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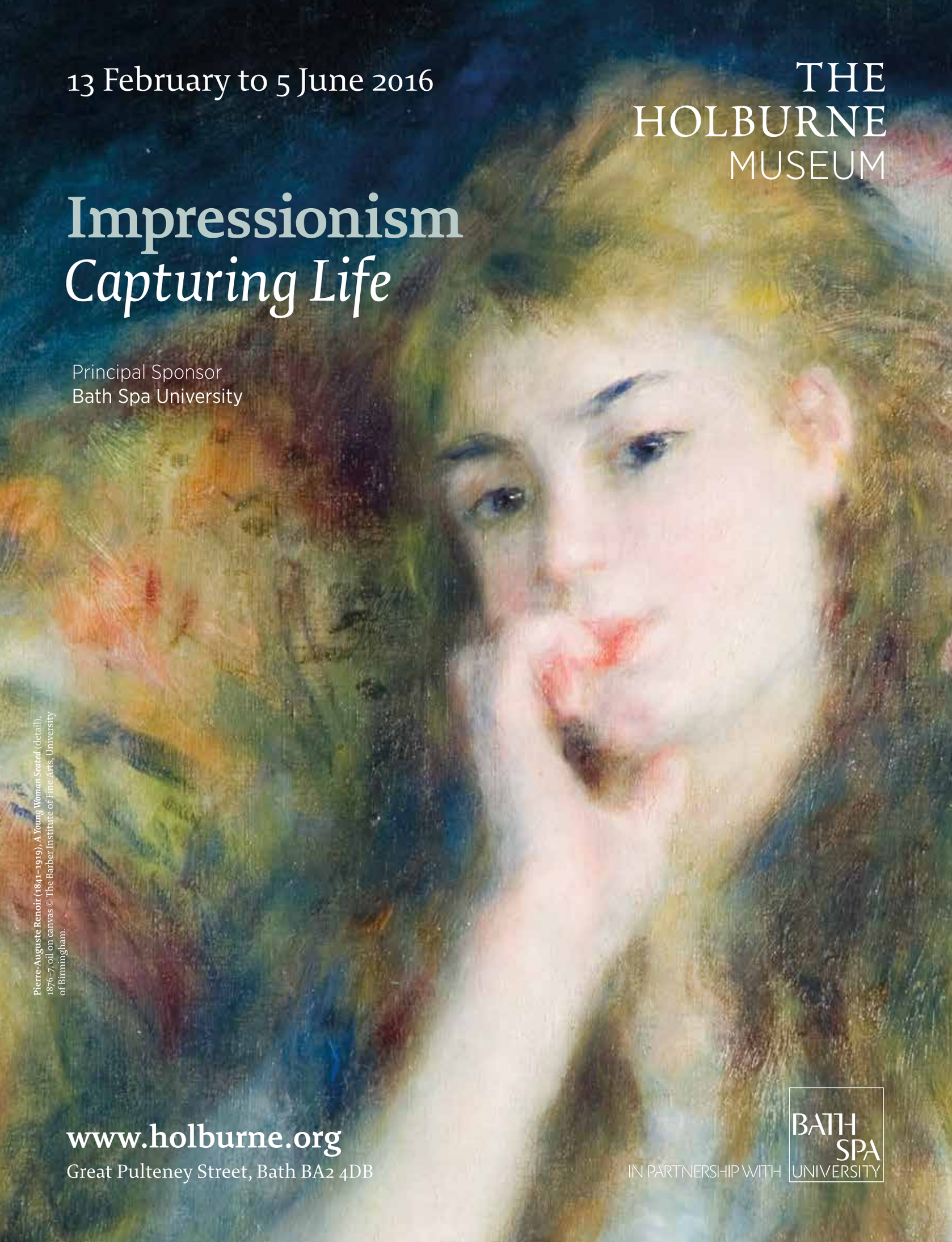

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), *A Young Woman Seated* (detail), 1876–7, oil on canvas © The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham.

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IT'S TIME TO EMBRACE URBAN SKETCHING

One of the many things I love about drawing and painting is that there is a style and approach to suit any personality. Expressive, single-minded types tend to make good gallery artists, able to generate works from scratch, while illustrators tend to be good problem solvers, better equipped to react to a brief creatively. Likewise, if you're shy and retiring, there's the comfort of a silent studio, whereas if you are more of an outgoing sort, then sketching in public offers a chance to make new connections.

For this issue, we spoke to two artists who, as members of the burgeoning Urban Sketchers community, definitely fit the latter profile. The Glasgow and Yorkshire correspondents respectively, Wil Freeborn and Lynne Chapman both enjoy meeting people and experiencing life through the medium of drawing.

If you've previously dismissed "urban sketching" as some sort of cutting edge alternative to street art and you enjoy the works in this issue, I wholeheartedly encourage you to explore the community further at www.urbansketchers.org. Stretching across the globe, the network is friendly, supportive and not-for-profit, dedicated instead to encouraging people to draw the world around them and share the results. And whatever your personality, getting new people to discover the joys of art is one thing that we can all support.

Steve Pill, Editor

Write to us!

Does your personality suit the art that you create? Tell us how and share some examples using one of these five ways...

- info@artistsandillustrators.co.uk
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EDITORIAL Editor Steve Pill **Deputy Editor** Katie McCabe **Art Editor** Alicia Fernandes **Contributors** Mitchell Albala, Ray Balkwill, Grahame Booth, Laura Boswell, Aine Divine, Rob Dudley, Lachlan Goudie, Tom Greenwood, Matt Jeanes, Kevin Scully and Jake Spicer **ONLINE ENQUIRIES** *support@artistsandillustrators.co.uk*
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YOUR LETTERS

LETTER OF THE MONTH

HEALING POWERS

Re: Your Letters, Issue 362

I started an art group about two years ago after a close friend was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Like many facing this difficult news, I felt compelled to do something practical, particularly as I am an Occupational Therapist and therefore clear about the therapeutic benefits of meaningful occupation.

Initially we would meet every week to make some artwork. When we tired or reached a pause in our work, we swapped pieces in order to either progress or finish what we had started. This process of sharing proved to be very creative and resulted in many more items being resolved or completed.

Our collaboration evolved into a larger group after a second friend became ill. We are now a group of 10 amateur artists working to a monthly theme. We arrange group trips to exhibitions and attend workshops hosted and led by one brave member. We have even arranged our first Art Collaboration weekend away in April when we plan to combine mini workshops, drawing and a lot of laughter.

Our first member passed away in January, but not before we sold our first print and launched our fundraising page for Cancer Research. I can highly recommend the formation of this type of group because it has helped all of us in so many ways. Artistic pursuits can very healing.

Joanne Olney, via email

write to us

Send your letter or email to the addresses below:

POST:
Your Letters
Artists & Illustrators
The Chelsea Magazine Company Ltd.
Jubilee House
2 Jubilee Place
London SW3 3TQ

EMAIL: info@artistsandillustrators.co.uk

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EMBRACING REALITY

Re: Get Real!, Issue 362

I thoroughly enjoyed the March edition – this is my sort of style.

I am an elderly gent and didn't start painting until after a stroke, having never had any interest in art up until then. I tried oil and acrylic not very successfully, then gave watercolour a try and liked it.

Having always been interested in wildlife, I thought I would give birds a try. After hours of practicing strokes with very fine brushes and looking at other wildlife artists, I began to feel I was heading in the right direction. Here is my latest attempt: a chaffinch on a branch [right], based on a photo taken by a keen photographer friend.

Peter Brown, via email

I was thrilled and not a little inspired by the wonderful photorealistic paintings in your March edition. I have painted a few quite realistic animal portraits in pastel [top right], but have often been put off by people's comments. Personally, I love the challenge of capturing the character of an animal or pet in the small detail and have often thought I would like to try painting plates of food and cake from local cafes. Your article has really encouraged me to give it a go.

Laina West, www.lainawest.co.uk

I have studied the March issue front cover and the articles inside and one has to admire the consummate skill of those who do realistic work of this kind, but – and this is a big but – it is surely craft, not art. Or not art as it has flourished and developed over the last century and

a half. Art should excite the imagination, make the viewer wonder and see things in new ways. There should be adventure, risk and energy in taking topics – whether they be landscapes, buildings, portraits or even still life – and giving them a life and energy all of their own.

When I look at art that appeals to me I want to be excited, whereas all I think when I look at this realist art is how realistic it is – nothing else!

David J Auld, via email

Great magazine as always.
I particularly enjoyed the article on Photorealism. It was also great that you devoted a number of pages to this type of art, in view of all the controversy surrounding it.

You often hear people ask "what's the point?" The point is that it takes a tremendous amount of skill and practice to expertly control the brush and medium to produce this type of artwork.

Only a handful of artists are capable of this and having us wonder how did he or she do it.
Well done, *Artists & Illustrators*.

Toulla Hadjigeorgiou, via email

Watts Gallery - Artists' Village
1 March- 5 June 2016
New Exhibition

WATTS GALLERY ARTISTS' VILLAGE

POETRY IN BEAUTY
THE PRE-RAPHAELITE ART OF MARIE SPARTALI STILLMAN

Marie Spartali Stillman, *The Enchanted Gard en of Messer Ansaldo, 1889* Watercolour and gouache on paper mounted on panel, Pre Raphaelite Inc., by courtesy of Julian Hartnoll

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De Morgan Collection

Watts Gallery

Watts Chapel

Watts Studios

Guildford

wattsgallery.org.uk

9 ARTISTIC THINGS TO DO IN APRIL

1 SKETCHING ST IVES

The Cornish harbour town of St Ives has inspired the work of countless British artists. In the 1950s in particular, it provided a hub for international modernism to thrive as painters flocked to its rugged coastal landscape. The St Ives School of Painting is keeping this tradition alive with an ongoing programme of workshops and creative weekends for artists of varying skill levels. The five-day *Exploring Forms* course (18-22 April) delves into the work of Barbara Hepworth, Sandra Blow and Wilhelmina Barns Graham, scouting for ideas in the environment that inspired them. Looking ahead, painter Gary Long's *When Sea Meets Land* (3-6 May) workshop invites students to sketch the coastline first-hand and learn how to create dramatic visual notes on colour and weather. **www.schoolofpainting.co.uk**

2 DISCOVER
RCA Secret 2016

The Royal College of Art's annual fundraiser sees anonymous postcard-sized works from famous artists sit alongside pieces by recent graduates. View in person from 8-9 April. **london.secret.rca.ac.uk/2016**

3 LEARN
Renaissance Drawing Materials and Techniques

Gain insight into the innovative methods of Da Vinci and his peers with this talk at Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle (20 April), which coincides with new exhibition, *Ten Portraits from the Royal Collection*.
www.laingartgallery.org.uk

4 ENTER
Broadway Arts Festival

Submissions are open until 30 April for the chance to exhibit in this Worcestershire festival in June. This year's theme is 'Conflict' and awards include the £1,000 John Singer Sargent Prize.
www.broadwayartsfestival.com

SALLY HISLOP, *WAR HORSE*

5 DRAW
Live Drawing Workshop

Sketch like there's nobody watching at Sadler's Wells in London (15 April). The class begins with a discussion on live drawing by artist Heidi Wigmore, before offering the chance to sketch the English National Ballet practising pirouettes in the theatre's auditorium.
www.ballet.org.uk/whats-on

FRANCIS BOWYER, *LIFE DRAWING I*, MIXED MEDIA

DON'T MISS!

6 PAINT
The Architecture of the Figure

Build on your life drawing skills with the Royal Watercolour Society. In this one-day workshop at London's Heatherley School of Fine Art (16 April), students will paint both a nude and a dressed model to study the layers of form and figure.
www.royalwatercoloursociety.co.uk

7 BOOK
This is Rembrandt

Rembrandt van Rijn had a dramatic life worthy of fiction, finding fame in the Dutch Golden Age, yet becoming destitute by his death in 1669. Jorrella Andrews' book (Laurence King, £9.95) tells his story with the help of Nick Higgins' playful illustrations.
www.laurenceking.com

8 STUDY
Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists

Far more than passive models, the key female artists of this movement rarely feature in our history books. To learn about the work of painters like Elizabeth Siddal, visit Surrey's Watts Gallery for this five-week course (18 April to 16 May).
www.wattsgallery.org.uk

9 PRINT
Screenprint Weekend

Want to learn a new skill in just two days? Challenge yourself at Double Elephant's printmaking workshop in Exeter (16-17 April), finding out how to cut paper and photo stencils with screenprint technician George Barron.
www.doubleelephant.org.uk

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EXHIBITIONS

APRIL'S BEST ART SHOWS

LONDON

Painting Norway: Nikolai Astrup
Until 15 May
Rustic visions of Northern Europe.
Dulwich Picture Gallery.
www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

Astrazione Oggettiva: The Experience of Colour
13 April to 26 June
Abstract Italian paintings from the 1970s.
Estorick Collection. www.estorickcollection.com

Comix Creatrix: 100 Women Making Comics
Until 15 May
Illustrations by a host of female comic artists.
House of Illustration. www.houseofillustration.org.uk

Dutch Flowers
6 April to 29 August
Tulips abound in these classical still lifes.
National Gallery. www.nationalgallery.org.uk

Russia and the Arts: The Age of Tolstoy and Tchaikovsky
17 March to 26 June
Famous faces from Moscow.
National Portrait Gallery. www.npg.org.uk

Painting the Modern Garden
Until 20 April
Last chance to see Monet's *Agapanthus Triptych*.
Royal Academy of Arts. www.royalacademy.org.uk

Botticelli Reimagined
5 March to 3 July
Interpreting the Italian's ideas of beauty.
V&A, London. www.vam.ac.uk

ENGLAND – NORTH

Anthony Clark: Burning Belief
Until 1 May
Watercolours of European cathedrals.
Bowes Museum, Durham.
www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk

Tom Wood: New Work
Until 19 June
Fresh portraits from the popular Yorkshire artist.
Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate. www.harrogate.gov.uk

Pre-Raphaelites: Beauty and Rebellion
Until 5 June
Victorian art inspired by the Renaissance.
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

On the Surface
6 March to 18 December
Textured paintings, prints and tapestries.
Shipley Art Gallery, Newcastle.
www.shipleyartgallery.org.uk

David Jones: Vision and Memory
12 March to 5 June
Watercolourist with a lightness of touch.
Djanogly Art Gallery, Nottingham.
www.lakesidearts.org.uk

Bridget Riley: Venice and Beyond, Paintings 1967-1972
Until 25 June
Early experiments in graphic colours.
Graves Gallery, Sheffield.
www.museums-sheffield.org.uk

At Home
19 March to 5 June
Smaller works from the Arts Council Collection.
Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield. www.ysp.co.uk

ENGLAND – SOUTH

Impressionism: Capturing Life
Until 5 June
28 masterpieces by Degas, Renoir and co.
The Holburne Museum, Bath. www.holburne.org

Wu Lan-Chiann: Reflections
Until 15 May
Contemporary ink paintings by a Taiwanese master.
Museum of East Asian Art, Bath. www.meaa.org.uk

Inquisitive Eyes: Slade Painters in Edwardian Wessex, 1900-1914
Until 12 June
The Dorset art colony featured in issue 361.
Royal West of England Academy, Bristol.
www.rwa.org.uk

1816: Prints by Turner, Goya and Cornelius
Until 31 July
Celebrating the Fitzwilliam's founding year.
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

Poetry in Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelite Art of Marie Spartali Stillman
1 March to 5 June
The pioneering artist's portraits and still lifes.
Watts Gallery, Guildford. www.wattsgallery.org.uk

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MARIA MERIAN'S BUTTERFLIES

15 April to 9 October
In 1699, the 52-year-old artist Maria Sibylla Merian sold the contents of her Amsterdam studio to fund an ambitious two-year trip to the Dutch colony of Suriname in South America.

She spent the next two years creating sketches of flora and fauna that she later adapted into the groundbreaking plates for her 1705 book, *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*. King George III would acquire a deluxe edition, which contained the 50 sumptuous watercolours collected here. Botanical painters, prepare to swoon.
The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London.
www.royalcollection.org.uk

© THE ARTIST. COURTESY FLOWERS GALLERY, LONDON AND NEW YORK. PHOTO: BRADFORD MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

DAVID HEPHER
23 April to 23 November
David Hepher turned 80 last year and celebrates belatedly with this major retrospective. The former Slade professor has straddled the conceptual and the traditional throughout his career, tackling everyday subjects in a graphic manner via a range of media.

Curator Sonja Kielty plans to hang Hepher's vast suburban oils (1973's *The Windows of No 19*, pictured) together to form a street in the gallery, while the Surrey-born artist's latest works will utilise concrete and paint to form abstract impressions of city life.
Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford.
www.bradfordmuseums.org

John Piper: An Eye for the Modern
2 March to 8 May
How the 20th-century artist embraced abstraction.
Jerwood Gallery, Hastings. www.jerwoodgallery.org

Alberto Giacometti: A Line Through Time
23 April to 29 August
Assessing the sculptor's impact on British art.
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich.
www.scva.ac.uk

Andy Warhol: Works from the Hall Collection
Until 15 May
Rare Pop prints with added fizz.
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. www.ashmolean.org

The Romantic Thread in British Art
Until 4 June
Pastoral paintings, prints and drawings.
Southampton City Art Gallery.
www.southampton.gov.uk

Shakespeare in Art
19 March to 19 June
Paintings inspired by the Bard's best works.
Compton Verney, Warcs. www.comptonverney.org.uk

John Craxton: A Poetic Eye
Until 7 May
Bohemian paintings by Freud's artist friend.
Salisbury Museum. www.salisburymuseum.org.uk

John Constable: Observing the Weather
Until 8 May
The cloud studies that inspired Impressionism.
The Lightbox, Woking. www.thelightbox.org.uk

Edward Lear: Travels and Nonsense
Until 8 May
Landscape sketches from Europe and India.
Ashmolean Museum Broadway, Worcestershire.
www.ashmoleanbroadway.org

SCOTLAND

The Artist and the Sea
Until 8 May
Modern paintings of seafaring Scotland.
City Art Centre, Edinburgh.
www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk

Masters of the Everyday
4 March to 24 July
17th-century Dutch paintings by Vermeer and more.
Queen's Gallery, Edinburgh. www.royalcollection.org.uk

Bridget Riley: Paintings, 1963-2015
15 April to 16 April 2017
Monochrome and colour works of Op Art.
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art,
Edinburgh. www.nationalgalleries.org

Comic Invention
18 March to 17 July
Picture stories, from Hogarth to Batman.
Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow. www.gla.ac.uk

WALES

Rose Wylie: Tilt the Horizontal into a Slant
Until 29 May
Eccentric imagery from the late-blooming painter.
Chapter, Cardiff. www.chapter.org

Augustus John in Focus
Until 30 September
Exciting early 20th-century portraits.
National Museum Cardiff. www.museumwales.ac.uk

Romanticism in the Welsh Landscape
19 March to 18 June
Hills, valleys and green, green grass.
MoMA Wales, Powys. www.momawales.org.uk

IRELAND

A Weed is a Plant Out of Place
2 April to 30 September
Artists create new work inspired by weeds.
Lismore Castle Arts, Co. Waterford.
www.lismorecastlearts.ie

Sarah Pierce: Pathos of Distance
Until 1 May
Visualising Irish migration and diaspora.
National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.
www.nationalgallery.ie

FRESH PAINT

INSPIRING NEW ARTWORKS, STRAIGHT OFF THE EASEL

BRIDGET MACDONALD

It may come as a surprise that Bridget MacDonald, an artist known for her evocative paintings of the Worcestershire countryside, didn't always see eye to eye with the landscape. "I'd never been quite sure how to approach it as a subject in a way that made sense to me," she admits.

Born in 1943, Bridget's earlier work focused on large-scale charcoal figures, until a residency at Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham piqued her fascination with the pastoral landscapes of Rubens and Lorrain. Soon after, the rich rural scenes of Malvern, where she lives, found their way into her art.

In *Summer Cattle*, the artist revisited the landscape of her childhood, St Catherine's Lighthouse on the southernmost point of the Isle of Wight, just a few hundred yards from where she was born. "I walked along the cliff as I had done many, many times before as a child and since, and was amazed to see a beautiful black Aberdeen Angus bull with a herd of cows and calves in the field next to the lighthouse," she explains. "It was like a vision."

The painting was created in Bridget's studio from memory and a few "not very good snapshots", allowing her own idealised view of the area to escape onto the canvas. She built up layers of impasto paint to convey the movement of the grass and glazed over those with a series of darker toned glazes to achieve depth and shadows.

At Worcester City Art Gallery, Bridget's work will come full circle as it is shown side by side with the landscapes of Claude Lorrain, Samuel Palmer and Peter Paul Rubens for a special exhibition, *This Green Earth*. "I feel thrilled to have my work displayed alongside them, although also very daunted at being in such exalted company," she admits.

