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*solved!*

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# SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS... OR ESCAPE TO MEXICO!



There were definitely two trains of thought hurtling headlong into the making of this issue. On the one hand, we've taken a very pragmatic approach to painting and come up with an entire technique section devoted to the common concerns and problems facing artists in the studio. If you have ever struggled with controlling wetness, finding focus, removing mistakes or mixing greens then we have an expert solution for you. In fact,

we have 27 pages dedicated to these common, tricky little complaints, so you can apply the advice to your paintings, no matter what the subject or situation.

On the other hand, we've been putting our troubles behind us and indulging in a little escapism. Brush maker Symi Jackson tells the story of 100 painters making an historic visit to Cuba, the largest trip of its kind in the island's history, while illustrator Nina Cosford recounts her three-week pilgrimage across Mexico in search of the studio of her heroine, Frida Kahlo.

So whether you decide to get to work in the studio, jet off to warmer climes, or simply combine the two trains of thought and become a working artist in Mexico, Cuba or somewhere equally exotic, be sure to paint us a postcard and send it to the address below!

Steve Pill, Editor

## Write to us!

Have you found a neat solution to a particularly tricky painting problem? Share your tips with us via email or social media...

 [info@artistsandillustrators.co.uk](mailto:info@artistsandillustrators.co.uk)

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# YOUR LETTERS

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### WORKING LIKE WARHOL

Re: Daily Painting, Issue 360

As well as being an artist, I work full-time, so I tend to spend quite a bit of time thinking about painting, but not much time actually doing it. I tell myself I haven't got enough time or I need better ideas or there's no decent light at this time of year. I particularly enjoyed and felt inspired

by the article in January's magazine, so I set myself a challenge to paint 30 paintings in 30 days. I didn't set out to create a perfect series of work, but rather to, in the words of Andy Warhol, "just get it done". I also wanted to develop a more regular rhythm of painting that would last beyond the challenge.

I'm nearly at the end of the 30 days and I haven't missed a single one. Not every painting has turned out well, but I've created more than half a dozen that I'm really happy with. It's been great to be able to respond creatively to the day's events, from observing the colours in a colleague's dress to creating a vivid visual tribute to David Bowie (left).

**Cherrie Mansfield, via email**  
[www.cherriemansfield.com](mailto:www.cherriemansfield.com)



## NEW BEGINNINGS

Re: The Working Artist, Issue 363

The article regarding what to do with older work was of interest because for months I have been returning to my oil paintings that have been stored away for a long time.

I decided to repaint over the ones that had become faded or marked and give them a fresh new look. Two

paintings were sold and I have plans for the others. Unused art from previous years can be made into a source of new beginnings.

**Jean Cooper, Dunfermline**

## OFF THE RAILS

I have just been reading your latest issue and saw your request for realistic art. Here is one of my

## write to us

Send your letter or email to the addresses below:

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Your Letters  
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London SW3 3TQ

**EMAIL:** [info@artistsandillustrators.co.uk](mailto:info@artistsandillustrators.co.uk)

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



paintings inspired by a photo (above). It is called *Sir Nigel Gresley* and it was painted with acrylic ink, gouache and watercolour.

**James Green, via email**  
[www.jamesgreenart.co.uk](http://www.jamesgreenart.co.uk)

## CRAFTY IDEAS

Re: Your Letters, Issue 363

In April's issue, you published a letter from David J Auld who claimed that the realistic paintings from the previous issue should be considered craft rather than art. I beg to differ.

Historically, art established itself by following clear realism guidelines until the late 19th century, only becoming truly 'expressive' once photography took over most of the role of realism. There is still an artist behind those modern realistic paintings, just as much as there's an artist behind a camera deciding what to capture and how to excite certain feelings. Realist paintings are indeed art. They are supported not only by tradition, but also by the art market itself.

**Anna Ventura, via email**

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Watts Gallery - Artists' Village  
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New Exhibition



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



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

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Watts Gallery



Watts Chapel



Watts Studios



## 9 ARTISTIC THINGS TO DO IN

## MAY



1

## OPEN STUDIOS CORNWALL

Take yourself on an art pilgrimage around the Cornish coast and explore some of the UK's most incredible art studios (28 May to 5 June). From Newlyn and Lamorna to Falmouth and St Ives, the county has the UK's highest concentration of artists outside London, so you won't be short of options. Highlights of this year's event will include the Newlyn garden studio of Bernard Irwin (pictured above), an heir to the great mid-century Cornish abstract painters. Meanwhile, popular landscape artist and tutor Tony Hogan opens up his new Wadebridge studio for the first time following his relocation from Yorkshire.

