give yourself the best chance for success** Take a long-term, strategic and balanced approach to your business.



Sarah in her studio

## CASE STUDY: SARAH ELDER

### Q: Tell us a bit about your journey as an artist

**A:** Having drawn and painted ever since I was a child, I was discouraged to accept my place at art college by my mother, who was concerned about the financial insecurity of the career of an artist, and so I worked in magazine publishing, then the *Sunday Times* and then as editor for a finance house in the City; however, I was always painting on the side. My lucky break was in 1995 when I was asked to illustrate *Where Warriors Met*, *The Story of Lewa Downs, Kenya*, by Edward Paice, and when my illustrations sold for over £10,000 at the book launch I had my mother's blessing that I could survive as an artist. So that's when my artist's journey really began.

### Q: How do you structure your painting practice?

**A:** At the beginning of the year I make a two-year plan of potential income streams, be it through exhibitions with galleries, charities, open studios, commissions, or new ventures. I enter dates/timelines and monthly goals

on a calendar/wall planner, which I attempt to adhere to. A few places sell my prints and cards, which although yields much smaller amounts financially, it all helps and every penny counts!

### Q: What does a 'normal' week look like for you?

**A:** I usually dedicate Monday to admin, aiming to do the lions share/time consuming bits then (forthcoming exhibitions, quotes, new leads/ventures etc), so that I can really focus on my painting for the rest of the week, without it hanging over me. Although I obviously reply daily to enquiries in the morning, and prepare my social media, before going to the studio to get on with the fun bit!

### Q: Tell us about your marketing – how do you promote your work?

**A:** As regards marketing, having exhibited for over 30 years, I am fortunate to have collectors and find that word of mouth and people seeing their paintings has proven very successful with selling and promoting my work. Social media (despite being embarrassingly late in doing it) is also amazing at reaching people, (wow! they come out of the woodwork) and I have had many sales as a result. I have been asked to paint Christmas cards for various charities, and I produce my own greetings cards. Again these have been an effective marketing tool too – basically it's free advertising.

### Q: What's coming up next for you? Where can we see your work?

**A:** Details of my 2023 winter exhibition, and all my future exhibitions and events can be found on my website [www.sarahelderart.com](http://www.sarahelderart.com) and on Instagram: [sarahelderart](https://www.instagram.com/sarahelderart), Facebook: [sarahelder](https://www.facebook.com/sarahelder), Twitter [sarahelderart](https://twitter.com/sarahelderart)

If you would like to be the first to know and benefit from priority previews and special offers, do sign up to my newsletter via my website. At the time of writing, I'm in the throes of organising several regional Cornish exhibitions this summer, showcasing over 75 paintings which I have created over the last three years in Cornwall.



▲ *A Fantasy of Flamingos*, oil on canvas, 24×30in (61×76cm)



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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



## JOIN ROBERT DUTTON FOR OUR FIRST 3-HOUR PASTEL MASTERCLASS ON THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER!

### Light, space and air

1pm to 4pm (UK time) Tickets: £35

The pastel masterclass is your chance to work on a much larger scale, with lots of layering and expressive mark making. The emphasis of the workshop is on expressive loose layering techniques, building depth in the painting using aerosol fixative and lots of different pastel techniques in combination.

## PAINTING & DRAWING BOATS WITH GRAHAME BOOTH

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

In this series, Grahame Booth will be demonstrating how to draw and paint boats successfully, with a variety of stunning coastal scenes.



**Rowing boats on the sand**

Thurs 5 Oct



**Floating boats**

Thurs 9 Nov



**Boat on wet sand**

Thurs 7 Dec



**Distant boats**

Tues 9 Jan

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# 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  
**International Original Print Exhibition 2023;** work chosen from this year's open submission, September 21 to October 1.

### Garden Museum

Lambeth Palace Road SE1.  
☎ 020 7401 8865  
www.gardenmuseum.org.uk  
**Frank Walter: Artist, Gardener, Radical;** featuring landscape and nature paintings by Antiguan artist, writer and environmentalist Frank Walter, October 4 to February 25, 2024.