***This Green Earth* runs until 25 June at Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum. www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk** >

RIGHT Bridget MacDonald, *Summer Cattle,* oil on linen, 102x127cm

TOP TIP

Bridget uses smooth, synthetic brushes to give the oil paint a gentle, luminous finish


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ABOVE Hsin-Yao Tseng, *Summer Sunset in Carmel*, oil on linen, 35x45cm

HSIN–YAO TSENG

After the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906, the Californian city of Carmel welcomed a host of uprooted artists and writers with the promise of pay-what-you-can rents. More than a century on, the small coastal enclave continues to attract painters and photographers drawn to the quaint architecture and gorgeous Pacific sunsets.

Oil painter Hsin-Yao Tseng was suitably impressed on a recent visit with his girlfriend, Serena. “I was fascinated by the beauty of nature and the beautiful orange-pink nightfall colour in the sky,” he says. “At that moment, I knew I would do a painting under this mood.”

Despite featuring Serena prominently, Hsin-Yao insists that he had other ambitions in mind for the resulting painting, *Summer Sunset in Carmel*: “I was focusing on the sunset colour and the back-lit lighting, and also playing with the positive and negative space in order to create interesting value patterns.”

He took several photos on location but relied upon memories of the scene to develop the painting back in his studio. “Getting the proper value is more important than trying to get the correct colour of the subject,” he says. “As long as you have a wide range of values within your painting you have flexibility in your colour choice.”

The glowing red halo is one such example. “I pushed the colour to make it look like the orange sunset light hitting the face. I worked on the head and the background at the same time, using the alla prima method and finishing one part of the piece before I moved on to the next.”

Born in Taiwan in 1986, Hsin-Yao moved to California at the age of 18, studying for both a BFA and MFA in painting at the Academy of Art University (AAU) in San Francisco. Following in the classically-trained footsteps of John Singer Sargent, Anders Zorn and Richard Schmid, the young artist has already developed a rich portfolio thanks to his superb skill and strong work ethic. “Every time you make a mistake it is an improvement in the next painting,” he notes.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned during his studies was not a practical one, however. “Love what you do and paint what your heart draws upon,” he says. “Alex Kanevsky made a guest lecture at AAU and he said, ‘If you are not excited about what you paint, then your painting won’t excite the viewer either’. I find great truth in this.”

www.hsinyaotseng.com >

TOP TIP

Kate works on several paintings at once: "It encourages you to loosen up and stop fiddling!"

KATE BENTLEY

Portfolio Plus member Kate Bentley has lived in the Lake District on and off since the age of 13. Today, she teaches courses in the area and roams the landscape in search of new subject matter. Paintings such as *High Dam No 2, Finsthwaite, Windermere* reveal how closely attuned the artist has become to her surroundings. The soft modulations of colour in the top right-hand corner of the picture in particular reveal a real sensitivity and skill.

"There are probably about 10 layers of paint there," she explains. "Initially I mainly use opaque pigments – my favourites are Underpainting White, Cadmium Yellow and Cobalt Turquoise Light. These are tinted with other transparent pigments such as Burnt Sienna, Rose Madder and Cobalt Blue to create a full spectrum of colours. Layers inbetween are often scrubbed, scratched or sanded, depending on how frustrated I am!"

High Dam No 2... is part of *Element*s, Kate's forthcoming exhibition at John Ruskin's former home in Cumbria. Her aim with the series is to awaken the senses. "Hopefully by asking the viewer to recall a personal moment, sensation, taste or smell associated with the visual stimuli, I am halfway there," she says. "For me, it was all about smelling the peaty waters, the occasional coo of a wood pigeon, the plop of a fish and the stillness of the air."

Sign up for your own personalised Portfolio Plus account today at www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/register or visit Kate's own page at www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/kate-bentley

Kate's new exhibition, *Element*s, runs from 25 March to 5 June at Brantwood Trust, Coniston, Cumbria. www.brantwood.org.uk

ABOVE Kate Bentley, *High Dam No 2, Finsthwaite, Windermere*, oil on panel, 60x60cm

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WIL FREEBORN'S DETAILED WATERCOLOURS CELEBRATE THE QUIET COMMUNITY OF SCOTTISH COFFEE HOUSES, BUT AS HE TELLS **KATIE MCCABE**, IT'S TIME FOR HIS ART TO START MAKING SOME NOISE

Many of us suffer from a little thing known as coffee hyperbole. It's most commonly used during those trying times of the day, when a hot cup of percolated caffeine is deemed a 'lifesaver'. For 42-year-old artist Wil Freeborn however, such claims are no exaggeration: coffee has quite literally changed his life.

Just a few years ago, Wil worked as a designer for BBC Scotland and sketched for fun. He has always been one of life's great observers, frequently found in the corner of a Glasgow café, quietly drawing the staff and customers with his Platinum Carbon Pen in a favoured Stillman & Birn sketchbook. As his confidence grew, he began posting drawings of his commute to work on the image-sharing website Flickr. Online followers warmed to his unusual style: urban sketches with a considered approach to figure and form, which he would later render in watercolour.

Wil's favourite Glaswegian coffee shops became a feature of his artwork and commission requests soon followed. In 2014, he was asked by the Glasgow Coffee Festival to illustrate a 'coffee calendar' of the city's best-loved cafés. The response was overwhelmingly positive and the opportunities just kept coming, including an artist's residency on the Isle of Skye. Eventually the illustration work became lucrative enough that he was able to focus on his art full time.

Wil continues to post his work online most days, though he's since turned his attentions to Instagram, a popular photo-sharing social network through which he has found an international community that can relate to his watercolours, many of whom have never stepped foot in Scotland, let alone George Square.

Keen to learn more, we headed to Glasgow to meet Wil in his natural habitat: Avenue Coffee on Great Western Road. As we sit outside waiting for a seat indoors, teeth chattering over flat whites in the razor-sharp Scottish >

LEFT *Papercup*, watercolour on sketchbook, 26x21cm

ABOVE *Velocity Café (detail)*, watercolour on paper, 22x15cm

winter air, it very quickly becomes clear that Wil doesn't just like coffee shops, he's become a part the city's café culture. As we flip through his sketchbook, he stops on a drawing of a red headed woman. "That's the girl who just served us," he smiles, pointing toward the counter.

There's something about sketching in a shared common space, he explains, that means the normal social laws just don't apply; drawing someone in a shop would feel intrusive, but in a café, an artist becomes part of the scenery. Although for Wil, there's more to it than having a room full of ready-made sitters. He believes cafés generate a kind of social cohesion that allows art to thrive. "With the economic downturn, [coffee] is a small luxury for people. They spend money on it to treat themselves, but that money might ripple out in other ways. Independently-minded coffee shops don't buy cups from B&Q, so you might get support for local ceramicists or artists might get involved."

Suitably caffeinated, Wil takes us on a tour of his erstwhile hometown [he's since moved to the quiet coastal town of Gourock]. His work is an entrenched part of the city, to be found by those who know where to look. Pass through the turnstiles at Hillhead subway station and you'll come face to face with an illustrated mural he created with the artist and author Alasdair Gray; order a drink in Laboratorio Espresso on West Nile Street and you'll be sipping from a cup printed with one of his watercolours.

Wil's process has seen him embraced by the emerging Urban Sketchers scene: a culture of in-the-moment drawing where the art has an unfinished quality. With a global network of correspondents, the movement has gained a huge amount of traction in recent years, as early-bird tickets for the latest International Urban Sketchers Symposium in Manchester sold out in minutes.

However, while Wil still sketches *en plein air*, it's his fascination with figure drawing that sets his work apart – even his simple crowd scenes possess a rare kind of expressiveness and a noticeable care taken with the human form. In the 1990s, he attended Glasgow Art School, which at that time was caught up in a wave of conceptual art. "I pretty much stopped drawing for the whole of [my time at] art college," he says.

Years later he returned to the same building for life drawing and anatomy classes, learning how to render the human body in his medium of choice: watercolour. It's a sketching style at odds with his larger artworks – where once he was a designer trying to make it as an illustrator, he now sees himself as an illustrator who wants to be an artist. "I am trying to wean myself away from sketchbooks and the sketching scene," he tells me. "I just really want to know how to 'draw properly'. There's a way of drawing and learning how to render form, and I feel like that feeds back into my work. With a sketch, it goes a certain way but you

hit a block. I don't want to be a 'good sketcher', it makes zero sense to me."

Many in the art world clearly value Wil's skills as a watercolourist. He is currently working on a first tutorial book for Quarto, *Learn to Paint in Watercolour with 50 Paintings*, which involves him creating a painting every day and breaking down his process into steps. His advice to those experimenting with the medium? Throw out most of the paints in your starter kit and upgrade to a better palette.

"Some watercolour kits you get are really simple – they bulk up their colours with quite cheap pigments. A lot of people get really disheartened when the first start using them because the results don't bear any relation to what they are seeing, and they get put off. But if you have a good palette to start with, you will be more inclined to pursue it."

When it comes to sketching, he says the best tip is to start with what matters to you: "Draw your garden, cafés or museums, just to build up a visual language. And don't post things online until you feel comfortable – just get something on paper first. Some people are naturally inclined to want to draw accurately, while others want to follow their own path. Both approaches are equally valid."

Wil initially chose watercolours because they were affordable, fast drying and handy to transport. "I was essentially colouring in," he says. "I would make notes and come back later on to fill them in. It was only later on that I began to use the medium to explore what is possible."

His current inspirations include the Danish painter >

WIL IS ONE OF LIFE'S GREAT OBSERVERS, FREQUENTLY FOUND IN THE CORNER OF A GLASGOW CAFÉ

RIGHT *Fortitude Coffee, Edinburgh*, 13x42cm
BELOW, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT *Peña Coffee (detail)*, 22x15cm; *Sarah*, 59x84cm; *The Brew Lab, Edinburgh*, 44x15cm; *Dear Green Coffee Cups (detail)*, 28x16cm. All watercolour on paper

Vilhelm Hammershøi, for his quiet way with figures in interiors, and the Victorian artist Arthur Melville, whose large-scale paintings weren't burdened by what Wil describes as the 'baggage' of watercolour, which is often associated with smaller, cheaper works.

Recently, Wil has been loosening up his style with large, evocative figure paintings. After years spent capturing undisturbed, natural scenes, he wants to kick up the dust a little and experiment with painting set ups and life models. He is currently creating Joan of Arc-style armour out of cardboard for a figurative portrait. The aim is to play around with the idea of contrived 'fakeness'; a kind of theatrical, artificial style seen in movies like *The Royal Tenenbaums*: "Everything is so mannered, but reality is thrown around."

No longer satisfied with being an avid people watcher, he wants to curate the story behind his work, allowing the viewers to lose themselves in the drama of it. But for now, Wil finds himself on the precipice of the fine art world, wash brush in hand, getting ready to make the leap.

www.wilfreeborn.co.uk

ABOVE *Life Drawing Outside*, oil on canvas, 45x55cm

WIL'S FASCINATION WITH FIGURE DRAWING SETS HIM APART... EVEN HIS CROWD SCENES POSSESS A RARE EXPRESSIVENESS

A MUG'S GAME?

WIL FREEBORN ON PAINTING PAPER CUPS

"Paper cups are almost a perfect support to paint on. They are matt on the outside and glossy on the inside, so the surface is really easy to draw on with paint. The cups are really sturdy too. They are built to hold water, so you can put a lot of watercolour on the surface and it's not going to ripple. Theoretically you could even use acrylic or oil paint. There are no rules."

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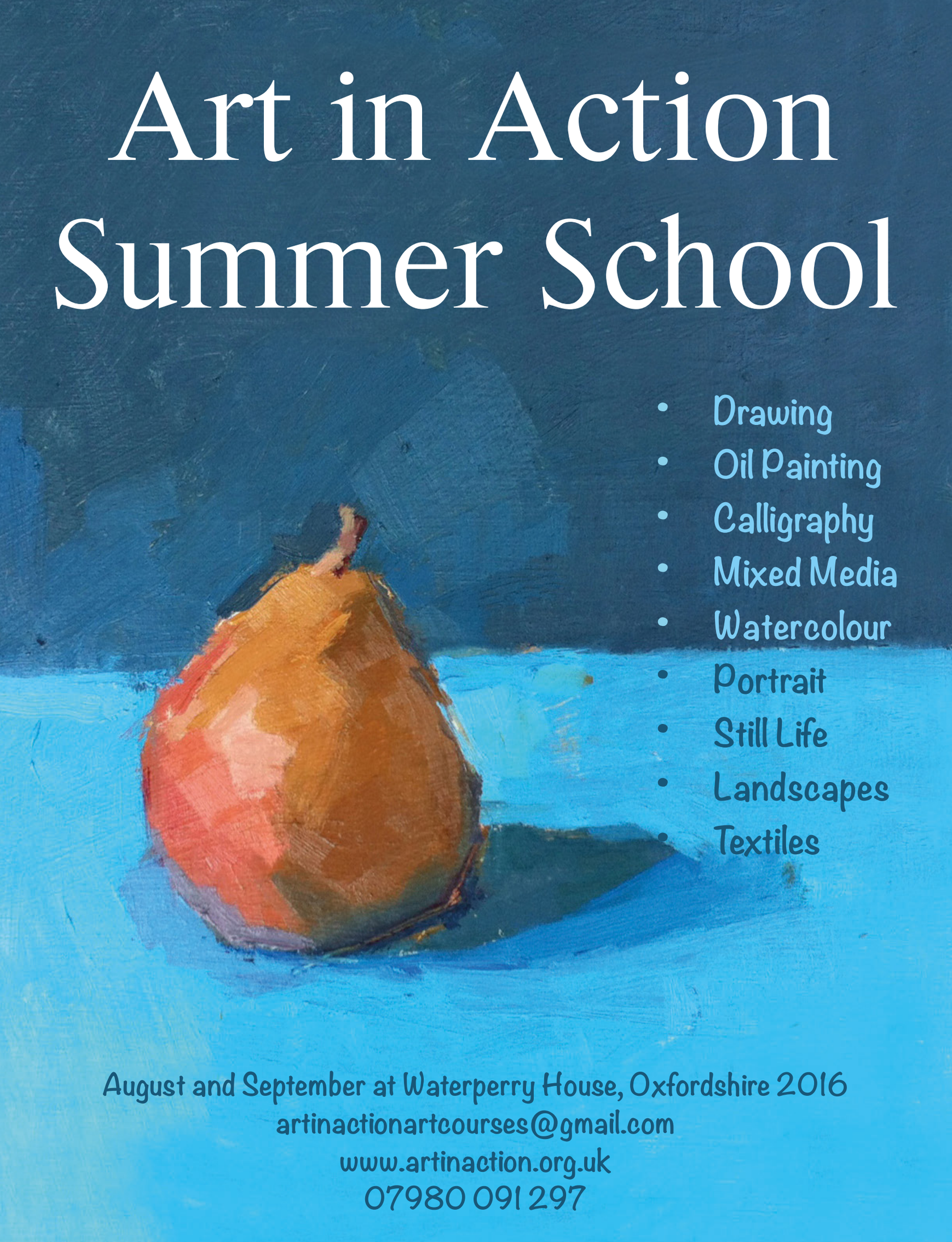

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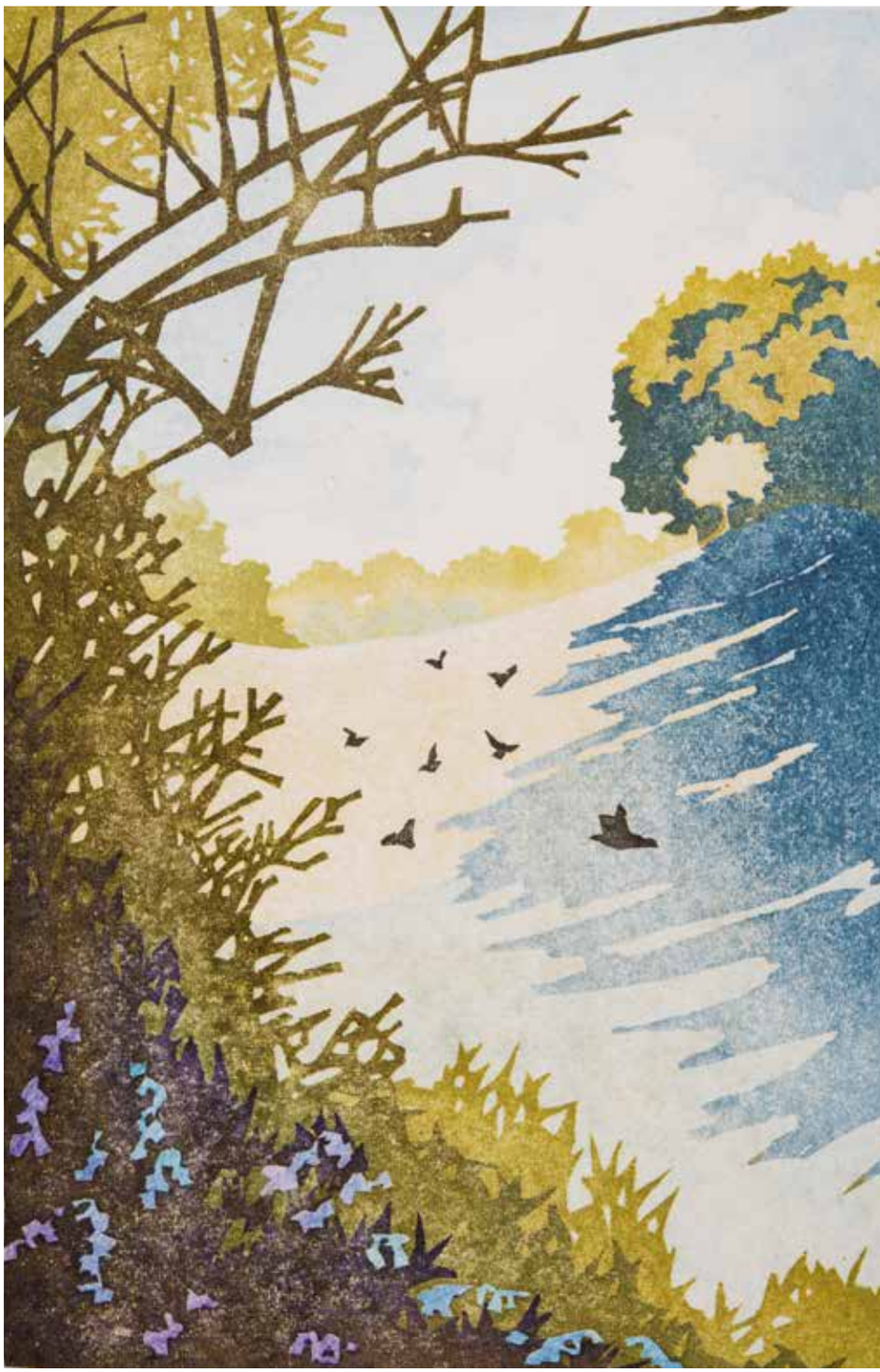
THE WORKING ARTIST

WE SHOULD BE MORE POSITIVE ABOUT OUR OLDER ARTWORKS, SAYS COLUMNIST **LAURA BOSWELL**



Visit my studio and you will usually find a selection of works piled neatly against a wall. The question of how to handle a stock of artwork and what to do with older work is one that affects most artists.

First, try to accept that work in stock is a good thing. It is easy to look at the piles and see them as clutter or as evidence of a failure to sell. I fight the impulse by taking time and great care to manage stored work. The trick is to see it as a resource, not a burden. At the very least, make sure that you can keep older artwork in a safe, dry place. Bad storage can result in ruined work fit only for the skip.

We all tend to be more passionate about our latest creations. The temptation is always to show off new pieces at exhibitions or events while hiding the older ones. It is important to have a mix of work on display, however. Your audience changes all the time and, while returning visitors will like to see new ideas, they won't expect an entirely new collection and may well enjoy 'seeing old friends' on the walls. I've sold plenty of work to people who, on seeing work again, couldn't resist. Never be afraid to display old work alongside new. First-time visitors will see all your work as fresh and, if you are travelling to a new venue or joining a new gallery, you start afresh too.

> "THE TRICK IS TO SEE UNSOLD ART AS A RESOURCE, NOT A BURDEN"

I also sell work online and, although I try to keep my website gallery up to date, the older work remains on display and still generates sales. Likewise, if a gallery is showcasing your work in a solo or group show, you can include work hung previously. A gallerist friend says her audience always responds best to a mix of familiar pieces alongside new work for group and solo exhibitions.

The one exception comes with commercial galleries who don't follow exhibition cycles and just hang a general selection of works. Owners of these galleries will expect new work to replace old and generally won't want to exhibit a piece on more than one occasion. In this instance, you need to come up with different work at each submission, but remember that "different" doesn't always mean new – you could submit a piece already seen elsewhere.