[openstudioscornwall.tumblr.com](https://openstudioscornwall.tumblr.com)





2

**PRINT****Wilhelmina Barns-Graham**

Experiment with the techniques of this abstract British artist – 1999's *Summer (Yellow)*, above – in one of two drop-in workshops led by printmaker Sarah Gittins at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (30 April and 1 May). The events run in tandem with the current *Modern Scottish Women* exhibition. [www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org)

3 **DRAW****The Nature of Drawing**

Reconnect with the wilderness on this six-day course at Coombe Farm Studios, Devon (22-27 May). Tutor Laurie Steen RWA will show you how to draw without inhibition and experiment with mark-making. [www.coombefarmstudios.com](http://www.coombefarmstudios.com)

4

**DISCOVER****Jerwood Painting Fellowship**

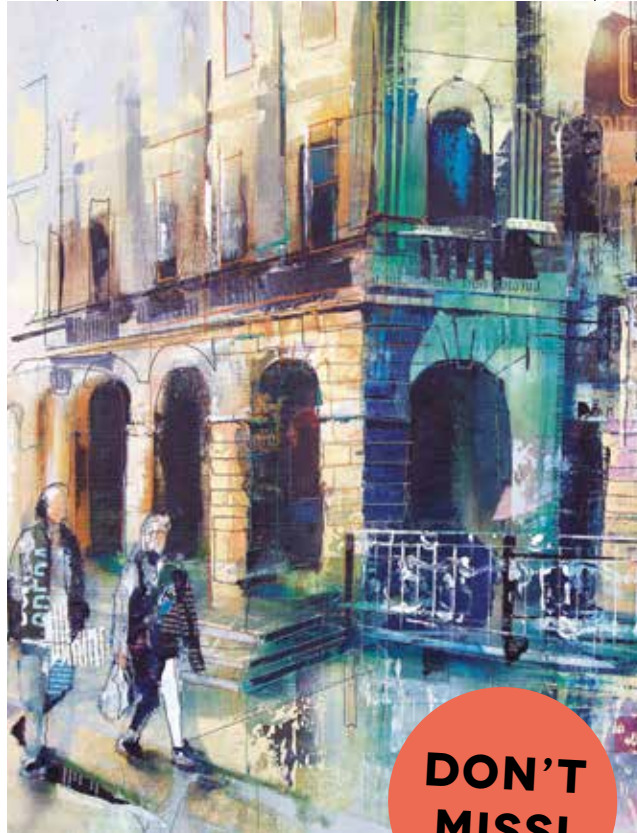
Francesca Blomfield (below left with mentor Phoebe Unwin) is one of three upcoming artists showcasing their work at London's Jerwood Space (11 May to 19 June) after receiving an individual £10,000 bursary. [www.jerwoodvisualarts.org](http://www.jerwoodvisualarts.org)



5

**PAINT****Buxton Spa Prize**

Artists of all abilities are invited to paint the Derbyshire spa town of Buxton *en plein air* for a chance to win the £5,000 first prize (2015 winner *The Crescent* by Rob Wilson, below). Register online from 1 April for the live painting event (6-15 May), during which artists can depict one of 40 Buxton locations. [www.buxtonspapriz.co.uk](http://www.buxtonspapriz.co.uk)

**DON'T MISS!**6 **EXPLORE****Spring Fling**

Follow colour-coded routes via the free online brochure to visit the studios of 94 Scottish artists across Dumfries and Galloway (28-30 May). [www.spring-fling.co.uk](http://www.spring-fling.co.uk)

7 **VISIT****Norfolk & Norwich Festival**

The highlight of this year's event is *A Line Through Time*, a special exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary of Alberto Giacometti's death at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts (23 April to 29 August). [www.nnfestival.org.uk](http://www.nnfestival.org.uk)



8

**READ****Grayson Perry – Sketchbooks**

There's a lot more to Grayson Perry than just outrageous ceramics. *Sketchbooks* (Particular Books, £40) gives insight into the artist's process via early drawings and first drafts of ideas for projects, including *The Vanity of Small Differences* tapestry series and his design for *A House for Essex*. [www.penguin.co.uk](http://www.penguin.co.uk)