### Dulwich Picture Gallery

Gallery Road SE21.  
☎ 020 8693 5254  
dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk  
**Rubens and Women;** September 27 to January 28, 2024.

### Mall Galleries

The Mall, SW1.  
☎ 020 7930 6844  
www.mallgalleries.org.uk  
**Royal Society of Marine Artists;** annual exhibition, September 21 to 30 (see pages 12 and 13).  
**Art for All: A Fundraising Auction;** online exhibition, October 9 to 16 (see page 9).  
**Women in Art Fair 2023;** October 12 to 15.  
**Society of Wildlife Artists: The Natural Eye 2023;** November 2 to 11.

### 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.  
**Take One Picture 2023;** work by primary schools across the UK that have

responded creatively to *A Shipwreck on Stormy Seas* by Claude-Joseph Vernet, until October 8.

### 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.

### Piano Nobile

96/129 Portland Road W11.  
☎ 020 7229 1099  
www.piano-nobile.com  
**R B Kitaj: London to Los Angeles;** October 25 to January 26, 2024.

### 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;** until September 24.  
**Women in Revolt! Art, Activism and the Women's Movement in the UK 1970-1990;** November 8 to April 7, 2024.

### Tate Modern

Bankside SE1.  
☎ 020 7887 8888  
www.tate.org.uk  
**Capturing the Moment;** a journey through painting and photography, until January 28, 2024.  
**Bob and Roberta Smith: Thamesmead Codex;** until October 29.  
**Philip Guston;** October 5 to February 25, 2024.

### Tin Man Gallery

4 Cromwell Place SW7.  
www.tinmanart.com  
**Tales from the Riverbank;** art inspired by Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, October 10 to 15.

### 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.  
**Turner and Bonington: Watercolours from the Wallace Collection;** September 20 to April 21, 2024.

### Whitechapel Gallery

77-82 Whitechapel High Street E1.  
☎ 020 7522 7888  
www.whitechapelgallery.org  
**Nicole Eisenman: Retrospective;** October 11 to January 14, 2024.

## REGIONS

### BATH

#### Holburne Museum

Great Pulteney Street.  
☎ 01225 388569  
www.victoriagal.org.uk  
**Painted Love: Renaissance Marriage Portraits;** until October 1.  
**Gwen John: Art and Life in London and Paris;** October 21 to April 14, 2024.

### 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, until 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.  
**From Life: Exploring the Human Figure;** works by Tracey Emin and Claudette Johnson as well as works that have influenced them by Frank Auerbach, Leon Kossoff and John Minton, until October 1.  
**John Craxton: A Modern Odyssey;** October 28 to April 21, 2024.

### COMPTON VERNEY

#### Compton Verney

Warwickshire.  
☎ 01926 645500  
www.comptonverney.org.uk  
**Audubon's Birds of America;** until October 1.  
**Portrait Miniatures: Highlights from the Grantchester Collection;** until December 31.

### DEDHAM

#### The Munnings Museum

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

### DORCHESTER

#### The Dorset Museum

High West Street.  
☎ 01305 262735  
www.dorsetmuseum.org  
**Elisabeth Frink: A View from Within;** December 2 to April 21, 2024.

### EASTBOURNE

#### Towner Eastbourne

Devonshire Park, College Road.  
☎ 01323 434670  
www.townereastbourne.org.uk  
**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.

### GUILDFORD

#### Watts Gallery

Down Lane, Compton.  
☎ 01483 810235  
www.wattsgallery.org.uk  
**Formations: Fiona Millais and Lucy Lutyens;** combining painting and sculpture, inspired by the landscape, until October 29.  
**Victorian Virtual Reality;** highlights from the Brian May Archive of Stereoscopy exploring the 19th century photography craze, until February 25, 2024.  
**In Print Joy;** printmaking exhibition, November 2 to January 14, 2024.

### HASTINGS

#### Hastings Contemporary

Rock-a-Nore Road.  
☎ 01424 728377  
www.hastingscontemporary.org  
**Nengi Omuku: The Dance of People and the Natural World;** October 7 to March 3, 2024.