If you really need a clear out, try my final trick. I hold an annual open studios event and, every few years, I will hold a fun "thrift shop" alongside this, stocking older work. People enjoy hunting for a bargain and I can say goodbye to my oldest prints with a happy heart.

www.lauraboswell.co.uk

ABOVE *Twelve Views: Early Morning, Spring* Japanese woodblock print, 25.5x39.5cm

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OPENING OUT
Lynne is working on a series of concertina sketchbooks for an exhibition in July. She plans to clip them to the wall.

IN THE STUDIO

LYNNE CHAPMAN

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK ILLUSTRATOR AND URBAN SKETCHER INVITES US INTO HER SHEFFIELD ATTIC STUDIO. WORDS AND PHOTOS: **STEVE PILL**

How long have you been in this studio?
About 10 years. I'm a Londoner and I moved to Sheffield in 1990. I thought moving would be a huge culture shock – I didn't want to come particularly, but the quality of life is great here: the people are nice, the money goes further and there's countryside.

Did you find the transition tricky?
Yes, because when I moved up I was an editorial illustrator and the work dwindled. I needed to meet people so I did a bit of teaching at the local art college and that's when I decided to do the children's books. I spent a year developing a portfolio of work and my first book was published in 1999.

Did you make any changes to the studio?
It's been decorated and we put in the plan chests – the drawers are all different sizes. We put in the extra windows, the daylight bulbs and this island in the middle too. It was a case of fine-tuning the space really.

Your picture books are all in pastel, whereas your sketchbooks use a variety of different media. How did that strand of your work develop?
I've always kept a sketchbook. I studied textile design but I got a job as an illustrator when people saw my sketchbooks. When I moved into children's books, I started getting invited to do workshops, which meant travelling about a lot. I thought I should be drawing on the train because I was surrounded by free life models.

How did you become involved with the Urban Sketchers community?
I started posting the train drawings online and Gabi [Urban Sketchers founder Gabriel Campanario] was

THE PERFECT GUIDE
After illustrating more than 30 children's books, Lynne has just published her first practical art title. *Sketching People* is a guide to drawing figures and faces on the go.

> I WANTED THE BOOK TO EMPOWER MORE PEOPLE TO DRAW AND BE COURAGEOUS

GOT IT IN THE BAG!
Lynne has refined her urban sketching kit to fit in a small black bag (above). Her favourite tools include Derwent Inktense pencils and a Sailor fountain pen.

looking for people to be correspondents globally. I looked at the way the other correspondents were drawing everything and celebrating the every day, and I suddenly realised I was missing a trick.

What's the appeal of drawing a person on a train?
I'm interested in capturing a moment in time, so it's not just about drawing you, it's about drawing you *today* rather than yesterday and *here* rather than there.

How do you get away with drawing a stranger?
There are techniques for disguising it. For instance, I'd pick somebody who wasn't just sitting looking around. I often try and get a seat with a table too, so I can put the sketchbook below it.

What do you do if somebody sees you drawing them?
Usually if you smile, they smile back and the tension is released. For most people, being drawn is a once in a lifetime thing and they take a photo on their phone.

What's the philosophy behind your new book, *Sketching People*?
I wanted the book to empower more people to draw and encourage them to be courageous. I want to encourage people to use watercolour as well. If you get a book on watercolour, there is all this prep and it sounds terrifying so I didn't use it for years, but then I saw these sketchers who were just chucking it at the paper and I thought that was so exciting.

Has your urban sketching changed your own studio practice in any way?
No, I think its purpose is mainly keeping my skills at a high level. When I'm drawing the picture books, I'm drawing from my imagination so building up visual memories is really useful. One of the dangers is not looking – for example, people tend to draw kids wearing clothes that they wore when they were a kid, not the sort of clothing that is out there now. Urban sketching gives you an awareness of what people wear and how they move. It gives you a whole library of things in your head.

Lynne's new book, *Sketching People*, is published by Search Press, £12.99. www.lynnechapman.co.uk

ROUGH DRAFTS
Lynne is currently illustrating a new children's book. Her pencil drawings will be sent to the publisher for approval before work begins on the final pastel paintings.

GROWING UP GOUDIE

AS A RETROSPECTIVE OF WORK BY HIS LATE FATHER, **ALEXANDER GOUDIE,** OPENS IN LONDON, BBC PRESENTER AND ARTIST **LACHLAN GOUDIE** REFLECTS ON THE LESSONS HE LEARNT FROM THIS GREAT SCOTTISH PAINTER, A MAN WHO COULD 'CONJURE WITH PIGMENT'

My father's name was Alexander Goudie and he was one of Scotland's most distinguished painters. His portraits were renowned for their swagger, and his still lifes seduced with sparkle and elegance.

He designed opera sets (Richard Strauss's *Salome*), illustrated great poems (Robert Burns's *Tam o' Shanter*), he was a sculptor, a ceramicist and he decorated the interiors of great ships. Whenever I'm struggling to finish a canvas, he's still the person to which I turn. Yet it was his destiny, as a young man, to become a plumber.

My father was born in 1933, in the town of Paisley, just outside Glasgow. There were no paintbrushes in the tenement flat in which he grew up, no paintings on the walls. His mother, Elizabeth, was convinced that his future lay in an apprenticeship with the family plumbing firm: Goudie Brothers. She'd never have believed that her son would one day walk across the courtyard at Buckingham Palace to paint a portrait of Her Majesty, the Queen.

At the tail end of the Second World War, however, Sandy (as he was known to friends and family) was still a schoolboy; academically disinterested, distracted and occasionally unruly. But boy, could he draw!

Horses were his speciality, often remembered from the Western movies that he loved so much. My father kept some of these early artworks and when, in turn, I began to draw my own childish pictures influenced by Westerns, he showed them to me. They were the first inkling of how brilliant my dad was – effortless drawings, sophisticated handling of watercolour, scenes and faces that were instantly recognisable.

As a child growing up in an artistic household, I took the paintings that my dad created for granted. But comparing what I was capable of with his early drawings was a sobering experience. It was the first and perhaps most important artistic lesson he ever taught me: Being an artist is a learning game. You're never as good as you want to be or maybe think you are. Keep striving, keep practising and never, ever, be disheartened.

ABOVE *Herod's Banquet*, oil and chalk on board, 1990, 144x274cm
OPPOSITE PAGE *Budoc and Gwen*, 1976, oil on canvas, 112x117cm

"MY FATHER TAUGHT ME THAT BEING AN ARTIST IS A LEARNING GAME... **YOU'RE NEVER AS GOOD AS YOU WANT TO BE... OR THINK YOU ARE"**

These principles were nurtured in him at the Glasgow School of Art where my father enrolled at the precocious age of 16. Dad's whole career as an artist would be grounded in the rigorous approach to figurative painting that was preached at the school. His exquisite control of tone and clarity of line were the legacy of this training.

Sandy emerged from his studies in 1955, already a confident and flamboyant practitioner and he quickly went on to distinguish himself as a portrait painter. During his career he painted the Queen, Lord Chancellors, business tycoons and celebrities, including Billy Connolly.

And yet, the most powerful portraits he ever created were of farmers and fishermen. In 1962 my father married >

a girl named Marie-Renée Dorval. She introduced him to a subject that would define his entire career: her homeland, Brittany. From 1962 onwards, during annual summer trips, Sandy sketched the face of a society that was virtually unchanged from the previous century – a rural community of potato pickers, labourers and fishermen folk. 'Bretagne' became his second home and unlike the studio-bound life he led in Glasgow, summer was spent working *en plein air*.

Each year as he relaxed into the season, so his style changed too. Brushstrokes became looser, the palette more vibrant and he began to look closely at the work of Gauguin and Émile Bernard – artists who had discovered the wonders of this region before him. But when August drew to a close, the painting cavalcade would return, to hibernate, in Glasgow. While Scotland was cold and dark, our home was a blisteringly exotic place.

Arnewood House was a Victorian mansion with grand rooms painted alternately black, green, yellow and red. There was a galleried staircase, an aviary which housed a pair of cooing doves, and hanging upon the walls were huge canvasses, many depicting my mother posing completely nude. Herding my friends around the building as I grew up was a visual minefield. But this was also a place of work, where my father had his studio. My brother, sister and myself were usually free to wander into this room; to stand bewitched by the paintings being created.

However, on occasions when the door was firmly shut, an atmosphere of foreboding reigned: "Don't bother your father", I would be told, not that it was likely. You could sense the sulphur building behind the door in a cloud of frustration.

Although, for my dad, painting and drawing was as natural as breathing, it still demanded huge amounts of effort and toil. "You gotta be tough!" was the outburst that usually thundered from behind the door as things started to go wrong, with expletives added in direct proportion to the seriousness of the problem.

TOP LEFT *Salute, Dusk*, 1989, watercolour on paper, 36x27cm
TOP RIGHT *Self-Portrait with Palette*, 1985, oil on canvas, 96x117cm
BELOW *The Chase*, 2003, oil and charcoal on board, 244x122cm
OPPOSITE PAGE *Portrait of Mainee with Boa and Mirror*, 1980, oil on canvas, 96x196cm

From an early age I learned to respect the life of an artist. This career, clearly, was not one for willowy types – despite what my school friends implied when they proudly asserted that their dads had 'proper jobs', like accountants.

I've known some artists to discourage their children from following in their footsteps, a few who did so for very selfish reasons, being uneasy with the prospect of familial competition. As forbidding as my father could be when possessed by a studio tantrum, he was also the most generous and encouraging of mentors. As he became aware of my nascent love of drawing, he was always on hand with large sheets of paper and a bunch of his pencils. And when I found myself asking "What should I draw?", he would pull down monographs on his heroes and instruct me to sketch from paintings by van Dyck and Velázquez. It didn't bother him that I was nine years old – "You're never too young to learn from the greats" was his attitude.

My dad's encouragement never evolved into formal instruction. He wasn't interested in shaping me into some kind of clone. Still, in passing, he would always proffer a comment or a tip. Sometimes I bridled at the interference but I always followed his advice. And he was always right.

As I got older, occasionally I accompanied him on days out sketching. One summer evening in Brittany, I remember sitting on a wall together, painting a lighthouse. For a few hours we worked in relative silence. I followed the progress of his watercolour through the corner of my eye but he seemed completely oblivious to my efforts, which were going gradually awry. At one point, almost without looking up, he said, "You need a bigger brush, more water and to mix a little crimson into that ochre."

It was one, brief sentence of advice which directly guided my painting towards completion. My father possessed a kind of sixth sense, an innate understanding for the feel of paint, the mysteries of colour and light. It allowed him to seize and resolve visual problems succinctly, whilst others labour the paint or over-work a detail.

Today, it's no longer my father's drawings of cowboys that make me pause and consider my own work. When I look through the portfolio that he left behind, I discover an artist who was always challenging himself. He explored allegory, mythology, poetry; he tussled with complex ideas and compositions, he painted on a scale that was, at times, physically arduous – yet he brought the same commitment and eloquence to a single line sketch. My father could conjure with pigment. And when I study the ways in which he could seize the moment, the beauty and the wonder of life with every brushstroke, I still feel very much the apprentice.

Alexander Goudie RP RGI: A Retrospective **runs from 11-16 April at Mall Galleries, London SW1. www.mallgalleries.org.uk**

"MY FATHER COULD CONJURE WITH PIGMENT... AND WHEN I STUDY THE WAYS IN WHICH HE COULD SEIZE THE MOMENT, **THE BEAUTY AND THE WONDER OF LIFE WITH EVERY BRUSHSTROKE, I STILL FEEL VERY MUCH THE APPRENTICE"**

10 MINUTES WITH...

ANN CHRISTOPHER

AS SHE READIED HER LATEST EXHIBITION OF WORKS ON PAPER CREATED IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE, THIS ROYAL ACADEMY SCULPTOR SHARED HER THOUGHTS ON DRAUGHTSMANSHIP, DAVID HOCKNEY AND THINKING IN THREE DIMENSIONS. INTERVIEW AND PHOTO: **STEVE PILL**

When did you first start working in France?
I was offered the use of a studio north of Albi by a collector of my work who owns property there. I've been there several times since 2001.

You previously said that the works in *Drawing – The Lines of Time* are based on "ever-changing climate and light on the landscape". Are they observational at all?
No, it was only in retrospect that I made the connection with my surroundings. Interestingly, the couple that owns the place came in to see what I was doing and they made connections. I was saying, "Oh yes, I suppose you're right... They *were* harvesting the corn, that explains that colour". I don't think about it. I work very instinctively and then retrospectively I can sometimes work out what triggered it.

Do you get time to explore the area?
I've been back six or seven times now and I've gone out less and less. The pleasure for me is to have this amazing uninterrupted time. I'll go to the market on the Saturday to buy goodies and I'll be back in the studio by 9am. I'm starting to begrudge the time away from the work.

Does the work you produce in Albi differ from the work you make elsewhere?
The work isn't different – it's the production that changes because it is very intense. When I go on a residency, I go on my own. I only tell my gallery and my partner what my phone number is, so I'm working with no interruptions. That's wonderful because I just get completely absorbed in what I am doing. I've always worked in intense bursts, even in my own studio. I will appear to be doing nothing for ages and then suddenly it will all pour out and I'm exhausted.

When you appear to be doing nothing, are you thinking about your work?
Not particularly. I am always thinking about my work in a funny kind of way. I could be doing the grocery shopping or pruning a bush in the garden, and then suddenly a solution to something will throw itself at me.

Do you think in three dimensions?
I don't know! I've never thought about it. To me, it's the most natural thing in the world to make something with my hands, it's just instinctive – I like making things. I mean I'm sat here now and my hand is not flat, it's shaped. Actually, I call my recent drawings "works on paper" because a lot of them aren't flat. Some of them have collaged paper spikes on them and some are floating within Perspex cases, so I obviously must think in three dimensions!

Does your focus change when working on paper?
No. My drawings are as important to me as my sculpture. I'll often start drawing when the sculpture is in a sort of transition period. The other nice thing about drawing is it tends to be quicker, whereas making a piece of sculpture is a very lengthy process. You can tear a drawing up very quickly if it's not going right.

What part does drawing play in making your sculptures?
I will draw little thumbnails – a shape will appear like a ghost in my head and I'll start drawing that. If it's a big piece, I'll [use drawing to] start working out how I might make it, particularly if it's got an internal structure.

In terms of draughtsmanship, who is your biggest influence?
I've always liked people's drawings – they are very personal. As a child, I grew up looking at architectural plans – my father was a surveyor and an architect, so I was looking at quite precise drawings. I love David Hockney's pencil drawings, I love the way he can describe things with just a single line. I also enjoyed an architecture exhibition in Vienna by someone called Étienne-Louis Boullée. He was an 18th-century French Neoclassical architect who made these exquisite, very symmetrical drawings. I don't look at other works to be inspired but to be enriched.

As a fellow Royal Academician, have you ever chatted to Hockney about drawing?
No, I haven't. He's a little bit untouchable. He rarely comes in there to be honest. When we all get together, we're usually moaning about accountants or tax bills. It's a bit of a shame really, it's something we, as the Academy, have discussed. There really ought to be more discussion about what we all do.

There will be a single sculpture displayed alongside the drawings. Why did you select that particular piece?
It was originally conceived in the same studio in France. It was also a case of working out what might work in the space. There are going to be 27 works on paper and they're going to be hung in a single line on three walls. The walls will have lines taped on them as well to tie in with my drawings. I'll be quite relieved if we pull this off.

***Drawing – The Lines of Time* runs until 29 May at the Royal Academy of Arts, London W1. www.annchristopher.co.uk**

"I LOVE THE WAY DAVID HOCKNEY CAN DESCRIBE THINGS WITH A SINGLE LINE. HAVE I TALKED TO HIM ABOUT DRAWING? NO, HE'S A LITTLE BIT UNTOUCHABLE."

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PHOTO: NICOLA STOCKEN FOR *THE ENGLISH GARDEN*

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Thurs 31 March Acrylics/Mixed media by Mick Davies and Nick Tidnam

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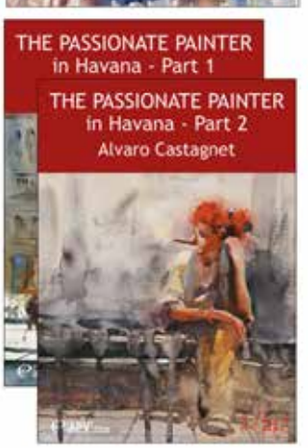

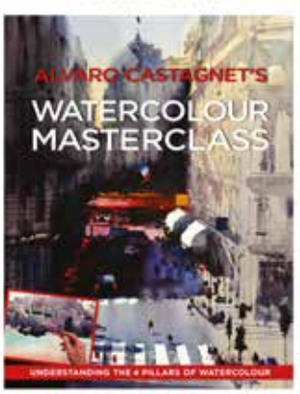

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APRIL

TIPS • ADVICE • IDEAS

CONE
The bowl is a conical shape. On a cone, the light and shadow shows itself in triangular shapes, so the best way to describe the light and shade on the bowl is to use a flat brush and triangular or diagonal-shaped strokes.

CUBE
A book is a flattened cube. Cubes exhibit gradual, even blends across their flat surfaces. Use flat brushes and parallel brushstrokes to suggest the flatness of cuboid shapes and their surfaces.

CYLINDER
Mugs are cylindrical. Cylinders are described by grading bands of light and shade. You can paint these kinds of shapes with a flat brush and parallel brushstrokes.

SPHERE
A lemon is roughly spherical; the lights and shades on spheres are shaped by crescents, so a round brush and curved brushstrokes will help to describe the form of a spherical-shaped object.

SIMPLIFYING STILL LIFE

IT HELPS TO BREAK DOWN SUBJECTS INTO BASIC SHAPES, AS **HAZEL SOAN** EXPLAINS

The most practical subjects to paint are things that do not move, so why not start with a still life? Before you begin, try to understand the form you are about to paint, then use outline and light and shade to describe it. It helps to approximate objects to basic forms such as the sphere, cube, cone or cylinder. It is then much easier to decipher the pattern of light and shade.

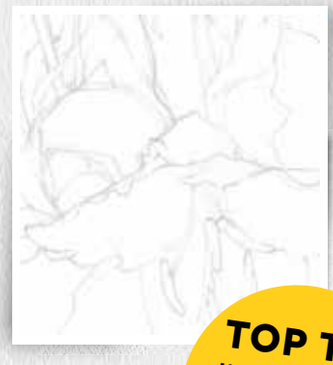
This is an extract from Hazel's new book, *Learn Oils Quickly*, published by Batsford, RRP £9.99. To buy your copy for only £8 including free UK P&P, call 0844 576 8122 and quote offer code CH1963. www.pavilionbooks.com

HOW TO DRAW FLOWERS

JAKE SPICER TACKLES A BOTANICAL SUBJECT

This drawing was made from life with the flowers in water to minimise wilting. Once I had arranged them, I began the study with a swift, twice-erased compositional sketch to establish which part of the bouquet I would focus on, developing the drawing in three passes: shape, tone and texture. In each pass I filled in the picture-plane completely before beginning the next one.

1 Shape
Using an H pencil, concentrate on finding edges in the subject. To avoid drawing the leaves as you imagine them, focus on the negative spaces between the leaves and petals to help make more objective observations.



TOP TIP
Use a viewfinder to help isolate and frame a potential composition

2 Tone
Using the framework of the previous pass, add a consistent, vertical mid-tone to everything that you intend to darken, leaving the light spaces as the white of the paper.

3 Texture
Finally, use a 2B pencil to add texture and pattern, making marks that follow the surface direction of the leaves and petals.

Jake's latest book, *DRAW*, is published by Ilex Press, RRP £17.99. www.jakespicerart.co.uk

MASTER TIPS: PAUL CÉZANNE

DISCOVER THE PAINTING TECHNIQUES OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST ARTISTS

After studying colour theory and painting the Provençal landscape *en plein air*, Paul Cézanne knew that warmer, brighter hues appear to stand out, while cooler, darker ones recede into the picture plane.

He applied this knowledge deftly to still life paintings such as 1900's *Still Life with Milk Jug and Fruit* (pictured above), pitting rich red and orange fruits against softer turquoise and teal backdrops to add depth to an otherwise shallow scene.

His real skill came in applying those thick blue-green outlines to the various objects. Squint at the picture above and those lines soon soften into subtle shadows, lending form to the objects they trace and backing up the French artist's claim that "to paint is to register one's sensations of colour".

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Modern Printmaking
Sylvie Covey

In the digital age, traditional printmaking techniques are enjoying something of a renaissance as people revert to the simple joys of crafting images by hand. French author Sylvie Covey should know, having trained in digital art and turned to prints later in life.

This smart, contemporary bible talks you through a vast range of techniques, while artist profiles reveal the possibilities of each.