9

**EXPLORE****Royal Society of Portrait Painters 2016**

While the tourists flock to the *BP Portrait Award*, artists in the know visit the the RP's annual show (5-20 May) to really see the best painted portraiture in Britain. The £10,000 Ondaatje Prize ensures a high calibre of entries, which this year includes *Artists & Illustrators* contributor Anne-Marie Butlin's elegant portrait of *Game of Thrones* actress Indira Varna (below). [www.mallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk)







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## TOUR DATES 2016

Norway	<i>Northern lights</i>	10th-15th January 2016
New York	<i>New York, New York</i>	13th-19th January 2016
Namibia & Botswana	<i>A dazzle of zebras</i>	22nd Feb-5th March 2016
Sri Lanka	<i>Resplendent isle</i>	23rd March-6th April 2016
Zambia	<i>Lazy big cats</i>	21st-28th April 2016
Galapagos	<i>Darwin's Islands</i>	2nd-16th May 2016
Crete	<i>Azure skies</i>	12th-18th May 2016
Spain	<i>Painting over lemons</i>	14th-20th May 2016
Lundy	<i>Puffin island</i>	28th June-2nd July 2016
Slovenia	<i>Bears in the woods</i>	6th-12th June 2016
Venice	<i>Venetian reflections</i>	15th-20th Sept 2016
Zambia	<i>Carmines &amp; Goliaths</i>	25th Sept-2nd Oct 2016
Japan	<i>Floating landscapes</i>	13th-27th November 2016
Morocco	<i>Blue boats, golden ramparts</i>	12th-19th November 2016

For more information, please ring us  
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# EXHIBITIONS

## MAY'S BEST ART SHOWS

### LONDON

#### **Light, Time, Legacy: Francis Towne's Watercolours of Rome**

Until 14 August  
52 views of the Colosseum and other landmarks.  
British Museum. [www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org)

#### **Painting Norway: Nikolai Astrup**

Until 15 May  
Last chance to discover this Scandi master.  
Dulwich Picture Gallery.  
[www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk](http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk)

#### **Astrazione Oggettiva: The Experience of Colour**

13 April to 26 June  
Italian abstracts for fans of Riley and Rothko.  
Estorick Collection. [www.estorickcollection.com](http://www.estorickcollection.com)

#### **Dutch Flowers**

6 April to 29 August  
Golden Age tulips in exquisite detail.  
National Gallery. [www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk)

#### **Maria Merian's Butterflies**

15 April to 9 October  
Vintage botanical art made in South America.  
The Queen's Gallery. [www.royalcollection.org.uk](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk)

#### **In the Age of Giorgione**

Until 5 June  
Celebrating Venetian art of the Renaissance.  
Royal Academy of Arts. [www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)

#### **Botticelli Reimagined**

Until 3 July

Modern twists on classical beauty.  
V&A, London. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

### ENGLAND - NORTH

#### **David Hepher**

23 April to 23 November  
Paintings of the city and suburbia.  
Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford.  
[www.bradfordmuseums.org](http://www.bradfordmuseums.org)

#### **Maria Lassnig**

18 May to 18 September  
Bright, expressive Austrian oil portraits.  
Tate Liverpool. [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)

#### **Pre-Raphaelites: Beauty and Rebellion**

Until 5 June  
Celebrating Liverpool's role in Victorian art.  
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.  
[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)

#### **David Jones: Vision and Memory**

Until 5 June  
English poet's artistic endeavours.  
Djanogly Art Gallery, Nottingham.  
[www.lakesidearts.org.uk](http://www.lakesidearts.org.uk)

#### **Pirates, Pants and Wellyphants:**

#### **The Illustrated World of Nick Sharratt**

16 April to 25 June  
Interactive display by the Tracy Beaker illustrator.  
Chapel Gallery, Ormskirk. [www.chapelgallery.org.uk](http://www.chapelgallery.org.uk)

#### **Bridget Riley: Venice and Beyond**

Until 25 June  
The Op Artist's Italian dalliances.

### THE ENGLISH ROSE - FEMINE BEAUTY FROM VAN DYCK TO SARGENT

14 May to 25 September  
The Duke of Northumberland's recent gift of Van Dyck's *Portrait of Olivia, Mrs Endymion Porter* inspired this "salute" to 400 years of female sitters. The chronological exhibition not only provides a chance to chart changing fashions and painting styles, but also attitudes towards women through the ages. Highlights include William Powell Frith's *The Fair Toxophilites* (left) showing the artist's daughters playing archery. Bowes Museum, Durham.  
[www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk](http://www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk)





## PAINTING WITH LIGHT

11 May to 25 September

Photography has both aided and troubled painters ever since the medium was first invented in the mid-19th century. Tate Britain's latest blockbuster aims to highlight the historic parallels between lens and brush, not least the assertion that JMW Turner inspired the first photographic panoramas.