### MARGATE

#### Turner Contemporary

Rendezvous.  
☎ 01843 233000  
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, until 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

**The Barn Gallery**  
St John's College, St Giles.  
**Trees of Life;** new work by Susan Neale, November 2 to 17. See page 10.

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

## PENZANCE

**Penlee House Gallery**  
Morrab Road.  
☎ 01736 363625  
[www.penleehouse.org.uk](http://www.penleehouse.org.uk)  
**A Passion for Cornish Art: 50 Years of Private Collecting;** 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;** until September 23.  
**Nicola Slaterry: Wild Imagination;** October 2 to 21.

## WOKING

**The Lightbox**  
Chobham Road.  
☎ 01483 737800  
[www.thelightbox.org.uk](http://www.thelightbox.org.uk)  
**A Spirit Inside;** Europe's largest collection of art by women, September 23 to January 14, 2024.

## 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

**Scottish National Gallery**  
The Mound.  
☎ 0131 624 6200  
[www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org)  
**Grayson Perry: Smash Hits;** 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), **Decades: The Art of Change 1900-1980;** (Modern Two), until January 7, 2024.



▲ R B Kitaj *The Architects*, oil on canvas, 60¼×48in (153×122cm) from *R B Kitaj: London to Los Angeles* at Piano Nobile, London

Piano Nobile

## ART SOCIETIES

**Ambleside & District Art Society**  
Exhibition at Ambleside Parish Centre, Cumbria, from October 18 to 29;  
<https://amblesideartsociety.co.uk>

**Crook Art Group**  
Annual exhibition at the Memorial Hall, Crook Road LA8 8LG on October 14 and 15, 11am to 4pm each day.

**Dorking Group of Artists**  
Exhibition at Denbies Wine Estate, London Road, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6AA, from October 13 to 15. Open 10am to 5pm; closing at 4pm on final day;  
[www.dga.org.uk](http://www.dga.org.uk)

**Easingwold & District Art Society**  
Exhibition at the Galtres Centre, Easingwold YO61 3AD, on October 21 and 22; 10am to 3.30pm each day;  
[www.easingwoldartsociety.co.uk](http://www.easingwoldartsociety.co.uk)

**Fairground Allotment Painters**  
Retrospective exhibition at the Gardeners Hall, 213 St Leonards Road, Windsor SL4

3DR on Saturday October 14, 1 to 5.30pm.  
Email [fap.windsor@gmail.com](mailto:fap.windsor@gmail.com)

**Highgate Watercolour Group**  
Exhibition at Lauderdale House, Highgate Hill, London N6 5HG, from October 11 to November 6. Open daily, 12noon to 4pm;  
[www.highgatewatercolour.org.uk](http://www.highgatewatercolour.org.uk)

**Leatherhead Art Club**  
Exhibition in the Old Chapel, St John's School, Epsom Road, Leatherhead KT22 8SP, from October 21 to 29, 10am to 4pm daily; [www.leatherheadartclub.com](http://www.leatherheadartclub.com)

**Mellor 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.

**Poole & East Dorset Art Society (PEDAS)**  
Autumn exhibition, *A Feeling for Art*, at The Gallery Upstairs, Upton Country Park, Poole BH17 7BJ, from October 13 to 30; 10am to 4pm daily; [www.pedas.org.uk](http://www.pedas.org.uk)

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



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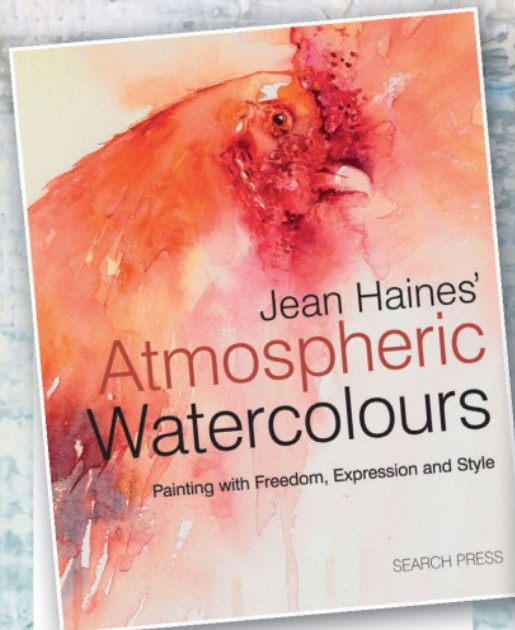