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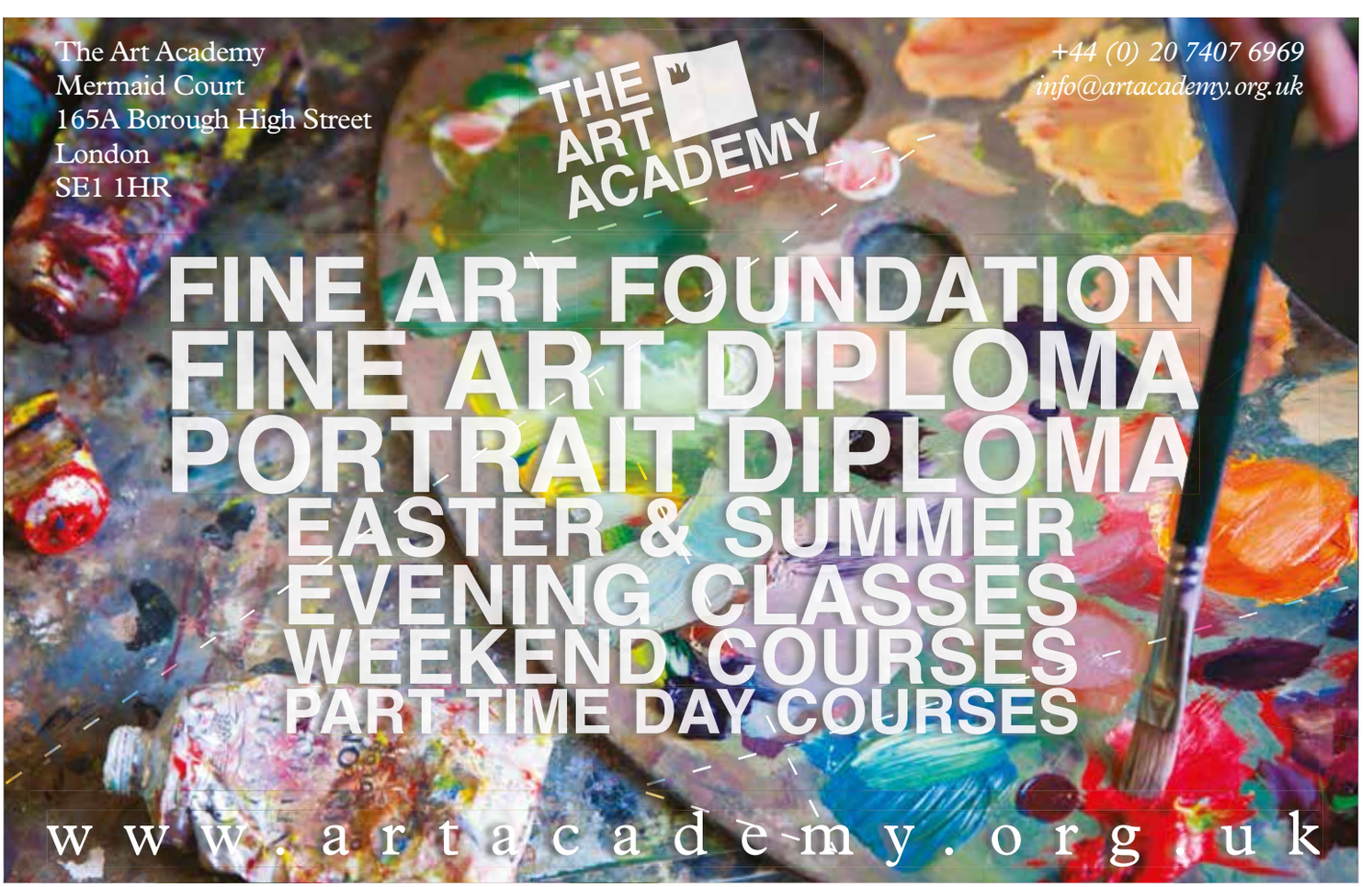

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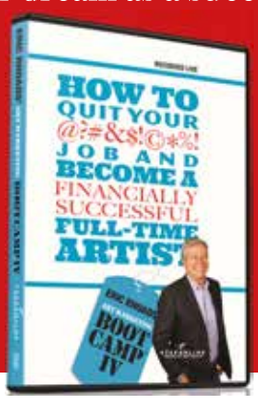

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STUDIO IDEAS

As a third-prize winner at the *BP Portrait Award 2014*, David Kassan clearly knows a thing or two about oil painting. He developed his revolutionary Parallel Palette as a means of having his model, canvas and colours all in a single sight line. "It allows me to quickly shift focus," explains David. Made from the same plastic as Lego, the palette's textured surface and 10mm sills prevent drips, while the universal thread allows tripod mounting. *www.parallelpalette.com*

LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

For artists working in inks, Schmincke's new Aero Opaque Medium (50609) will open up a host of possibilities. Use the pipette to add a few drops of this milky medium to your ink colours and it will increase the opacity of the marks you make. Try it on a mid-toned or dark surface for particularly vivid results. *www.schmincke.de*

WHY NOT TRY...

EXPRESSIVE PAINTING

PAUL WADSWORTH'S TIPS FOR MORE CREATIVE RESULTS

1 Wet the canvas
Drips give movement – they bring a sense of looseness to the painting, while connecting elements and creating an illusion of space. Introduce water to acrylics or white spirit to oils, before turning the canvas around to let the paint drip across the image.

2 Get layering
My paintings are built up of maybe four, five or six layers. Through the layering, the painting develops a history and you discover more about it. I start with thinner acrylic layers and then I'll use a palette knife to add thicker oil paint on top, so the surface becomes textural.

3 Use your hands
The brush is a tool you sometimes don't need. At times, it's necessary to just enjoy the paint. If things aren't going well, I tend to go in with my hands to reconnect with the painting.

Paul's next exhibition runs from 4-28 March at Bath Contemporary. www.paulwadsworth.co.uk

WHAT IS... A VARIEGATED WASH?

A variegated wash is an area of paint that varies in density and colour. To create a variegated wash, tilt your watercolour paper or board a little and load a wash brush with your first colour. Apply a consistent, horizontal stroke of paint. Before it dries, apply a second stroke in a different colour that overlaps the first stroke and picks up the 'bead' of paint.

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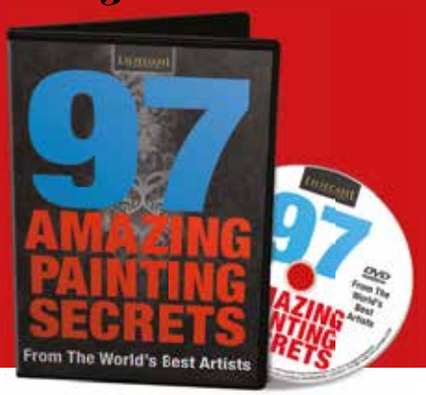

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A detail from 'A Passion for Peonies' by Billy Showell SBA

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Spring PROJECTS

OVER THE NEXT 13 PAGES, THREE LEADING ARTISTS PRESENT A TRIO OF SEASONAL PROJECTS WITH TIPS ON HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR PAINTING AND INSPIRATION FOR WHAT TO TRY NEXT

WWW.WILDTEXTURES.COM/ISTOCK

ORIGINAL PHOTO

TOM'S CHALLENGE

To paint a portrait under dappled light, it is essential to use direct sunlight – the 'hardest' variety, both in terms of the shadows it casts and the challenge it presents to capture.

For this painting project, position your sitter in direct sunlight but find a way of breaking up that light so that it creates a series of interesting shadow patterns – tree branches or a venetian blind, for example. The broken shapes will force you to observe your subject more closely and focus on accurately capturing the different effects.

PORTRAIT IN DAPPLED LIGHT

AS THE LEAVES RETURN TO THE TREES, SPRING IS A PERFECT TIME TO TRY A TRICKY LITTLE TWIST ON PORTRAITURE, AS ARTIST **TOM GREENWOOD** EXPLAINS

USING THE HARD LIGHT

'Hard' or 'soft' refer to how abrupt the transition of value is at the edge of the shadow, and it is determined by the size of the light source relative to the size of your chosen subject. A light source that is large next to the subject will create a soft, even lighting, whereas a light source that is smaller in relation to the subject will create 'hard' lighting. For instance, if you place your sitter next to a large window, the shadows on their face will appear to have soft edges, but sit them outside on a sunny day and the edges of the shadows will be sharp.

If you want the shapes of shadows cast by leaves or slatted blinds to fall across the face of your sitter, the only light that is hard enough is direct sunlight – setting this portrait up with an artificial light or a north-facing skylight would not work. The problem with direct sunlight is that it is very changeable, so for this project it is advised to work from photos.

Tom's portrait *Farhana in the Garden* shows a different colour scheme and format

HOW TO... PAINT THE EYE

1 In order to position the eye correctly, paint the eye socket slightly darker than the surrounding skin tones. Next, find appropriate values and colours for the half-tones within the eye socket and across the eyebrow.

2 Place the eye roughly within the socket. Darken the half-tones either side of the eye to give the lids some roundness. Remember that the whites of an eye are never as bright in reality as you think they are.

3 Resolve the half-tone values until the sense of form is more solid. The changes are mainly additional darkening of the half-tones at the sides of the eye, as well as some smoothing of the transition between tones.

4 Make a final adjustment to the position. Here I reduced the space between the top eyelid and the brow, darkening both eyelids to create more form. Keep brushwork soft to give the impression of lashes without painting each hair.

WORKING FROM PHOTOS

Many of the problems that painters experience when working from photos are due to problems with the photo itself. For this reason, it is really important to learn how to take a good photograph, and also to spend time comparing your photos with reality, noting any differences while you are still alongside your subject. Here are five key tips specific to photography for painting:

1. Use small apertures
Small apertures give a larger depth of field. You can always change the focus in your painting, but you want as much of the photo in focus as possible.

2. Shoot in RAW mode
Most good cameras have an option to shoot in RAW, a file format that captures all the data from your camera's sensor. The files are larger but allow for greater manipulation later.

3. Bracket your exposures
A 'bracketed exposure' of the same image allows you to see more detail in the highlights and shadows. Some cameras have a bracketed exposure option, otherwise simply take three shots: one standard, one underexposed, and one overexposed.

4. Adjust the colours
Use a colour-calibrating tool to help you get the colours right in the photo, since even good cameras often have a poor Auto White Balance (AWB) detection. Take notes on the colours you see with your eye, or even better, do a quick colour study from life.

5. View in monochrome
If possible, print off your photo in black-and-white at the same size as the finished canvas, as this will make judging the proportions much easier. >

HOW TO... DEVELOP TEXTURES

1 For textured areas such as the fur collar, begin by blocking in the large masses of colour, as you would with any shapes. Make sure to find the lightest and darkest areas in order to establish a value key.

2 Fill in the mid-tone areas and darken the collar. Allow the darks to blend into the shadows of the hair. Merging these two areas ensures that the viewer's attention is not detracted from the face.

3 Use a hog bristle brush to scumble in the texture of the fur. Pay particular attention to the transition between areas of dark and light, ensuring they are soft yet broken up with irregular marks.

4 Repainting the neck can create a hard edge that attracts the eye, so finish by adding soft, bumpy shapes to the top edge. This final stage may seem minor but a final edit is crucial.

TOP TIP: Highlights not bright enough? Make shadow areas darker instead. Adding contrast suggests greater vibrancy.

JUDGE YOUR PROGRESS

Learning to analyse your progress is an excellent way of developing as an artist. Every part of a picture can be analysed in terms of four key elements: value, hue, chroma and proportion.

The first and most important element of any portrait is the proportion, otherwise known as 'the drawing'. Although I paint completely alla prima with no prep drawing, I am constantly 'drawing' with that paint. If you want your painting to look like the sitter, proportion is all-important.

Simultaneously, every time I paint a shape within the face, I will assess its value, hue and chroma. Value refers to how light or dark the shape appears. It reveals the shape of the form and the impression of light. Hue is often known in layman's terms simply as 'colour' – whether we see a shape as red, green, blue and so on.

Finally, chroma refers to the intensity of that hue, and is analogous to the 'saturation' setting on a television or computer screen.

Using these four elements, it is possible to analyse each shape of the face. Is the nose too wide? That's a question of proportion. Is that shadow too light? Check the value. Is her skin too pale? Maybe the chroma is wrong.

www.tomgreenwoodfineart.com

Tom switched Cadmium Yellow Pale (top) for Cadmium Yellow (middle) and added Cadmium Orange (bottom) to his basic palette

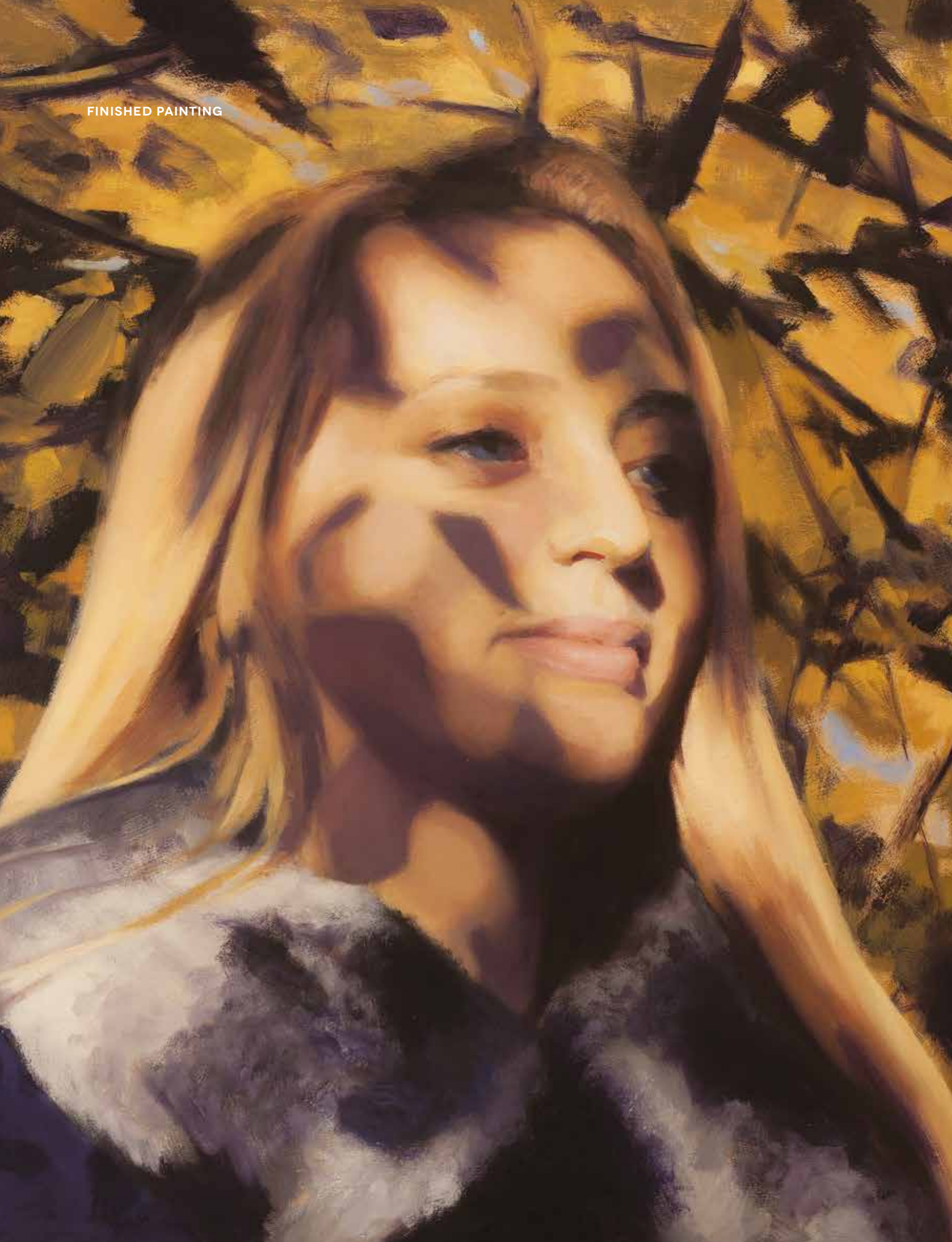
CHOOSING YOUR PALETTE

I like to choose a palette of paints specifically for each new picture, depending on the colour themes of the subject. My basic palette would normally consist of Cadmium Yellow Pale, Cadmium Red, Permanent Alizarin Crimson, French Ultramarine, Cobalt Blue and Ivory Black (all Winsor & Newton Artists Oil Colours) with a Lead White from Lefranc & Bourgeois.

However, I wanted to get some very warm lights for this painting, so I switched the Cadmium Yellow Pale for Cadmium Yellow and added Cadmium Orange for the background. I also added Titanium White because I wanted to get the highlights extra bright, and in fact used that instead of Lead White throughout.

COLOUR MIXING

At the start of each session, I began by mixing up three big piles of paint: an almost-black made purely from Alizarin Crimson and French Ultramarine; a light, warm skin tone and a muddy brown mid-tone. I found I could get a good shadow value by adding tiny amounts of white to the dark mix (and adding more Alizarin Crimson to counteract the cooling effect of the white) and I could get most of the half-tones of the face by combining varying amounts of the light skin-tone mix with the muddy mix, and adding small amounts of Cadmium Red and Cadmium Yellow or French Ultramarine, depending on whether I wanted to warm or cool the mix. For the lips, I had to mix separately using just Titanium White and Cadmium Red. >


FINISHED PAINTING

ORIGINAL PHOTO

MATT'S CHALLENGE

As the blossom returns to the trees and the days begin to lengthen, now is the time of year when the light will start to flood into your studio once more.

The long cast shadows and constantly shifting light provides the opportunity for a still life painter to create new and interesting effects.

Matt's challenge was to work against the light, establishing the sensation caused by the sun hitting the glass through a series of precise details and sharp contrasts. Try a similar set up at home by arranging a selection of objects on a bright windowsill or table, choosing an interesting angle and glass or reflective items for maximum impact.

CAPTURING SUNLIGHT

A STILL LIFE ON A WINDOWSILL PROVIDES A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS ON THE EFFECTS OF LIGHT AND SHADE, AS WATERCOLOURIST **MATT JEANES** REVEALS

WORKING CONTRE–JOUR

My still life set up for this project was arranged on the same windowsill that featured in one of my previous paintings, *La Cocina Ventana*. What interested me about this composition was the light coursing through the window, shining through the glass objects and lighting up the lemon and the knife, which both cast beautiful long shadows on the surface.

This back-lit effect is known as *contre-jour* – from the French for 'against daylight'. If you have a very bright window with great sunlight, placing flowers or glass objects in the window can give you some beautiful reflections, long shadows and strong contrasts. Many of the highlights in a contre-jour painting are simply the white of the page, so focus instead on the darker tones to build that contrast and make the picture sing.

In his previous painting, *La Cocina Ventana*, Matt was attracted to the early sunlight which illuminated his subject beautifully.

LOOKING FOR COLOUR

Training your eye to identify colour is one of the most difficult elements of painting. There are subtle variations of colour in everything we see, and one of the reasons for this is reflected colour. When an object is hit by sunlight, its colour is reflected onto adjacent objects and the surface on which it is stood. Resulting shadows can in fact include a rich array of colours.

You may think an object is 'green', but try to identify the various colours within it – blues, yellows, reds, browns, purples and more. Don't feel you have to get the colour spot on first time either. If you can keep these larger washes moist, you can add touches of other colours and move them around with a small brush. Be careful not to add too much water though, otherwise you will create puddles and the paint will dry with water stains. >

HOW TO... LAYER FOLIAGE

1 Pick out a few highlights with masking fluid and then paint your lightest colour (in this instance, a pale yellow-green) in loose leaf shapes. If some of the plant is in shadow, you can vary the tones to give variety later.

2 When this is thoroughly dry, mask the next lightest areas and paint a second layer. Working from light to dark gives the suggestion of backlit leaves and helps create negative shapes as you add darker layers.

3 Once dry, mask again and add a darker green mix, working into the shadows of your foliage. This enables you to create strong shadows without damaging the lighter leaves and areas you have already painted.

4 Re-mask again and apply a final layer. When the rest of the painting is complete, remove the masking fluid to reveal the highlights (see page 51). Building layers and tones in this way is a similar process to Batik painting.

WORKING FROM PHOTOS

Painting a strong sense of light in watercolour is a time-consuming task. It not only involves accurate drawing and planning highlights, but also layering washes and waiting for each to dry. This is why I favour working from a photograph.

A photograph can capture enough information for you to base a detailed still life painting upon. I always have a camera to hand. I could have set up this still life arrangement myself, but nothing beats the thrill of spotting an accidental composition and capturing it in paint. This gives you a moment that your viewer can recognise – not quite staged, yet not quite perfect. This gin glass and bottle were on the side from the night before; in the morning light, the objects presented themselves as an ideal composition. Try and photograph your subject without a flash to maintain the strong light and shade needed for your contre-jour painting.