Artists who experimented in both media feature prominently too, from James Abbott McNeill Whistler capturing Thames nocturnes on both canvas and photographic plate, to Atkinson Grimshaw applying oil paint to his printed scenes (*Pall Mall*, right).

Tate Britain, London. [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)



Graves Gallery, Sheffield.  
[www.museums-sheffield.org.uk](http://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk)

## ENGLAND – SOUTH

### Impressionism: Capturing Life

Until 5 June

Choice collection of French painting.

The Holburne Museum, Bath. [www.holburne.org](http://www.holburne.org)

### Inquisitive Eyes: Slade Painters in Edwardian Wessex, 1900-1914

Until 12 June

The brief brilliance of a Dorset art colony.

Royal West of England Academy, Bristol.

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

### 1816: Prints by Turner, Goya and Cornelius

Until 31 July

Bicentenary of the museum's founding.

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

[www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)

### John Piper: The Fabric of Modernism

Until 12 June

Painterly motifs explored in textile designs.

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester. [www.pallant.org.uk](http://www.pallant.org.uk)

### Poetry in Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelite Art of Marie Spartali Stillman

Until 5 June

First showcase for the Victorian muse-turned-artist.

Watts Gallery, Guildford. [www.wattsgallery.org.uk](http://www.wattsgallery.org.uk)

### Alberto Giacometti: A Line Through Time

23 April to 29 August

Sculptor carves a niche in British art.  
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich.  
[www.scva.ac.uk](http://www.scva.ac.uk)

### The Romantic Thread in British Art

Until 4 June

Three centuries of painting and yearning.

Southampton City Art Gallery. [www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk)

### Shakespeare in Art

Until 19 June

Paintings by Sargent, Watts and more.

Compton Verney, Warwickshire.

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

### FL Griggs: Visions of England

11 May to 11 September

Prints and watercolours of bucolic scenes.

Ashmolean Museum Broadway, Worcestershire.

[www.ashmoleanbroadway.org](http://www.ashmoleanbroadway.org)

## SCOTLAND

### Stephen Collingbourne: Don't Be Afraid of Pink

7 May to 3 July

The artist tackles his least favourite colour.

City Art Centre, Edinburgh.

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

### Masters of the Everyday

Until 24 July

Vermeer's interior scenes, lit from the left.

Queen's Gallery, Edinburgh. [www.royalcollection.org.uk](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk)

### Bridget Riley: Paintings, 1963-2015

15 April to 16 April 2017

Visually perplexing abstract art.  
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.  
[www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org)

### Comic Invention

Until 17 July

Graphic storytelling through the ages.

Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow. [www.gla.ac.uk](http://www.gla.ac.uk)

## WALES

### Rose Wylie: Tilt the Horizontal into a Slant

Until 29 May

Wild images from the Senior Royal Academician.

Chapter, Cardiff. [www.chapter.org](http://www.chapter.org)

### Augustus John in Focus

Until 30 September

Stylish portraiture by Gwen's brother.

National Museum Cardiff. [www.museumwales.ac.uk](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk)

### Romanticism in the Welsh Landscape

Until 18 June

Uplifting responses to the Cambrian surroundings.

MoMA Wales, Powys. [www.momawales.org.uk](http://www.momawales.org.uk)

## IRELAND

### BP Portrait Award 2015

Until 12 June

The pick of last year's 2,748 entries.

Ulster Museum, Belfast. [www.nmni.com/um](http://www.nmni.com/um)

### Leonardo da Vinci

4 May to 17 July

Ten drawings by the inventive Renaissance man.

National Gallery, Dublin. [www.nationalgallery.ie](http://www.nationalgallery.ie)







# FRESH PAINT

INSPIRING NEW ARTWORKS, STRAIGHT OFF THE EASEL

## OLIVER BEDEMAN

London-based painter Oliver Bedeman is an inveterate people watcher, wandering the city's many parks or forms of public transport in search of inspiration for his next canvas. "On the tube you get such a rich mix of people it's the perfect place to observe," he says. "You have to be careful not to catch the wrong eye or to stare too long, so I tend to half-draw from memory. This in turn adds to the work as you internalise it and discover what it was that drew you to the scene. Although the oddities are always compelling, really it's the mundane and every day that I'd like to convey as a sort of shared experience."