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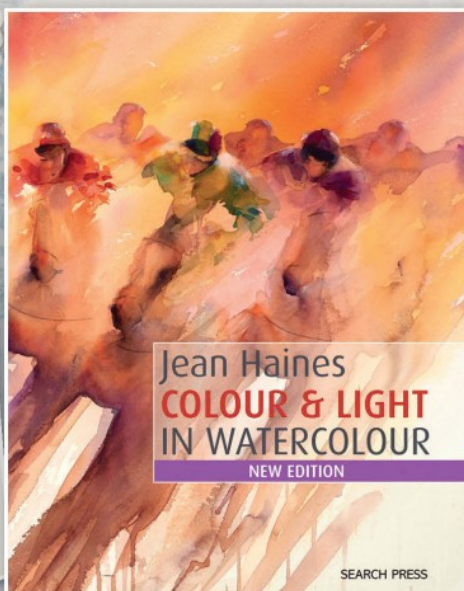
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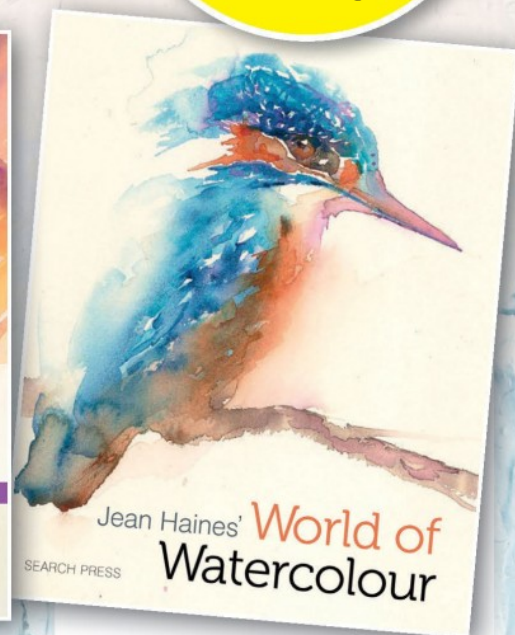
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## Poetic Woods – Experimental Watercolour and Collage

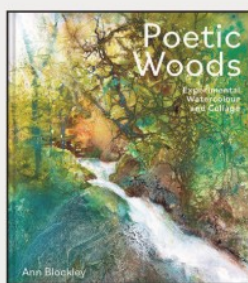
**Ann Blockley**

In this new book, renowned watercolour artist Ann Blockley, known for her experimental paintings of natural landscapes, explores a variety of interpretations of woodland scenes, drawing inspiration from forest poetry, birdsong and folklore. She provides practical advice on working *en plein air*, mixing colours, using a variety of mark-making techniques and found objects as well as working with collage. With easy-to-follow demonstrations, and simple instructions, the book is illustrated throughout with inspiring examples of Ann's expressive, colourful work, including a study of her own woodland garden. Continuing to push the boundaries of watercolour and other mixed media, this book is ideal for the experienced landscape painter who wishes to develop their painting skills and take their work to the next level.

**Batsford, £25, 144pp (HB)**

**ISBN 9781849948081**

**Published September 14, 2023**



**Poetic interpretations**

For the painter, design is an essential part of making and using water and colour in water-based media. The artist's vision is the starting point for the work. The artist's vision is the starting point for the work. The artist's vision is the starting point for the work.