TOP TIP: Use coloured pencil on top of dry watercolour to enhance details – a white pencil is perfect for adding sparkle to sunlight hitting glass.

PICKING OUT DETAILS

A straight edge is often needed in a painting. To avoid smudging the paint, hold a ruler to the paper and tilt it towards you. Place your brush's ferrule (the metal neck) on the ruler's edge with the bristles on the page and draw a line as you would with a pen or pencil. For best results, make sure the brush isn't too wet but has enough paint to finish the line.

The best way to reserve highlights is with masking fluid – I use Winsor & Newton's colourless version, as it doesn't stain the paper. Apply it with an old nylon brush or a colour shaper, as the fluid can dry stiff and ruin good brushes.

Coloured pencils can then be used to enhance areas of detail, such as the reflections or foliage. Use a good quality pencil to avoid 'scratching' your painting and don't overwork details – it will spoil the painterly feeling of spontaneity. For a finishing touch, use a fine brush and white gouache to refine the highlights and pick out reflections. Gouache is an opaque paint and sits well on watercolour so it can give your glass added sparkle.

HOW TO... PAINT GLASS

1 Painting glass is a daunting prospect. How do you paint what is clear? The simple answer is: you don't. Try instead to paint what you see. Start off by studying the glass. Look for the highlights and mask out even the smallest details.

2 Look for the colours, shapes and reflections, as you have done with the shadows. Remember that items may be distorted through the glass and create shapes that are different from what you might expect. Always look, never presume.

3 If there is water in the glass or the back of a label refracted on the bottle, try to see them as a series of tones and colours. If you concentrate on painting what you see accurately, the glass will appear as the painting progresses.

4 Once you have painted the coloured areas, remove the masking fluid. If the reflections appear quite crude, try masking the main highlights again and adding some more delicate washes of colour to soften the effect.

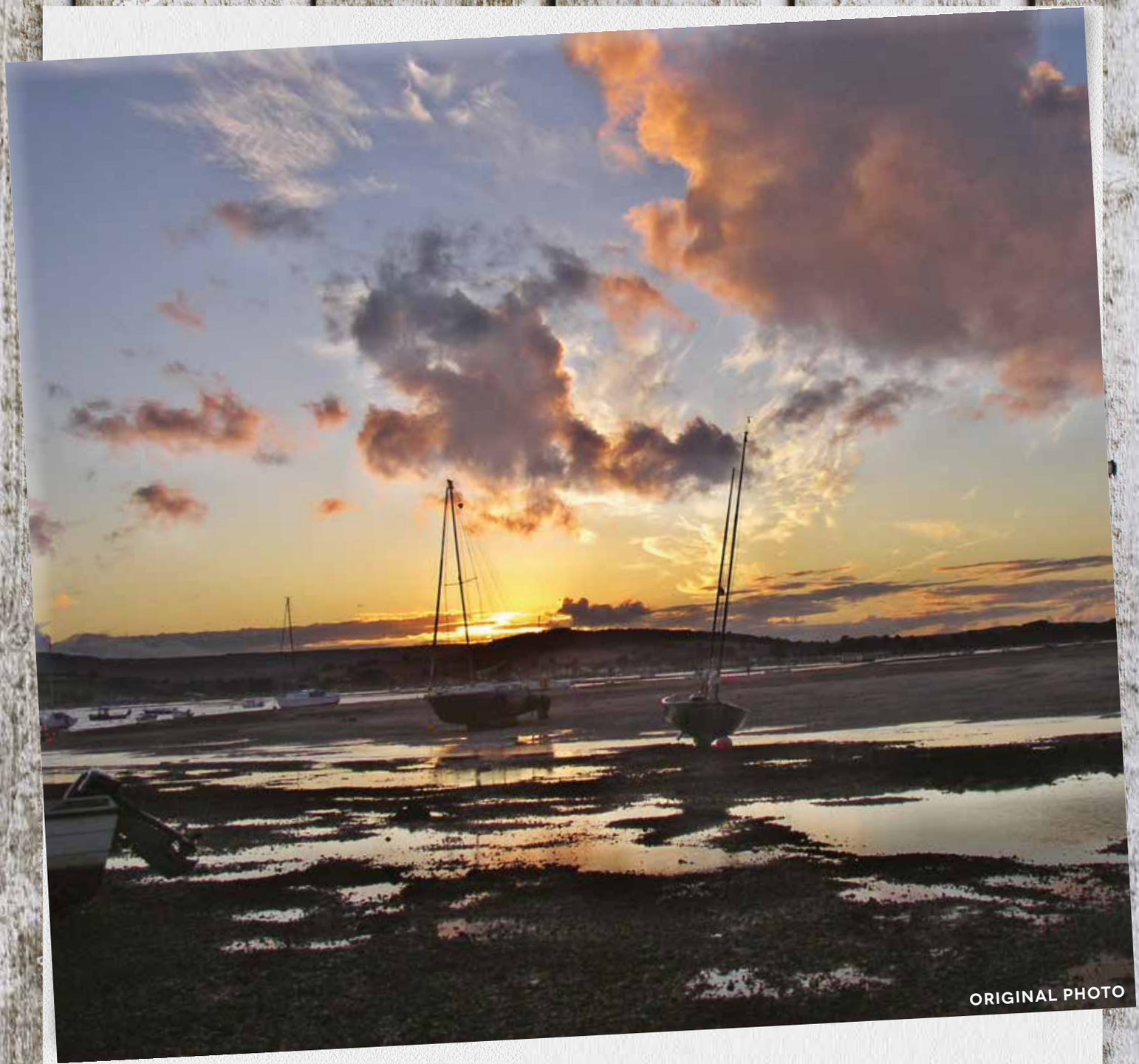
BE PATIENT

Don't rush your painting. Watercolour takes time to dry, so trying to remove masking fluid when a painting is still wet can rip the surface of the paper and ruin your final picture. Likewise, if your washes are damp and you try to add another wash, the colours will bleed and can become muddy.

Leave your painting to one side for a couple of days before deciding if it is finished. The temptation is to stare at a painting for several weeks and over work it. In my experience, looking at it with fresh eyes can help you see little details that may need adding and also teach you to love your painting.

www.matthewjeanes.co.uk >

FINISHED PAINTING



ORIGINAL PHOTO

SPRING LANDSCAPE

MASTER LANDSCAPE PAINTER **RAY BALKWILL** SHOWS YOU HOW TO GET THE CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING BY CHANGING YOUR APPROACH

RAY'S CHALLENGE

Getting your creative juices to flow is not always easy. As Henri Matisse once said: "Creativity takes courage". It can be easy to settle into a groove, choosing a particular subject or style that is no longer fed by vital or intense experience.

In order to break out of this habit, I begin each year by setting myself a new challenge – this may simply involve tackling a new theme or choosing a different medium.

I find this not only stimulates me as a painter and forces me to think differently, but also keeps my work fresh and prevents the process from becoming too repetitive.

For this project, try to make a painting using something that is new to you. This could be as big as using a whole new medium or subject, or as small as trying a different sized canvas or a different type of brush. More often than not, a painting made with an unfamiliar element is far more exciting and the lack of knowing what comes next will keep you on your toes.

So be courageous and forget any preconceived ideas; just enjoy the process and let your creativity flow.

VERSATILE MEDIUM

For this project, I decided to try a change of medium, swapping watercolour for acrylic. Although I still wanted to combine other media, my main aim was to exploit the range of vibrant colours and textures.

Acrylic paint is an extremely versatile medium. It can be thinned with water or a glazing medium to be used like watercolour for transparent effects, such as washes and glazes, or it can be used thickly – either alone or with a gel medium – for impasto effects similar to those of oil paint.

Acrylics are ideal for mixed media paintings. When dry, they allow the use of pastel and other media on top of the painted surface. One can continually adjust the colours and marks until you have the effects you desire, so the possibilities are endless.

Ray used a selection of Winsor & Newton Galeria acrylics and Unison Colour soft pastels for this painting

REFERENCE MATERIAL

I am fortunate to have the Exe Estuary on my doorstep and it's a subject that I am passionate about. Although I've painted it hundreds of times, I never tire of the subject.

Inspiring reference material is an important starting point for a painting in the studio. Whether you are working from a sketch or a photograph, your reference material must be able to elicit an emotional response from you.

My reference photo was perfect because it was almost monochrome in places, meaning that I could interpret the colours more intuitively.

TOP TIP: Try starting a few paintings at once. Working in this way can help to spur creativity. If you're struggling to resolve something, you can work on another and return refreshed later.

HOW TO... CREATE DRAMATIC SKIES

1 Prepare your mountboard by applying an equal mix of gesso and texture paste with a palette knife. While this is still wet, press a variety of materials (such as polystyrene, fabric or cardboard) into the surface to create interesting texture.

2 Using a 1" filbert brush, apply Powder Blue acrylics to the sky and Cadmium Orange to the clouds. Clouds are best painted with a degree of transparency so dilute the colours with plenty of water. If needed, adding a glazing medium will also increase the transparency of a colour.

3 Apply a dilute wash of Pale Violet acrylic over some areas of the clouds using a smaller 1/2" filbert brush.

4 Add variation to the colours using pastels on their sides to create broad strokes that pick up some of the texture from the support.

Use Blue Violet 7 or 8 pastels for the sky and Grey 10 to darken the underside of the clouds. Blend some parts of the pastel using a paper tissue.

5 Add a few touches of Orange 12 pastel to suggest wispy clouds. Look for a balance of soft and hard edges here. Finish by using a Yellow 18 pastel to highlight the setting sun.

PLAN AHEAD

Consider the support carefully as the type of surface on which you paint will influence the subsequent handling of colour and painterly effects one can create.

I began by sketching in the initial composition, drawing with a 4B pencil on a sheet of mountboard. I ensured the boats were accurately drawn, paying particular attention to the lengths and angles of the masts.

I then applied an equal mix of gesso and texture paste and, whilst this was still wet, pressed materials into this (see demo above). I left some areas of the board untouched in order to provide a smoother surface for the areas in which I intended to paint the boats and reflections.

I applied masking fluid around the boats with an old rigger brush to reserve some highlights where the sunlight hit the estuary water.

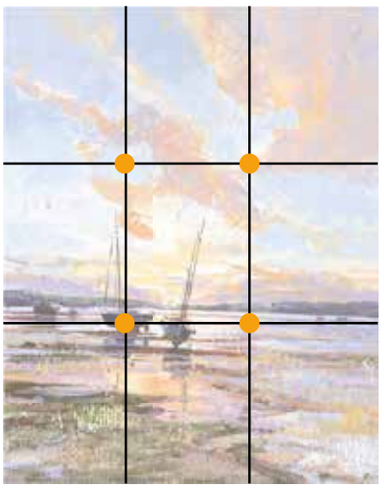
>

HOW TO... PICK OUT DETAILS

1 For the masts and rigging on the boats, use a small rigger brush – size 2 or similar. To keep your lines straight, hold a plastic ruler at a slight angle and guide the ferrule of your brush along its edge.

2 Build up the texture of the foreshore by 'spattering' paint – flicking it from a size 2 short flat hog hair brush. Pay particular attention to the initial colours and the way they might influence subsequent ones.

3 'Scumble' the foreground by scrubbing a thick mix of Pale Umber acrylic over the area with a 1/2" filbert brush. Multiple layers of scumbling not only adds depth to the colours, but also helps to unify your painting.



Notice how Ray observed the 'rule of thirds' and positioned his focal point (the largest boat) one-third of the way from the edge of the canvas

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

One important consideration is the proportion of space devoted to land and sky – in other words, whether you choose a high or low horizon. Often with a landscape painting in a portrait format the emphasis is on the sky, allowing two-thirds for this and one-third for the land. The sky is one of the most important elements as it sets the mood for the whole painting.

Composition is crucial to the ultimate success or failure of a painting. I always make sure any boats are placed in accordance with the 'rule of thirds' – in other words, they will always be one-third of the way in from two of the four edges of my painting. Often these focal points may be narrative, or in this case where the strongest contrasts of light and dark are situated.

TOP TIP: Good composition is not only about arranging the various elements within your painting, but also about choosing what to leave out

PAINTING BOATS

Painting marine subjects when the tide is out interests me far more than it does at high tide, as the foreshore can add wonderful contrasts of colour, texture and shapes in the painting. I also find seeing the shape of the whole boat is far more interesting than when the hulls are fully submerged in the water.

Observing both objectively and analytically is something you must learn to do if you wish to improve your boats. A constant checking of proportions and making comparisons is vital and, with practice, soon becomes automatic.

Checking the correct angle of the mast, cabin or bow should be the first step. Making boats sit on the mud or float on the water is another common problem.

This is usually because the shadows or reflections are not stated strongly enough, so the boats tend to appear to float in mid air.

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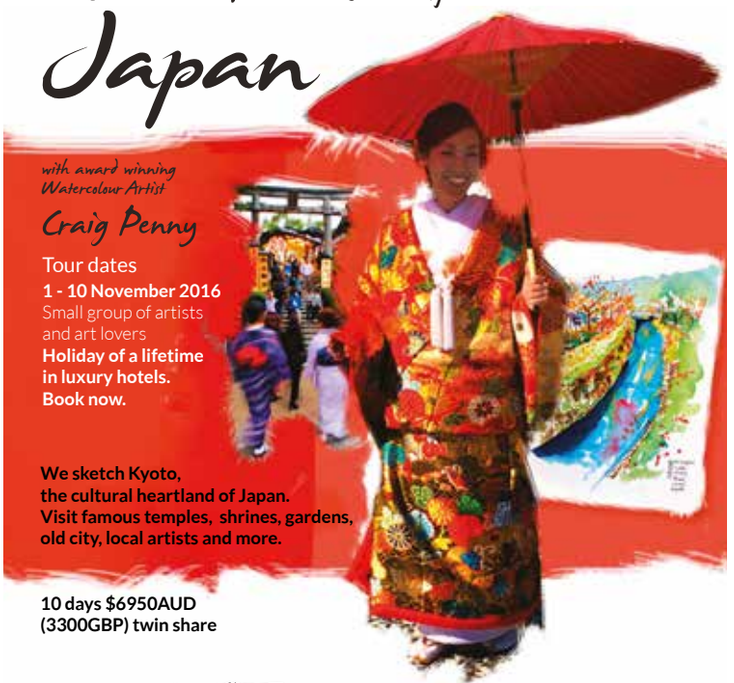

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THE PERFECT PALETTE

4. EARTHS, DARKS AND WHITE

TO CONCLUDE HIS SEARCH FOR THE BEST PIGMENTS, **GRAHAME BOOTH** TESTS THE EARTH COLOURS, DARKS AND WHITE, BEFORE SELECTING HIS NEW AND IMPROVED COLOUR PALETTE

When painting a traditional landscape it is important that colours appear natural and suggest the real colours observed in the subject. We can argue endlessly about what actually constitutes "real" colours but one group of colours can truly claim that label. The warm yellow, red and brown colour we see in soil and rocks is often iron oxide and these natural earth colours, along with carbon from charcoal, were used many thousands of years ago to create the oldest art known to man.

In this final part of my search for the perfect palette of watercolour paints, I will look at these earth colours, as well as the darks and whites, before deciding upon my new and improved set of colours. >

ABOVE ***Messina, Sicily,*** **watercolour on Bockingford 200lb NOT paper, 49x36cm**
"One of my first paintings with the new palette. It takes time to get used to mixing with new colours but it will soon become instinctive."

DARKS

Strong darks and blacks mostly still use carbon created from burning wood, bone or fossil fuels and it is reasonable to assume that using what is essentially soot in your painting will deaden the mix. Not all strong darks contain carbon, however.

In concentrated form you can see that all of these darks appear black, but when diluted they often reveal a colour bias. All of these paints are very different in composition. Schmincke's Neutral Grey lives up to its name as a neutral mix of blue and orange. The Payne's Grey from MaimeriBlu meanwhile is a mix of Ivory Black and Ultramarine pigments, in which the latter is clearly visible. Meanwhile, the Neutral Tint is strangely named as this colour traditionally has a violet bias, while the two blacks tested were surprisingly no less transparent.

My dark of choice is Neutral Tint because of its warm bias. A gallery owner once warned me that a painting wouldn't sell if there was no warmth in it and unless I have a good reason to do otherwise I follow that rule.

WHITE

White is no less contentious with watercolour painters. Some refuse to have anything to do with it, but I have always used it for highlights and I am increasingly seeing its value in the mix.

There are a lot of white pigments but only two really matter to the watercolour painter: Chinese White (PW4) and the more opaque Titanium White (PW6). If you are unconvinced by the idea of mixing with white, have a look at the pigments listed on your current set of paints. PW4 is a common ingredient in many colours, including Naples Yellow, so you may find that even if you are anti-white you actually use it without realising.

A touch of white can give a subtle useful shift to a colour without having a serious effect on transparency. Ultramarine with a touch of white comes very close to a Cobalt Blue and can help give more body to a blue sky.

THERE ARE A LOT OF WHITE PIGMENTS BUT ONLY TWO REALLY MATTER TO THE WATERCOLOUR PAINTER: CHINESE WHITE AND TITANIUM WHITE

ABOVE *Muchelney, Somerset,* **watercolour on Milford 140lb NOT paper, 36x26cm**
"This painting was made with only Raw Sienna, Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine. With just these colours, it is possible to mix a good range of natural landscape hues. This is an ideal palette for the beginner to practice colour mixing as almost anything goes."

EARTH COLOURS

The earth colours could, in many ways, be considered the boring ones. They lack the variety of brighter hues, but can be a useful restraining hand when things threaten to get out of control. Colour mixing is something that benefits from practice, but if you begin with more natural pigments, they require effort to produce something unusable.

A very limited palette of Raw Sienna, Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine is basically the equivalent of the yellow, red and blue primaries, though far less garish. A range of darks can be produced from Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine and this gives us a good basic range of colours for a natural landscape. In fact, I can think of no better palette for the beginner, but once you gain experience, other yellows can be far more useful than Raw Sienna because they offer more options.

On the other hand, Burnt Sienna is still absolutely essential. Add this to a garish green and it will transform it to a more natural colour. Mix it with Ultramarine to produce a range of colours from dark blue through grey to umber-like dark browns.

Today most of the modern ochres, siennas and umbers are manufactured from synthetic iron oxides, but don't assume that two similarly named colours from different manufacturers will be the same. Subtle changes occur and these can be amplified in a mix.

BROWN EARTHS

Many of my dark brown colours involve mixes of Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine, two colours that offer a wide variety of possibilities.

The three proprietary colours here however are all based on iron oxides, but the Stil de Grain has a little Phthalo Green added. Stil de Grain is named after a traditional colour originally made from unripe buckthorn berries.

RED EARTHS

Burnt Sienna is incredibly useful in the mix and I probably use more of it than any other colour. I haven't discovered anything in my tests to change this, but I have found other variations that give subtle variety to my usual mixes.

Don't be afraid to try other colours with different names that utilise the same pigments – apart from the M Graham & Co. Burnt Sienna (PBr7), the other five red earths here are based on the iron oxide PR101, which comes in quite a variety of colours and transparencies. Given that PR101 is the colour used in the manufacture of red bricks, it is great for painting buildings.

YELLOW EARTHS

I always thought there was no significant difference between the two yellow earth colours – Raw Sienna and Yellow Ochre – and I have no reason to change this opinion after my tests. Both are based on iron oxides (PY42, PY43 and Pbr7) but the composition varies between each manufacturer. It is a matter of personal preference, but I would suggest the yellower Raw Sienna from Winsor & Newton because it will produce better greens. >

THE PERFECT PALETTE
(Clockwise from top)
- Phthalocyanine Green (Yellow Shade)
- Green Apatite Genuine
- Titanium White
- Modern Aureolin
- Quinacridone Gold
- Burnt Sienna
- Quinacridone Magenta
- Pyrrole Red
- Neutral Tint
- Ultramarine
- Phthalocyanine Blue (Green Shade)
- Cobalt Teal

GRAHAME'S NEW PALETTE

Before I began this series of articles, I guessed that I would end up confirming that my existing palette would be perfect for me, but in reality I have made some quite fundamental changes. However, after simply making a swatch of the colours in my existing palette, I realised some of them were quite close in hue to one another, while other parts of the spectrum were not really covered at all. I was using some colours simply because I always had done, without really analysing their usefulness and relevance to my painting technique and subjects.

I have decided to leave Permanent Alizarin Crimson, Cobalt Blue, Brown Madder, Raw Sienna, Cadmium Red and Cadmium Yellow to the side for the time being and by introducing Quinacridone Magenta and Pyrrole Red to my basic palette instead, I feel I can now mix a wider variety of hues that effectively renders those six colours redundant.

I have discovered the joys of Cobalt Teal, a colour that allows me to mix beautiful hues I have admired in other artists' paintings, and I am confused but entranced by the way Green Apatite Genuine from Daniel Smith granulates into two colours. Only time will tell if these will become permanent changes, but if nothing else this process has made me think again about colour and how it affects a painting – something that I would actively encourage all artists to do. And what about the brand variations?

I can honestly say that I would be very happy to use paints from any of the manufacturers tested. Consistency was good throughout – there were no pigments that were either too runny or too stiff, while all of them mixed easily in a wash. I found no problem at all in intermixing paints from different manufacturers.

Pigment strength varied quite a lot, even within the range of a single manufacturer. This should be expected simply because some pigments are naturally more intense than others, but I felt that the M Graham & Co. paints that I tested were generally noticeably stronger than the others.

On the downside – and possibly because of this – they seemed to cause more staining to my palette. If you use lifting out as a technique (or as a rescue remedy), the more traditional colours are easier to lift than the more intense staining colours but almost all lifted to an acceptably useful degree if you only wish to lighten part of a wash. (I've actually found that it is the type of paper that has a much greater impact on the ease of lifting out than the paint itself).

I also tested how the paint dried in the air by applying blobs of colour to a sheet of watercolour paper and leaving them uncovered and exposed to the air in my studio. After four days, the Winsor & Newton, Schmincke and Daniel Smith paints were dry to the touch, followed by the QoR colours after about four weeks. After eight weeks, the Sennelier and MaimeriBlu were still marginally tacky, while the M Graham & Co. paints remained sticky and paste-like.

In trying to reactivate the paint with a wet brush, the difference was much less obvious than I expected from the drying times: the driest paint still mixed fairly easily to a wash, but the M Graham & Co. definitely had the edge. This was confirmed when I submerged the paper in water. The colour on the M Graham & Co. paints immediately began to drift off, closely followed by the QoR paint.

I THOUGHT MY TESTS WOULD CONFIRM MY PALETTE WAS PERFECT BUT I HAVE MADE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES

This drying of squeezed paint may only be a consideration if you don't paint every day or every week or if you use a plate as a palette. If you use a palette with a lid as I do, all of the paints remain workable – I simply top up the paint as needed and then clean everything out once a year or so. I would point out that although no student quality paints were tested, my limited experience of them suggests that it is often very difficult to reactivate them after drying.

Missed parts 1-3 of Grahame's search for the perfect palette? Buy back issues at www.chelseamagazines.com/shop

MIXING IT UP

GRAHAME'S FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR OWN PERFECT PALETTE

1. PERSONALISE YOUR PIGMENT SEARCH

Remember that my perfect palette may not be yours. I can now mix any colour I need for my landscape paintings, but floral artists may wish to have a few brighter colours to hand, for example.

Likewise, I favour rich Mediterranean landscapes, if you only paint British landscapes you may prefer duller earthy colours – just because I don't feel I need dark browns, it doesn't mean you won't need them.

2. COMPARE PIGMENTS, NOT NAMES

Do not rely on the fact that two similarly named colours from different manufacturers will be the same hue.

For a more accurate comparison, look instead at the pigment numbers that should be printed on all tubes of paint. This gives a better, though not infallible, guide.

3. TRY SOMETHING NEW

As I discovered in my tests, it's important to be prepared to try new things. I know paint is expensive but Daniel Smith produces a retail dot card with 238 small samples of their full watercolour range that allows you to try every colour at a modest cost. I would be very surprised if you didn't find a few colours that will make your painting easier, better, more interesting or just more fun.

4. BE COST EFFECTIVE

The price of paint will vary, both within a range and between the various manufacturers. If price is a factor for you (and it certainly is for me) take time to compare prices, as they will vary.

In one case I found a colour that was more than four times more expensive per millilitre than the same colour from another manufacturer. Even allowing for differences in formulation, I have seen nothing in my tests that could justify this.

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DEMONSTRATION

ART on location

TRANSFORM YOUR SKETCHBOOK SCRIBBLES INTO FINISHED ARTWORKS WITH THE HELP OF **KEVIN SCULLY**'S SIMPLE SIX-STEP GUIDE

One of the advantages of working from sketches is that it allows you to be less literal when it comes to producing a painting from them, particularly if there has been a long time lapse between making the sketch and tackling the painting.

I sometimes make sketches simply for the enjoyment of it and to experience the atmosphere of a time and place. On other occasions I make sketches with the intention of producing a painting, and this usually occurs within a day or two. But this detailed sketch (above right) was made in a sketchbook on a trip to the Caribbean more than a year ago. Returning to it recently, I decided to create a painting with a particularly Caribbean feel, using bright colours applied in a loose painterly way.

I chose Winsor & Newton Griffin Fast Drying Oil Colours for this, an alkyd paint which I have often used when working outside. The drying times are quicker than ordinary oils but slower than acrylic, which gives me just enough time to put down what I want. Had I used traditional oil paint, it would have been difficult painting the small red lettering on the trailer on top of wet oil paint, but with the alkyd it was dry enough the next day. The slightly unrealistic colour scheme of blue and green evokes the memory of that hot, sunny day when I produced the sketch.

KEVIN'S MATERIALS

• BRUSHES
Rosemary & Co Artists Brushes, filberts sizes 4 and 7; a selection of round and flat synthetic brushes sizes 2, 3 and 5
• OILS
Titanium White, Cobalt Blue, Cerulean Blue, Dioxazine Purple, Cadmium Yellow Light, Phthalo Green and Cadmium Red, all Winsor & Newton Griffin Oil Colours
• SUPPORT
Raymar linen panel, 20x30cm
• ACRYLIC GESSO
• TURPS AND WHITE SPIRIT

1 I primed an MDF board with three coats of acrylic gesso, each rubbed down slightly between applications. This produced a semi-absorbent surface with just enough tooth to stop the paint sliding over the surface. I washed over this with a thin blue-black mix using paint left on my palette from a previous session. The main elements of the image were copied very loosely from the sketch in dark blue pencil, knowing that a few changes would be made as the painting progressed. The subject matter didn't call for the kind of initial detailed drawing that might have been necessary for a more complicated composition.

As the sketch had lots of white space around it, I extended the painting to the edges of the board. I also enlarged the image so that the trees on the left were less dominant and bled off the top of the board. Some foliage and corrugated iron was added on the right-hand side. Beginning with the sky, which is usually the area in the lightest tone, I began blocking-in the various sections.

2 Establishing the tone of the sky first allowed me to determine how light or dark to make the other elements in the picture. I added patches of colour here and there, which even at this stage gave me a clue as to how well they related to each other. By working the whole painting in this way, nothing is set in stone early and colours can be

Top tip

ALKYD OIL PAINT IS USEFUL FOR PAINTING OUTSIDE BECAUSE OF THE SPEED AT WHICH IT DRIES

adjusted at any time. Apart from the sky and road, I also added a little purple into the blues of the shack, the trailer, and the tree trunks, which unifies as this is the main focus of the composition.

3 Up until this point, the paints were thinned with turps and used quite dilute. Here I began to work thicker as I introduced clouds into the sky. The sketch indicated that the sun was almost directly above and a little over to the left, so I introduced some stronger shadows and highlights to suggest this. To add variety, I made the tree on the right-hand side a different species to those on the left. The dark shape to the right gave the sense of a turn in the road, going downhill and towards the viewer.

4 The dark tree formed a good backdrop to the shack, while the white clouds created a sense of distance behind the trailer. My intention throughout the painting was to keep it loose but not out of control, so I started to sharpen up a few details such as the corrugated iron and structure of the trees and grass. Some of the foliage was painted over the clouds to create a degree of perspective. The dark shadows were a mixture of Phthalo Green and Dioxazine Purple, which produces a beautifully rich and intense shadow colour.

5 I wiped away some of the semi-dry paint with a rag to reveal the brushstrokes of the gesso beneath. I did this to remove some colour that I didn't like, but in a happy accident, it also added to the dilapidated look of the shack. As the paint was beginning to dry, I made use of the slight texture by drybrushing colour over the foliage highlights.

6 The bottom of the painting was lacking detail, so I included some overhead cables and painted the shadows they would cast across the road. I also added the lettering to the side of the trailer, and a washing line with the jeans hanging out to dry. I painted over the top of the trailer as it didn't look quite right, adding some more detail to the wheel. The painting was completed with a few extra details, such as the dappled sunlight on the trailer. Further highlights and shadows were painted with flicks of colour, in keeping with the feel of the whole scene.

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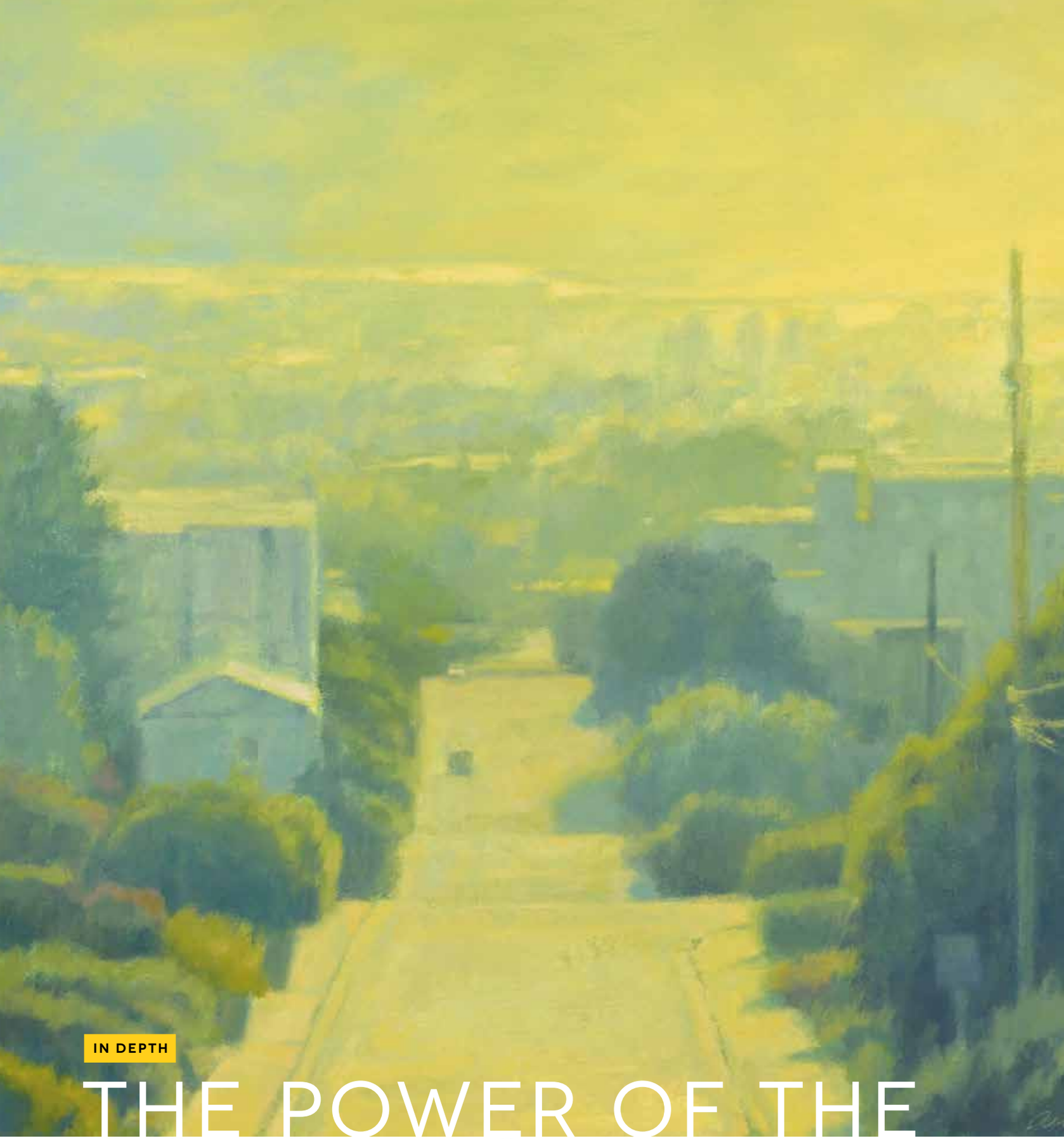


IN DEPTH

THE POWER OF THE COLOUR STUDY

COLOUR STUDIES NOT ONLY OFFER A GREAT WAY TO TEST OUT A COLOUR STRATEGY BEFORE STARTING A PAINTING, BUT ALSO EXPAND YOUR PALETTE AND BUILD YOUR PAINT MIXING SKILLS, AS **MITCHELL ALBALA** EXPLAINS

LEFT Mitchell Albala, *The Way Home*, oil on panel, 40x40cm
A colour study is an ideal way to test which colour-light strategy works best for a particular subject.

From my studies for *The Way Home* (see page 66), I chose the second combination – the warm yellows and subtle Phthalo Blue accents produced a sensation that felt most like brilliant sunlight.

RIGHT Mitchell Albala, *The Colour Thumbnail*, oil on paper, 7.5x10cm
A colour study doesn't need to be tight or polished in order to get the message across. The simple sketch establishes the basic composition and colour groups.

Every landscape painting I make begins with a colour study. It's a practice I adopted not long after art college, when my interest in painting the colour of light was in its formative stages. Now, whether I'm making a small painting in the open air or a more developed piece in the studio, the colour study is an integral part of my process. Without it, I would not be able to face the audacious goal of translating light into paint.

Although colour is highly subjective, it is anything but random. The colour study is an extension of the idea that colour is intentional. As landscape painters, we naturally "borrow" the colour relationships we find in nature, but we also rely on colour strategies: specific colour relationships that can be used as a formula for building our colour composition. For example, we might use an analogous harmony, a complementary or a split-complementary relationship.

A strategy also includes determining which particular pigments will best create those relationships and mixtures. I've always been surprised by artists who dive into a painting without having a clear colour plan. It's true that many colour relationships can be worked out during the course of the painting, but the clearer your plan is at the outset, the more likely it is that you will arrive at an effective solution in the final work. The colour study is a way to test that plan.

Colour studies take extra time, and to some they may seem like an overly formal process, but I believe there is no better way to expand your colour vision and flex your colour mixing muscles than to do colour studies. They can be fun, practical and very rewarding. >

WHY MAKE A STUDY?

When I reflect on so many years of doing colour studies, I can think of five important ways in which they have helped my practice:

1. Capture colour better
In landscape, each painting is typically pegged to a moment in time and a particular colour of the light. Colour studies are a great way to determine what works best for a particular subject, as I did in the studies for *The Way Home*.

When painting outdoors, I respond to nature. Like the Impressionists, I try to capture the colours as I see them, even though I know that perfect matches are not possible. In such cases, the colour study serves as a way for me to test which pigments and colour mixes will best translate the colour of the light in that subject.

In the artificial light of the studio, I cannot respond to nature in the same way. Instead, my approach to colour must be partly invented. I rely on photos and memories of sunlight on certain subjects at certain times of day. I am willing to experiment, which is the whole point of the colour study.

2. Get your eye in
Colour studies are the perfect warm-up exercise – try to think of them as painted thumbnail sketches. Not only are you able to familiarise yourself with the colours, but also the basic design and composition as well.

3. Relieve the pressure
Psychologically speaking, a small study is a low-pressure exercise. You are less likely to be invested in a small "disposable" study than you would a larger painting. The study is a safe avenue down which to explore (and get lost) without a large time commitment or attachment to the outcome. Of course, colour studies can sometimes be mini masterpieces in their own right, entirely saleable at an open studio or exhibition of smaller works.

4. Move beyond photos
Many landscape painters work from photographs. There is nothing inherently wrong with this practice, as long as it's done properly. Avoid the temptation to simply copy the colours seen in a photo.

A series of colour studies can liberate you from the single and often limited option proposed by the colour in the photo. Colour studies force you to try alternate strategies and encourage you to be more creative with your palette choices.

5. Become more expressive
The smaller the study, the more painterly and gestural it is likely to be. This is easy to see in all the colour studies featured in this article. For some painters, this is a desirable quality, but one that is difficult to translate into larger pieces. An expressive study can serve as an inspiration; a gentle reminder of the expressive style you aspire to in the larger painting.

1. THE DEVELOPED COLOUR STUDY

These studies, done in the studio as preparation for a larger painting, each took about an hour-and-a-half – a similar amount of time as I would spend on a plein air painting. I took time to consider the drawing and placement of shapes, but I also strove to keep them loose and painterly. Working small helped with this.

My reference photo provided an interesting subject, but it was drab and lacked any suggestion of sunset-like colours, so it was up to me be inventive with the colour. Each study makes a unique statement about a colour and light for that time of day. Having done all three, I could then decide which one best fit my vision.

2. THE SIMPLE COLOUR STUDY

This set of studies is what I call "simple" colour studies — small, loose, and very direct. Unlike the more developed studies, these only took about 15 minutes each. Despite being just 9cm wide, the brushstrokes were relatively large and gestural.

How much does precision and accuracy play in this type of study? Not much. The simple study can be effective even when capturing only the most basic shapes and little detail. What is important to define are the basic colour groups and how they relate to one another.




ABOVE Mitchell Albala, developed colour studies for *The Way Home*, 2015, oil on paper, 20x20cm each
These developed colour studies show a yellow-violet complementary, a yellow/yellow-green/green analogous harmony with contrasting blue accents and a yellow-blue split-complementary. The original photo meanwhile reveals how much the image has already been transformed in these studies – cropping the composition, experimenting with the colour scheme, and removing unwanted details to simplify the scene.

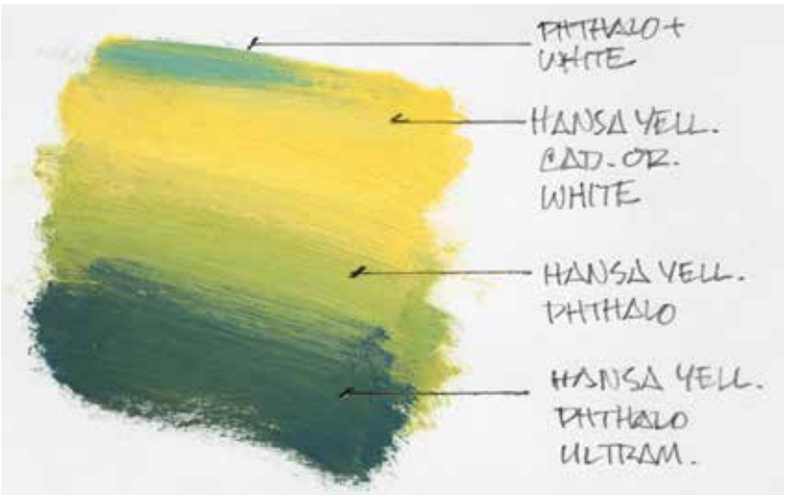
BELOW Mitchell Albala, simple colour studies for *Peak*, oil on paper, 10x9cm each
Rendered quicker than the developed paintings above, these studies took about 15 minutes each. The large, gestural strokes made it easier to quickly visualise the subject under a range of colour-light combinations.



3. THE COLOUR SWATCH STUDY

The colour swatch study is different from a developed or simple study in that it doesn't capture a representational image at all.

It is simply a set of colour mixes that are intended to correspond to the main colour groups of the painting. The swatch study should be very simple with just three or four colours.



RIGHT Mitchell Albala, colour swatch study for *The Way Home*
Allow the swatches to touch and blend a little, since that is a better test of how they will relate in the actual painting. You can also make a note of pigment choices and colour mixes.

EXERCISE

We are so used to trying to paint the colours we see, it's easy to become less inventive with colour. In my landscape workshops, I do an exercise called "100 Studies" that was inspired by the work of American pastel painter and instructor Marla Baggetta (*Going for 100*, right).

The exercise is designed to expand your colour range and involves doing as many studies as possible of the same subject. This is a challenge, even for the seasoned painter, because you have to really stretch to come up with so many different colour schemes. You don't have to actually do 100 studies in order to benefit from the exercise, but the more you do, the more you'll expand your colour vocabulary. Here are a few tips:

- **Choose a small size.** Pick something that won't allow you to fuss with detail. Marla's studies were 25cm, well suited to her style.

- **Choose a simple subject.** Opt for a scene that can be repeated with little compositional variation so you can focus on the colours.

- **Be exploratory.** Don't tell yourself that you can't – or shouldn't – try certain colour combinations. Try all the various colour strategies: every combination of complementary or split-complementary, and various analogous harmonies. Explore tonalist or neutral palettes.

- **Alter the mood.** Ask yourself: what colours could I use to turn day into night? Or what colours could turn the subject into a sunrise or sunset? Test out colour families you have avoided in the past. If you run out of ideas, find a painting by another artist with a successful colour strategy and apply those to your study.