## Experimental Nature in Acrylics

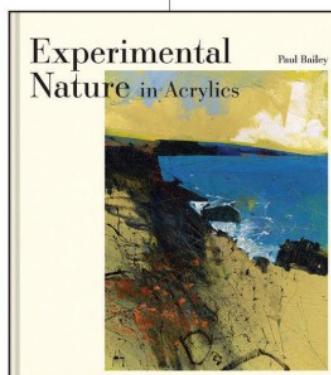
**Paul Bailey**

In his first book for Batsford, contemporary landscape artist Paul Bailey introduces us to fresh and experimental ways to capture landscapes in acrylics. His fascination with the natural world is clearly expressed in his colourful, semi-abstract paintings. Paul generously shares his approach and techniques, making it simple for readers to adapt his processes and produce work that is abstract, evocative and full of vivid colour. Through easy-to-follow explanations and step-by-step demonstrations, he describes how to manipulate the medium to capture craggy cliffs, rolling farmland hills, tidal rivers or flat, open-skied wilderness in striking and unusual colour palettes. He includes tips on how to paint organic shapes and use abstract elements in the landscape as the basis for a painting, as well as how to create a compositional sense of rhythm.

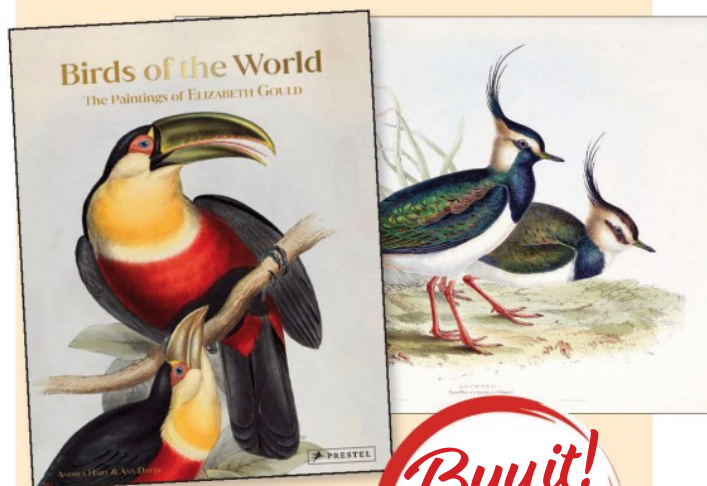
**Batsford £25, 128pp (HB)**

**ISBN 9781849947763**

**Published August 31, 2023**



When I was a child, I was fascinated by the natural world. I was fascinated by the natural world. I was fascinated by the natural world.



## Birds of the World: The Art of Elizabeth Gould

**Andrea Hart and Ann Datta**

Artist and illustrator Elizabeth Gould (1804-1840), may be unfamiliar to many, but she and her ornithological illustration skills are given well-deserved recognition in this profusely illustrated volume that includes hundreds of her scientifically precise illustrations of birds from nearly every continent.

Elizabeth Gould's artistic career was initially linked with her husband, ornithologist John Gould, with whom she worked on a series of projects to document and illustrate the birds of the world — many of which were new to science. However, following her tragic death aged just 37, her efforts and talent were nearly forgotten. So, this Impressive book offers a new tribute to Elizabeth Gould's reputation and skill, covering her eventful life and revealing many of her published and previously unseen original artworks which mark her as one of the world's greatest bird painters.

**Prestel, in association with the Natural History Museum, London £55, 248pp (HB)**

**ISBN 9783791379876**

**Published September 7, 2023**

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For an appreciation of the legacy of one of the world's most skilful bird painters



# 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.aletterinmind.org](http://www.aletterinmind.org)

### Discerning Eye Drawing Bursary

**Details:** The Discerning Eye Drawing Bursary, currently valued at £1,500, was launched in 2005 to provide an opportunity for artists to extend their practice by offering financial support and the chance to exhibit their work as part of the ING Discerning Eye exhibition. Each year artists resident in the UK are invited to submit up to three images and a short written proposal that demonstrates how the bursary will benefit their current practice.

**Exhibition:** Selected work will be exhibited at the ING Discerning Eye exhibition at the Mall Galleries, London.

**When:** Open for submissions shortly; please check the website for updates.

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

### 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



▲ **Tom Marshall** *Wave to the Sea*, mixed media, 11¾×13¾in (30×35cm), from Upton Country Park Open 2023

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>

### 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)

### Rugby Open 2023

**Details:** The Rugby Open exhibition of contemporary art is open to residents of Warwickshire and its surrounding counties. Prizes include a cash prize and exhibition for the overall winner. The selection panel includes established artists and curators from respected institutions. There is also a youth category for artists aged 14 to 19 years.