Mitchell is the author of *Landscape Painting*, published by Watson-Guptill, RRP £22.99. www.mitchalbala.com, www.marlabaggetta.com

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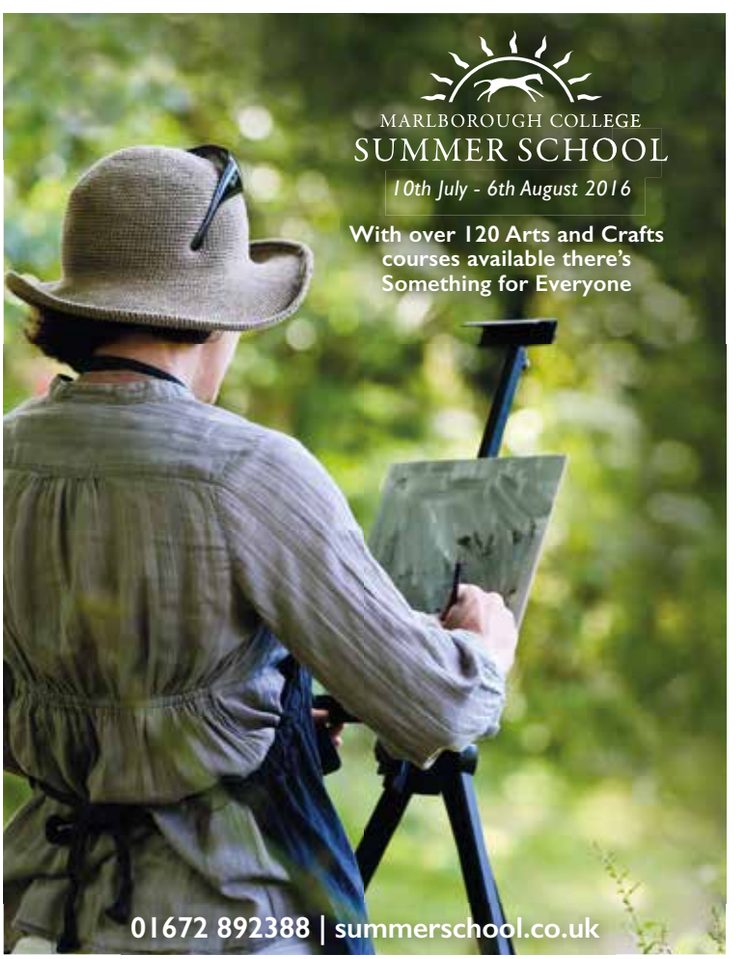
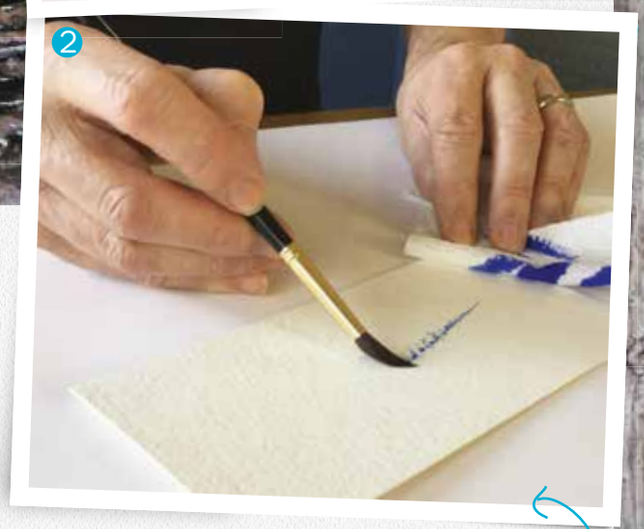


TRY SOMETHING NEW

DRYBRUSH

ROB DUDLEY DEMONSTRATES A NEAT WAY TO CREATE EXCITING TEXTURES IN WATERCOLOUR

1. Wide, broken textures
Hold the brush at a low angle, so the sides of the bristles touch the paper. Sweep briskly across the surface to leave a broad, broken mark that reflects the texture of the paper.



2. Thin, sharp marks
For a sharper, less broken mark, raise the angle of the brush so more of the tip (and less of the side) comes into contact with the paper.

Why drybrush?

I find a drybrush stroke is one of the most useful in my armoury of watercolour brush techniques, often employed to convey the texture of wood, flaky paintwork, distant hedgerows or foreground grasses.

How do I do it?

Skimming or dragging the brush lightly over the paper, the aim is to transfer the minimum amount of paint onto the surface. If one considers the surface of watercolour paper as a series of peaks and valleys, the aim of the drybrush stroke is to apply colour to the peaks and not to flood the valleys with wash. More textured papers will result in more effective drybrush marks.

As the term suggests, the brush should not be loaded with paint. I will often have some kitchen roll to hand to either take away any excess moisture directly from the brush or dab away any excess paint from the painting surface. Working on dry paper is better too. If the valleys of the paper's surface are damp, they will fill with colour and the definition of the stroke will be lost. It is better to complete drybrush passages with as few strokes as possible, otherwise the broken mark is liable to be filled in and the texture lost.

What materials should I use?

Watercolour tubes are preferable to pans when drybrushing – they allow you to use the minimum amount of water to create a workable consistency.

A round or pointed sable is the ideal brush for drybrushing – I use a size 6 or 8. Using the tip will produce a sharper, thinner, broken line that is useful for expressing the mooring lines from boats or telephone wires. Scuffing the side or belly of the brush against the paper's surface gives broader, wider marks e.g. texture in a distant landscape.

A fan brush is also useful for creating the effect of weathered wood. Pull the tips of the brush across your paper to describe the wood grain simply yet effectively, keeping the brush's hairs splayed and suitably damp.

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TOP LEFT Rob Dudley, *Netton Breakers*, watercolour on paper
"I used multiple layers of drybrush to suggest the texture of the rocks, making sure that each layer was completely dry before the next was added."

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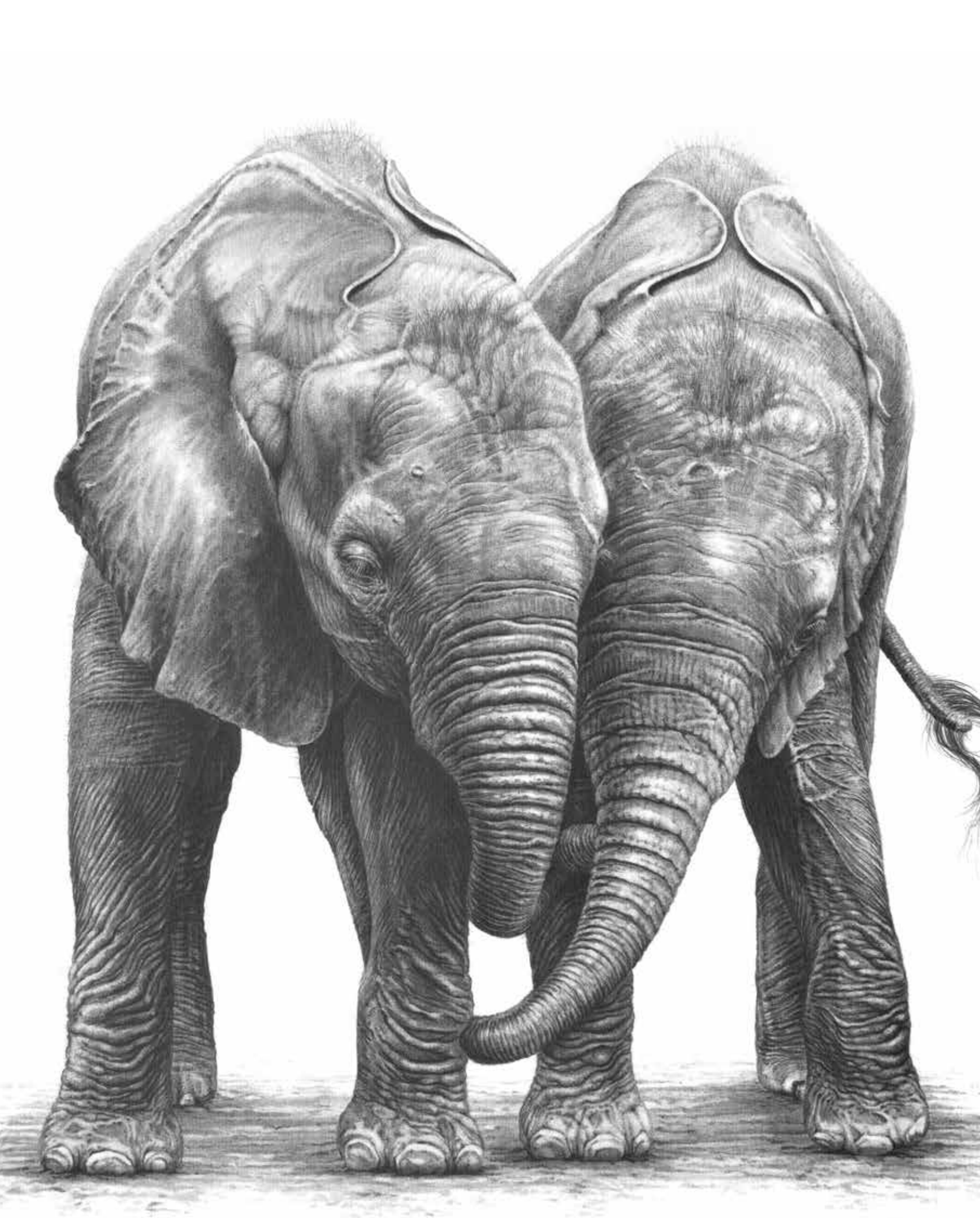
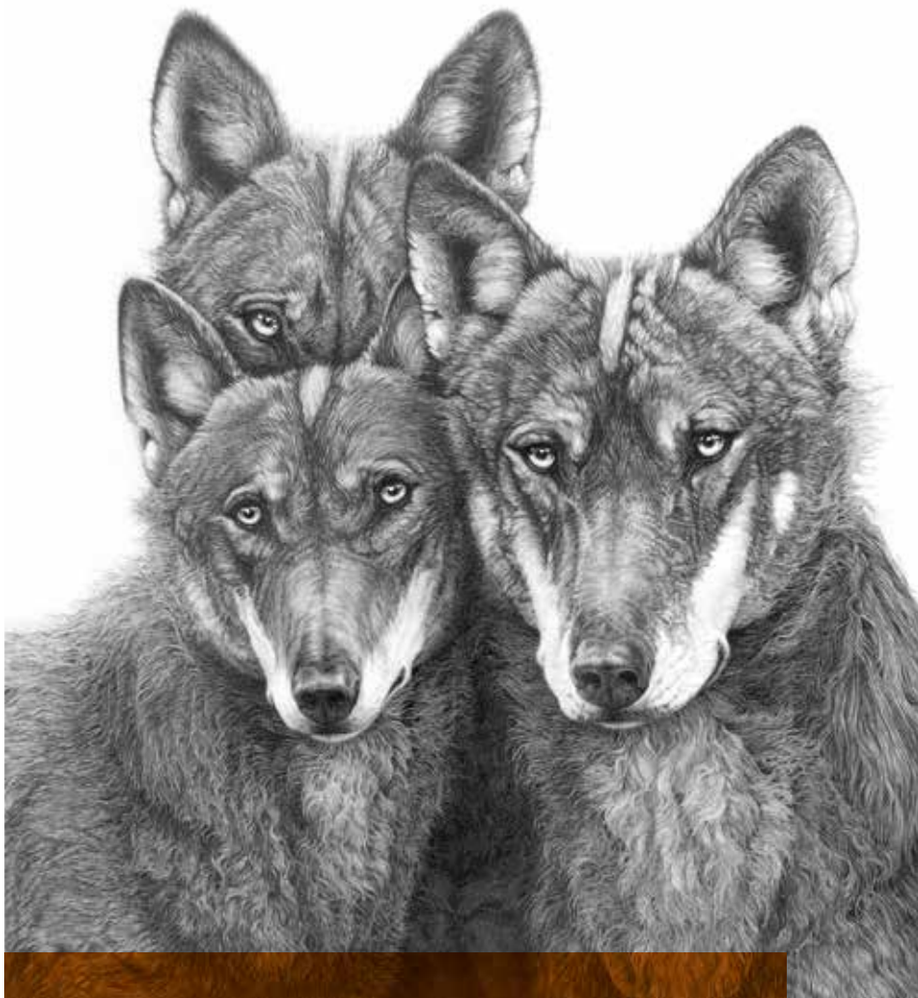


YOUR QUESTIONS

DRAWING ANIMALS

AS THE UK'S BEST-SELLING PENCIL ARTIST, **GARY HODGES** IS THE PERFECT PERSON TO ANSWER YOUR QUERIES ABOUT CREATING REALISTIC DRAWINGS OF WILDLIFE



What are the benefits of working in black and white?

I found many years ago that, by drawing in monochrome, I could really bring out the wonderful characters of animals without any of the distractions of colour. I rarely include backgrounds either and that also focuses the eyes straight to the heart and beauty of the creature.

By stripping things right back like this, it has made me a better composer of pictures. You really need to have a strong composition if you get rid of any colour and scenery. Also the negative space between shapes becomes massively important to the dynamics of the whole picture.

I find drawing animal hair a real challenge. Any tips for how I could improve?

The obvious answer is to really look deeply at your subject matter, whether you are sketching an animal right in front of you or, as I do, studying the many photos I take as reference material. There aren't really shortcuts to drawing in great detail. My greatest 'tools' are my patience and my love of the subject. The technical side of what I do, I've slowly learnt over 30 years, so my advice would be to practice until you like what is appearing on the paper.

What's the best way to achieve the deepest black values?

I gradually work the pencil layer upon layer, working in small areas at a time and then moving across the paper until it looks right. My drawings can take up to about 200 hours.

I rest my hand on a piece of recycled paper to avoid unwanted smudging – some will still occur but it prevents most. I can't stress how important it is to regularly step back from your drawing to get an overview of what you're creating as well. You want each little bit of the drawing to flow seamlessly into the next or it will end up looking like a patchwork quilt.

How do I capture a sense of movement?

That's a difficult one to answer. If an animal is running, adding dust obviously helps create a sense of movement, but I try to make even a static picture have 'life' by making sure it flows well and injecting my love of the subject.

How do I create a sense of light on water?

I treat each texture differently. With fur, I want it to look soft, but still have a sense of sharpness and movement. With water, I soften any edges to the patterns I draw for creating the water effect. Once shaded, I use tissue paper and really blend it firmly, pushing the tissue with my fingers into the paper's fibres. I'll then go over the area again with more shading until I've achieved the effect I want.

I want to create authentic-looking shadows. Got any tips?

My main advice if you are working from photos would be to make sure you don't create solid, dark shadows – there should still be detail in those shadow areas. I love creating rich dark patterns within them.

What's your approach to planning out a new drawing?

I start by sketching my picture out with a softer graphite pencil, an HB or B. This stage can take up to about six hours – I drew a full-length eight-foot crocodile that took at least that long to get the sketch just right. I always use a larger piece of paper than I actually require, so that I can cut it down to size once the drawing is sketched out. I make sure all proportions seem correct before I move forward.

I'll roughly draw in some of the darker areas, using clean fingers to smudge the graphite a little. I then use a firm plastic eraser to pick out highlights. Once this gives me a >

ABOVE *Iberian Wolves – Hope for the Future,* graphite on paper, 60x45cm

OPPOSITE PAGE *The Orphans,* graphite on paper, 55x40cm

rough idea of how the drawing will look, I'll start putting on the detail, starting with the eye. For me, that is the most important part of the animal; once you have that nailed, the rest of the drawing seems to fall into place.

Which pencils brands would you recommend?

I've been using Derwent exclusively since the early 1980s. This may sound strange, but I love the colour that I can produce with Derwent's Graphic pencils – they are neither too brown nor too blue. I use mainly the harder pencils in that range, from 2B right up to the really hard 9H. That way, less accidental smudging occurs and my drawings can have a real sharpness to them.

More recently, I also started using Derwent's new Onyx range. They replicate very soft pencils, between 8B and 12B, but can be sharpened to a point without crumbling. I started using them towards the end of my drawings and they really finish them off.

Do you use any other tools when finishing your images?

I use plastic erasers to correct any mistakes and also for highlighting at various stages. I sometimes use Blu-Tack to lift graphite off the paper if I've overworked a certain area or to clean the paper towards the end of the drawing, before applying fixative.

I also use a scalpel to sharpen my pencils to a fine point and cut the paper to size. I also enjoy using my fingers a lot to smudge the graphite. I remember at secondary school I had a really good art teacher who was very encouraging, but she always would tell me not to smudge with my fingers to create an effect. She said it was cheating but I now do it all the time, so my advice is do what works for you. Rules are there to be broken sometimes.

Which paper brand best suits a more detailed drawing?

I have been using Fabriano 5 for most of my drawings for many years now. If I need a particularly large sheet, I use Fabriano Artistico instead because you can buy it in a massive roll. Both are pretty robust and not too cream, unlike many other watercolour papers. Prior to this I used regular cartridge paper, but I always found this would buckle under the sheer pressure I put it under.

What's the best way to gather reference material?

Personally I like to go out in the field to experience the animals as they truly behave. I don't like zoos. I became self-employed in 1989 and stopped visiting zoos regularly the following year. I have been to just three since then to see species of wildlife that would be nearly impossible to see in the wild, like snow leopards or Amur tigers.

My advice is to make sure you research the species you are drawing first before you put pencil to paper. Try to inject a sense of 'life' into the creatures' eyes.

What's your favourite animal to draw?

Elephants are wonderful to watch and great to draw too. There are so many different textures within one amazing animal: the rough wrinkled hide, the sculptured creamy toenails, the toilet brush of a tail and their gentle amber eyes. But I like to vary my subjects. As long as I'm inspired by the poses, I'll draw any species.

Gary's next exhibition, *Heart & Soul*, runs from 19-23 April at the Mall Galleries, London. www.garyhodges-wildlife-art.com

Do you apply fixative to your drawings?
Yes, I use a top-quality fixative towards the end, just before I add the really soft pencil grades. I'll then put on another layer of fixative, draw a bit more and repeat, until I've achieved the right depth of tones. This also means that when I give the drawing to my framers, there's no risk of smudging on their part.

BELOW Gary Hodges, *Snow Leopard (detail)*, graphite on paper, 95x25cm

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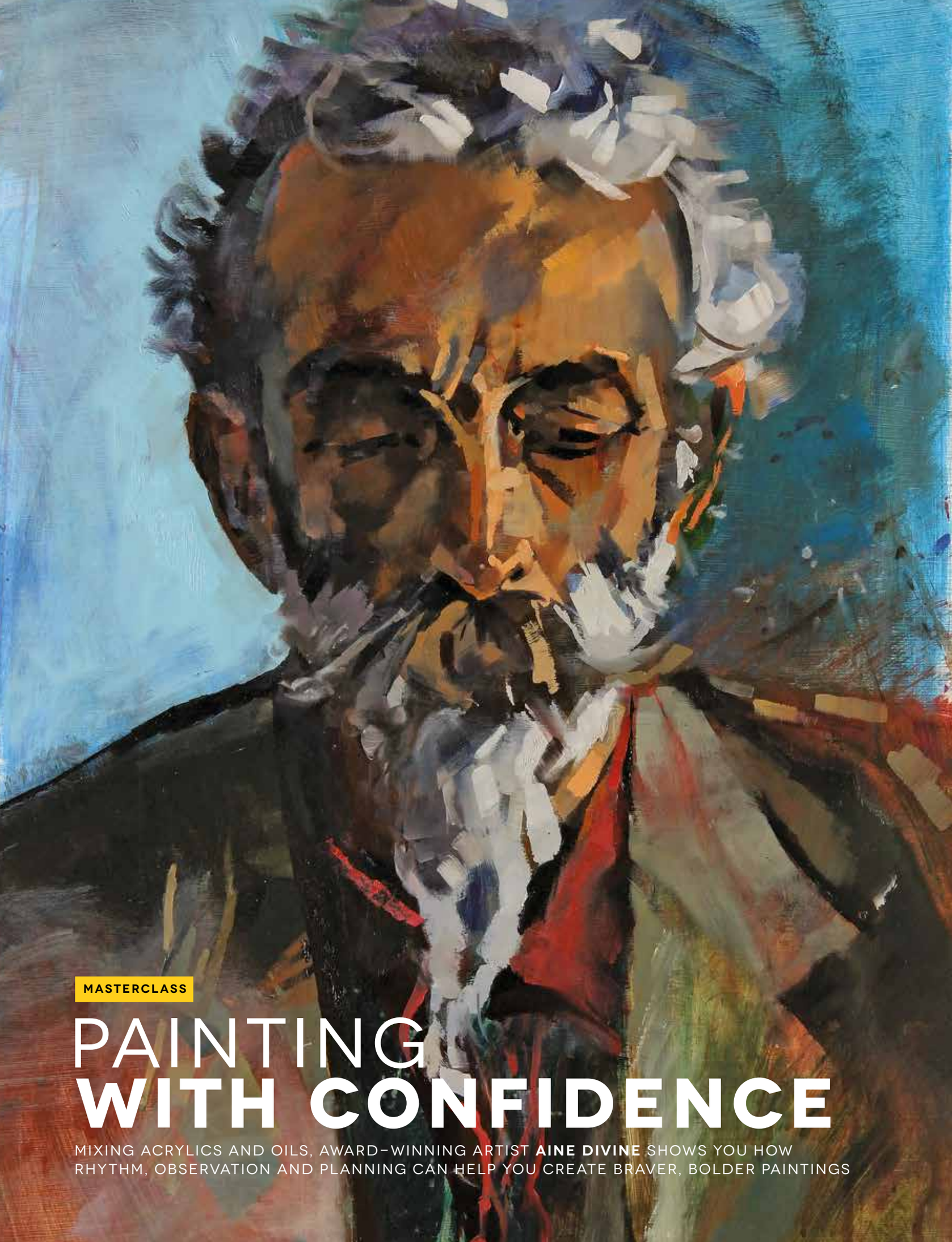

MASTERCLASS

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In this month's masterclass, I want to offer ways of fostering a brave, more confident approach that will help you to, in the words of Paul Klee, "make chance essential".

I believe what we see with our eyes is important, but the process of painting from observation involves much more than that. We need to tune out from the critical voice in our head that wants to label everything, and tune into our intuition that instead allows us to feel our way into the painting process.

When people paint regularly, they develop a rhythm – of observing the subject and applying the paint – that involves good co-ordination. I believe we do our best work when our whole bodies are actively involved in this process; we roll our shoulders back, let ourselves breathe and feel softness in the knees. Also remember to stand well back from your picture at regular intervals, so that you can see what still needs to be done.

One of my aims at the beginning is to create an interesting surface to work upon. Acrylics are ideal for this as they have shorter drying times than the oils I used on top.

My hope is that this step-by-step article will open up new possibilities for your next painting. I want you to be encouraged to experiment with the ideas presented here and be willing to take some risks.

I want to dispel any fears of "getting it wrong". Luck favours the brave and it's enough to be approximate along the way. We are not computers, after all. Painting is an organic process, so we should make a mess and find our way gradually. Remember Matisse's words: "exactitude is not truth". Now get going – and best of luck!

Aine teaches a Painting Retreat at Villa Carmine in Italy from 22-29 May. www.villacarmine.com

AINE'S TOOLS

- **ACRYLICS**
  Cadmium Red (Hue), Crimson, Lemon Yellow, Sap Green, Hooker's Green, Coeruleum Blue (Hue), Ultramarine and Burnt Umber, all Daler-Rowney System 3 Acrylic Colours
- **OILS**
  Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, Lemon Yellow Hue, Sap Green, Viridian, Cerulean Blue, French Ultramarine, Burnt Umber, Vandyke Brown and Titanium White, all Winsor & Newton Artists' Oil Colours
- **BRUSHES**
  Royal & Langnickel long-handled, flat bright brushes, various sizes; a 2" household paintbrush
- **SUPPORT**
  Plywood board, primed with gesso

1 VISUALISE YOUR SUBJECT

I began by visualising the space that Michael's head and shoulders would occupy on the board. My intention was to block in the main forms: the skin, the hair, and the position of the shoulders. I used a rag to apply a fairly dry mix of Cadmium Red and Sap Green acrylic, with Ultramarine added for the hair. I worked quickly and confidently, scrubbing the paint at arm's length.

2 SCRUB IN MAIN FORMS

I mixed a light skin colour with Cadmium Red, Lemon Yellow and Sap Green. The acrylic was loosely scumbled using a crosshatch motion to push the paint in different directions.

I used the rag to describe the hairline and position the features with a mix of Hooker's Green and Cadmium Red. I also scrubbed Hooker's Green on the shirt area that will be red to provide a contrasting under-painting.

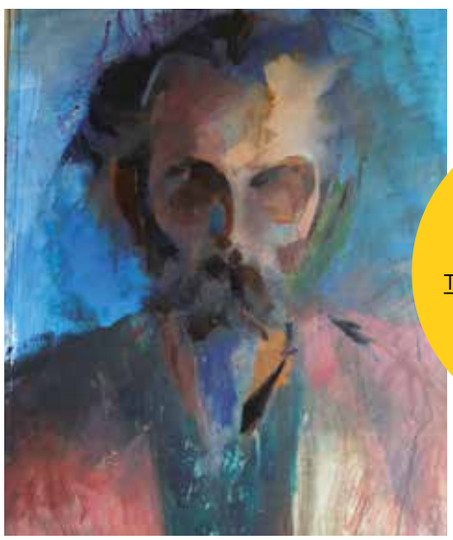
3 FLING SOME PAINT

Whenever I feel tension creeping into my shoulders, I do something general and loose. In this step, I splashed runny acrylic on here and there to see how it might alter the layer beneath. Flinging paint loosens up the shoulder and allows us to engage our playful side. I make a habit of trying to lose parts of the picture early on, knowing that I will find them again later if they are important. >

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL WILDMAN AND MICHAEL GRAHAM

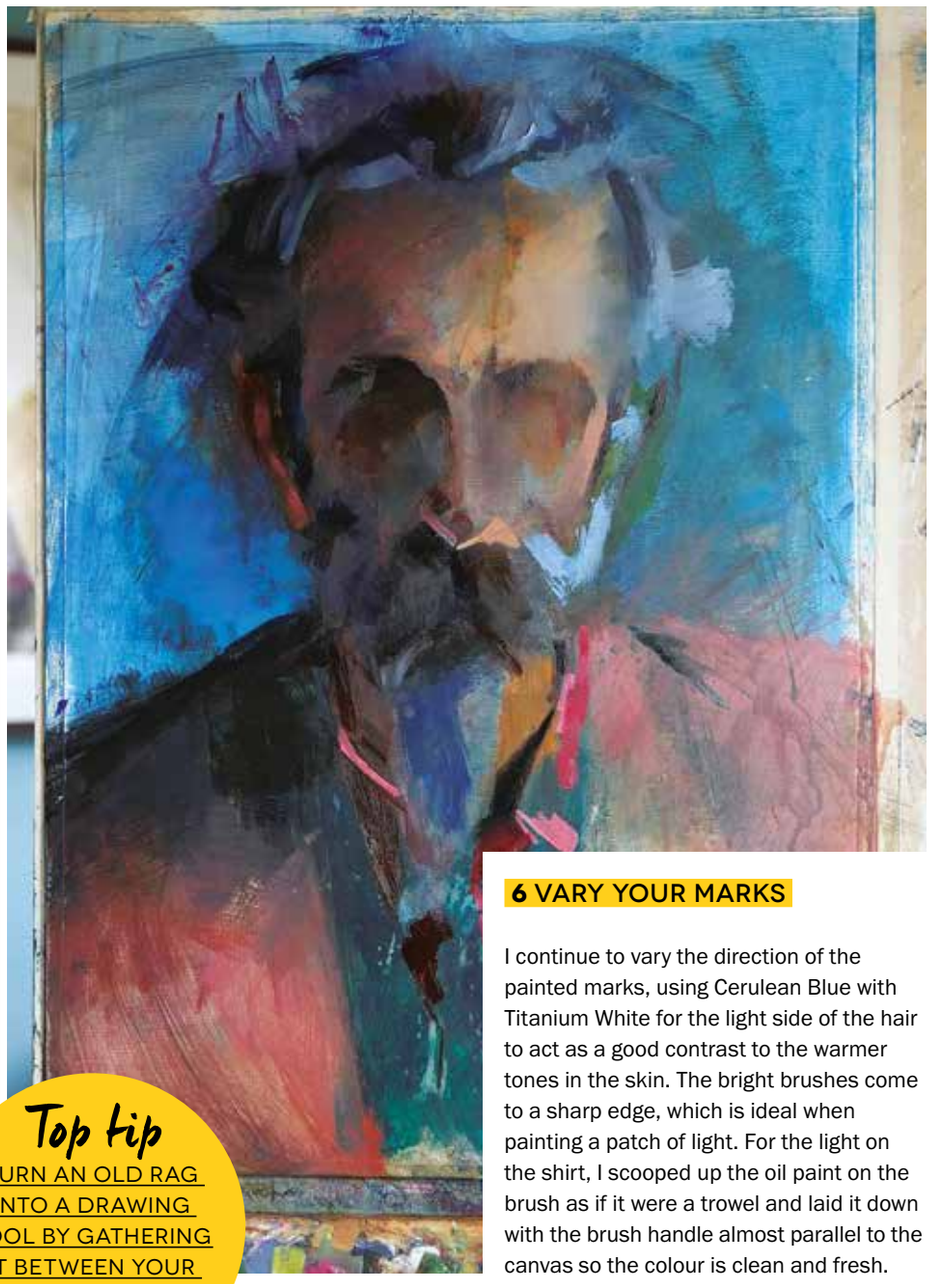
4 MAKE DECISIVE MARKS

Even though my physical actions are often expressive, my process is firmly grounded in observation. Before making a mark, I steady myself by planting both feet firmly on the ground. This gives me the best opportunity to keenly observe the part I want to explain, then commit the mark to the painting without hesitation and move on. That mark may be adjusted later, but in that moment of seeing, the response is decisive and committed.



5 SWITCH TO OILS

As soon as the darks and lights are generally indicated in acrylic, I switch to oils. I like to use oil paint to more fully explore the bumps and hollows of the face and to clarify the darks in the skin and hair. I like the square head of flat, bright brushes as it gives the marks clear edges. Mapping out the shadows of the face in these geometric shapes helps me to make sense of it all, as well as finding some order as I go.



Top tip

TURN AN OLD RAG INTO A DRAWING TOOL BY GATHERING IT BETWEEN YOUR THUMB AND INDEX FINGER

6 VARY YOUR MARKS

I continue to vary the direction of the painted marks, using Cerulean Blue with Titanium White for the light side of the hair to act as a good contrast to the warmer tones in the skin. The bright brushes come to a sharp edge, which is ideal when painting a patch of light. For the light on the shirt, I scooped up the oil paint on the brush as if it were a trowel and laid it down with the brush handle almost parallel to the canvas so the colour is clean and fresh.

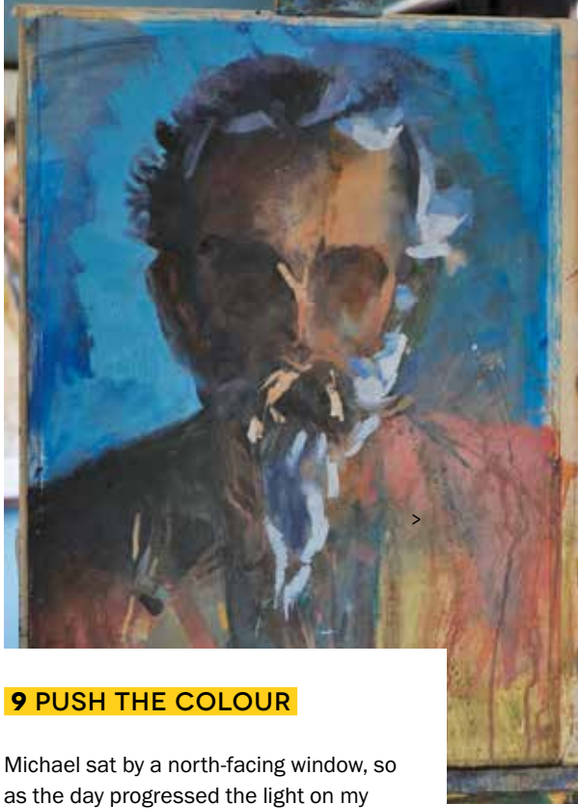
7 MIX UP COLOURS

I took time out to mix colours on my palette here, finding variations in the grey of the hair. I added Yellow Ochre to Cerulean Blue and Titanium White to make a warmer grey. It was much more satisfying then to start sculpting the face and hair with patches of opaque colour that had been mixed with care.

It's important to plan your move with care, so you can then be light and confident when you put the paint down. Finding the right size of brush, choosing the right colour and observing carefully should take longer than making the mark.

8 REFRESH THE DARKS

It's important to always refresh the darks to keep moving the painting forward. Otherwise, the temptation is to tinker, when really what's needed is to consider the relationship between the larger areas of dark and light. Step back frequently to see these and keep an eye on the whole.



9 PUSH THE COLOUR

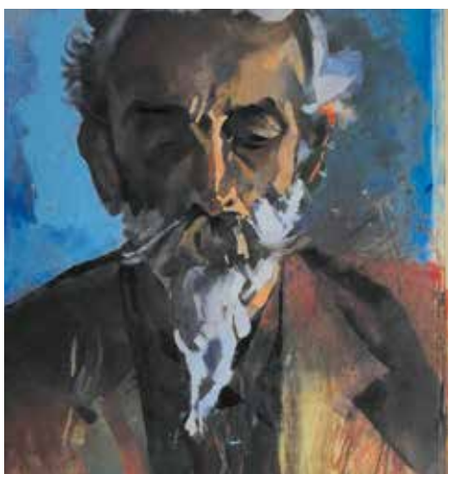
Michael sat by a north-facing window, so as the day progressed the light on my easel faded a little, whereas the areas of light on his face and hair stayed constant.

I used the rag here to push the background colour up to the left of the head, contrasting it with the dark hair to add drama. There were some splashes and drips on the jacket, where I took the opportunity to loosen up again in contrast to more focused brushwork elsewhere.

10 LET THE LIGHTS SING

A great way to describe the form of the forehead is to establish the two directions of the eyebrow line, as I did here. The colour was a mix of Vandyke Brown and French Ultramarine, which I exploited elsewhere on the jacket collar and the darker parts of Michael's beard. By painting these darks, the lighter tones can sing out in comparison.

I steadily made adjustments here, as I continued to look with curiosity at the face I was painting. The oil paint can be wiped away easily, leaving the acrylic underneath intact.



11 MAKE MARKS QUICKLY

I move from feature to feature quickly – for example, with three moves, I applied marks to indicate the dark of the iris, the dark of the nostril and the dark patch between the beard and shirt collar. The light on the nose was made clearer and brighter too.

Ignoring the details of the patterned suit, I instead focused on finding the shifting tones of skin and beard. I preferred to sculpt these areas in more detail.

12 FINISHING TOUCHES

To finish, I applied very opaque oils with the bright brushes, floating it on top of the more thinly-applied layers beneath. This is evident around Michael's left ear where a few carefully chosen colours helped explain the side of the face, the sideburns and the warm light on the ear.

I recommend that you become familiar with painting with flat, bright brushes, as they allow you to pick out what's important without getting caught up in too much detail.

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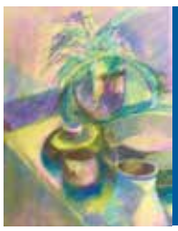

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ARTY FACTS

PIERRE BONNARD

STEVE PILL EXPLORES THE COLOURFUL FRENCH PAINTER'S TECHNIQUES AND INSPIRATIONS

PIERRE BONNARD, *NUDE IN AN INTERIOR*, 1935. OIL ON CANVAS, 134X69.2CM NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART. © 2015 ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/ADAGP, PARIS

1 HE WAS IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

"Bonnard turned everything he touched into a garden", writes Guy Cogeval in new monograph, *Painting Arcadia*.

Born in 1867, the French artist celebrated the union of man and nature throughout his career, via a series of bright pastoral scenes and sultry Mediterranean seascapes. These visions of Arcadia, a sort of unspoiled idyll, were furthered by his magical handling of colour and light.

2 HE WAS A DECORATIVE PAINTER

From the Rococo revival to the Art Nouveau movement, decorative art was a hot topic in turn-of-the-century France. Bonnard embraced this, producing elegant lithographs for advertisements early in his career and designing folding screens and painted panels for the homes of several clients.

3 HIS MUSE BECAME HIS WIFE

Bonnard met Marthe de Méligny in 1893 and immortalised her in a series of intimate portraits, such as 1935's *Nude in an Interior.* Despite a relationship complicated by Bonnard's affairs and Marthe's bouts of depression, the couple eventually married in 1925 and stayed together until her death in 1942.

4 HE WAS AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPHER

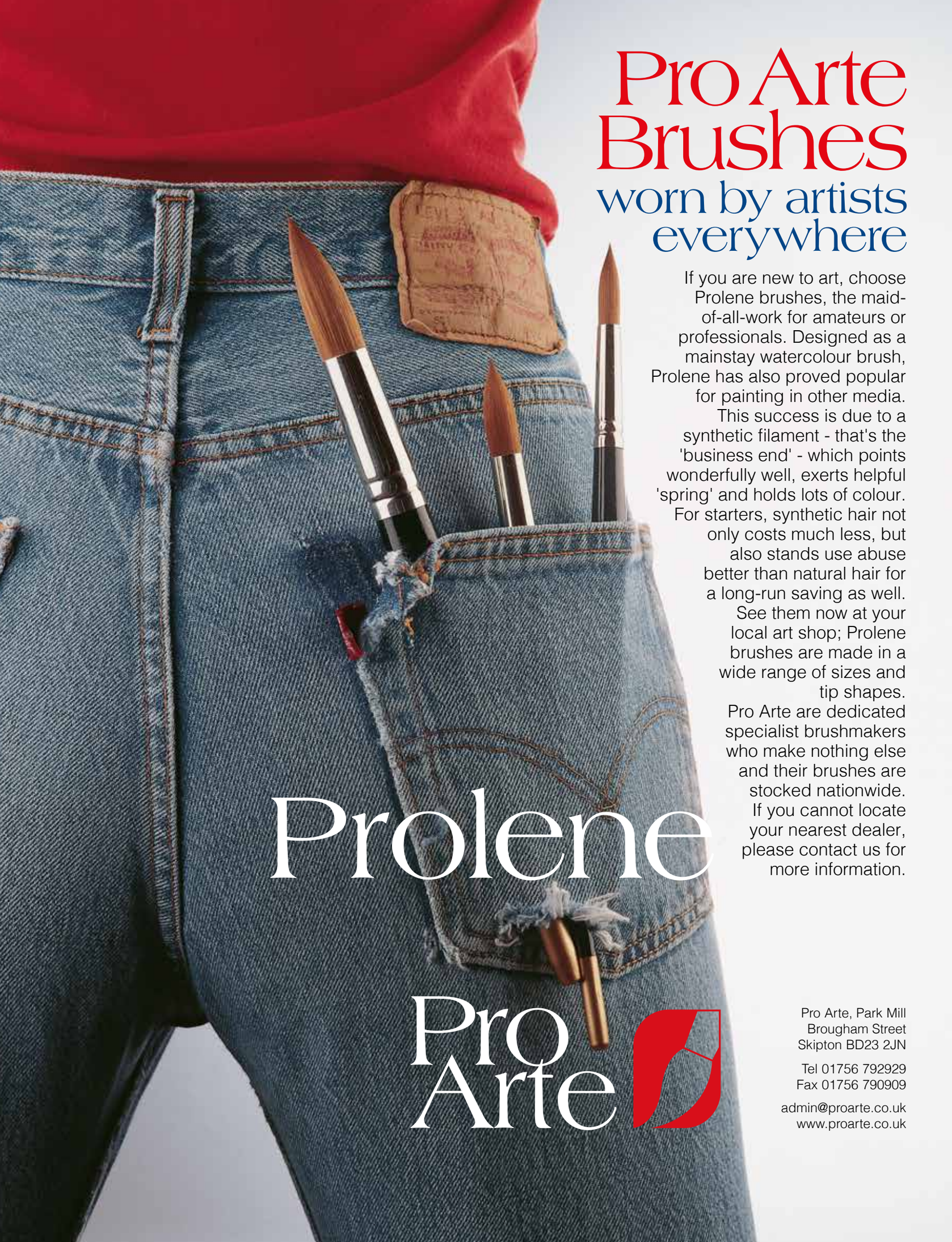
Bonnard took his first photograph in 1891 – just three years after the first Kodak camera reached the market. Over the next 30 years, the artist would take many pictures of Marthe, his family and other models. In contrast to prevailing styles, Bonnard abandoned linear perspective and favoured instead informal compositions that he often echoed in his paintings.

5 HE ABSORBED SPANISH INFLUENCE

Bonnard travelled to Spain in 1901 with a group of friends, which included the artist Édouard Vuillard.

Bonnard's photos from the trip reveal a fascination with the light-filled courtyards and Islamic decoration of the Alhambra palace, while paintings such as *Sleep* bear the influence of Spanish masters El Greco and Velázquez. "We need to look at the Masters, but without exaggerated respect," he explained.

***Pierre Bonnard – Painting Arcadia* is published by Prestel, RRP £50. www.prestel.com**



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