**Exhibition:** Rugby Art Gallery

and Museum, November 25 to February 3, 2024.

**When:** Closes for submissions on November 13.

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

### 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. 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 will go 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)

### Upton Country Park Open 2023

**Details:** Artists living within a 15-miled radius of Poole in Dorset are invited to enter the Upton Country Park Open 2023 on the theme of 'Atmosphere'. The organisers welcome entries in most media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, handcrafted prints, digital and textile art; not photography or video. Prize money, totalling £400 will be awarded, divided at the discretion of the selector.

**Exhibition:** Selected work will be exhibited at the Gallery Upstairs, Upton Country Park, Poole BH17 7BJ, from December 1 until Christmas 2023.

**When:** Closes for submissions on November 15.

**Contact:**  
[www.thegalleryupstairs.org.uk](http://www.thegalleryupstairs.org.uk) to enter or for more details email [contact@thegalleryupstairs.org.uk](mailto:contact@thegalleryupstairs.org.uk)

## Demonstrations

### Café scene

**Details:** David Norman will demonstrate to the Sidmouth Society of Artists how to paint a French café in watercolour.

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

**When:** October 26, 2pm. Entrance free for members; £3 for visitors.

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

### Light and atmosphere

**Details:** Val Ridler will demonstrate how to paint light and atmosphere in mixed media to members of the Tewkesbury Art Society.

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

**When:** Tuesday October 24. Visitors welcome. Entry £5.

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



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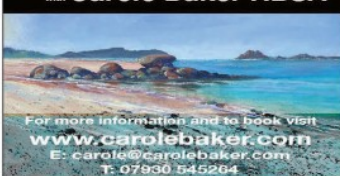
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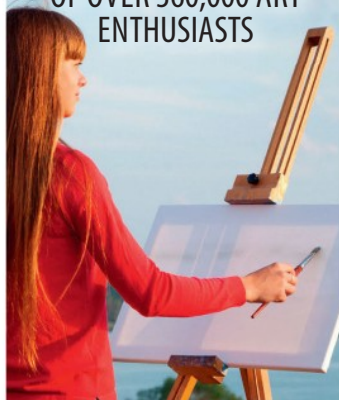
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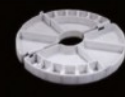
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# PaintersOnline editor's choice

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



▲ Lisa Shearing *Summer Dip*, acrylic on deep-edged canvas, 8×10in (20.5×25.5cm)

There has never been a time when Lisa has not painted, she says. Even when she had her children, she would snatch time to paint late at night. 'In 2000, with my three sons' encouragement, I took part in Channel 4's *Watercolour Challenge*,' she writes. 'The heat was at Sandown Racecourse and a regional final at Hampton Court Palace. It was an incredible experience with the paintings later exhibited at the Mall Galleries, which was quite a moment! I've been lucky enough to have won two art holidays – one in 2006 to the Verrocchio Art Centre in Casole d'Elsa, Tuscany and,

to my surprise, another one in 2017 – a life course at the Art Academy Studios in Aubais in France under the expert instruction of Tod Ramos. The latter was phenomenal and I felt very privileged to have had this experience.

'Growing up, I always loved to draw beach scenes after a day at the beach and now, living only a stone's throw from the sea on the south coast, I have never-ending painting inspiration. Combining my love of the sea and painting is what drives me to paint my wild swimming scenes. For the past couple of years, I have swam all year round. There is no feeling like it and it does wonders for my

wellbeing, especially when I can fit in a swim before work. The sea and sky never fail to surprise; skies can be exotic, bright yellows and oranges or subtle misty greys, both equally beautiful.

'*Summer Dip* was painted in acrylic which suits my busy lifestyle with limited drying time. My preferred brand is Liquitex but I'm not against mixing it with other brands if they are to hand. I like to go straight in with the paint, first blocking in the sea and then as soon as I'm more or less happy with it, I block in the figures with a mix of burnt sienna and raw sienna. The swimsuits come later when I can see what colour will stand out against the colour of the sea. The sea colour can take several layers and shades before I'm happy that it fits the mood. I like to add vibrant touches of Pebeo Fluorescent acrylic paint to the swim hats so that they really stand out, before adding the finishing touches to the sea surf with an old splayed brush.

'My brushes are mainly flats – 2cm and 1cm brushes for the sea – with smaller flats for the figures and fine-pointed brushes for the finishing details. I use old splayed bristle brushes to create the texture of the surf.

'As well as sea paintings, I love to paint animals and wildlife. I have painted many pet portraits as commissions. Within the next 12 months I am taking the plunge to stop work and paint (and swim more). I have lots of ideas and inspiration stored, just waiting for the time to come. I'm currently working on a website to be finalised shortly.'

Lisa is available to take commissions. Contact her on 07901 671570 or email her at [lshearing50@gmail.com](mailto:lshearing50@gmail.com). More of her work can be seen on Painters Online and she has an Etsy shop page at [lisasart66](https://www.etsy.com/shop/lisasart66) for wild swimming cards, giclée prints and some originals. See her dog and cat paintings on Instagram and Facebook @Lisa'sArt

TA

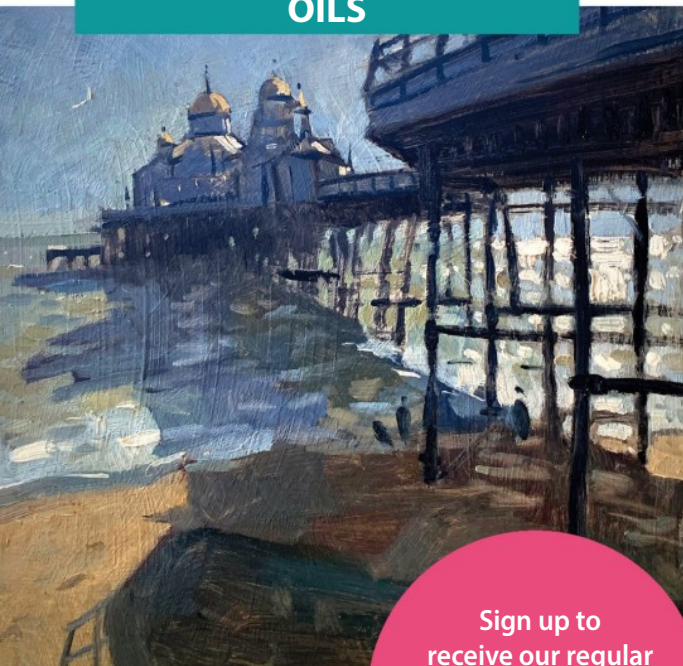
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# the artist

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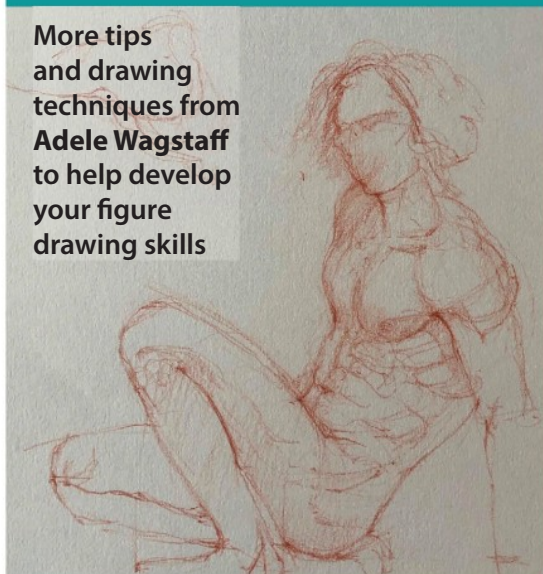


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● Why choose oils? **Paul Talbot-Greaves** has some answers and advises on painting techniques

● **Steve Griggs** shows how to paint successfully from photographs

● See the winning works from our 2023 *The Artist Open Competition* Exhibition

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● Traps for artists and how to avoid the ones that seem hard to resist, by **Mike Barr**

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