Oliver trained at the Prince's Drawing School (now the Royal Drawing School) and remains alert to ideas or situations that might make the basis for a composition. "I always have a sketchbook on me, ready to jot anything down that strikes me. Drawing is like every other skill in that practice is essential. Everyone can draw, it's just about working out your own language."

*Brighton High Life* was inspired by a trip to the seaside town, trying on hats in the North Laine with his girlfriend Lucy. While the painting's title is suggestive of the couple's grand day out, "highlife" is also a popular African music genre and that exotic link is echoed neatly in the graphic patterns and vivid orange-blue colour scheme.

Oliver has used the latter in a number of different figurative works over the last few years. "It's a phase where I've discovered those colours and I wanted to test their limit," he explains. "The Cadmium Orange has a high pigment content, making it really sing from the canvas."

Having explored that pairing, the artist plans to turn his attentions to yellows next: "We'll see where that takes me."

*Brighton High Life* features in the **Bath Society of Artists 111th Annual Exhibition**, which runs from 23 April to 4 June at Victoria Art Gallery, Bath. Oliver's solo exhibition, *Nature Boy*, runs from 30 March to 12 May at Fairhurst Gallery, Norwich. [www.bedeman.co.uk](http://www.bedeman.co.uk)

### TOP TIP

Experiment with a few favourite colours across many works to really see how they interact

LEFT Oliver Bedeman, *Brighton High Life*, oil on linen, 130x120cm



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## JULIAN WHEAT

Before Portfolio Plus member Julian Wheat discovered his natural ability for painting, he found it impossible to stay in one spot. In his early 20s, he moved from Oxford to Brittany in the hopes of becoming a professional cyclist. “I didn’t make the grade,” he says. “I didn’t have the physical capabilities to get to the top, but I managed to make a living from prize money.”

After years of training for physically punishing cycling competitions, his wanderlust persuaded him to “pack it all in” and use his bike to travel the world instead. From the age of 28 to 40, he worked to explore, taking temporary jobs to fund his expeditions.

When he wasn’t on the road, Julian would paint his surroundings in watercolour and sell them to local souvenir shops. He later switched to acrylics, painting wildlife scenes on greeting cards, which for years he ran as a successful business.

Today, Julian is a pet portraitist, painting commissions from his home studio in the southwest of France. *Princess Cherry* was one of a series of commissions from an online fan of his work. The much-loved lurcher passed away last year having spent the latter part of her life as the “eyes” for her owner’s other dog, a blind Labrador called Captain Jack.

The bright, ethereal quality of Julian’s work is achieved by using acrylic paint with a watercolour technique.

Starting with a very detailed drawing, he began the painting stage of *Princess Cherry* by working from light to dark. “If you hold my painting up to the light and look at it from the back, you will see areas that have hardly got a single wash on them and then other areas of the painting are more opaque paint. Sometimes I don’t even cover the paper,” he says.

The stark shadow contrast in the painting proved a challenge, but it is the image’s complex tonality that makes it so memorable. Relaxed in the dappled sunlight, Princess Cherry looks like a real aristocrat enjoying a siesta on the veranda.

Though Julian admits he has mostly learned his craft through trial and error, he stresses the importance of being able to “read other artist’s work”. The wildlife art of Raymond Ching was instrumental in Julian finding his style, but getting online with Portfolio Plus helped with the rest. “Had there been Internet access when I was younger, my life might have taken quite a different turn,” he notes. **Sign up for your own personalised Portfolio Plus today at [www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/register](http://www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/register) or visit Julian’s portfolio at [www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/julian-wheat](http://www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/julian-wheat)** >

**ABOVE** Julian Wheat, *Princess Cherry*, acrylic on paper, 61x46cm



## BENJAMIN SULLIVAN

Despite retiring from the Labour Party in 1997, the voice of former deputy leader Roy Hattersley can still be heard in the British political conversation. Even in his 33 years as the MP for Birmingham Sparkbrook, he wrote well-respected opinion pieces for titles across the political spectrum from *The Guardian* to *The Spectator*, despite his more natural position on Labour's political right.

This contrast in views made for an interesting few weeks when Benjamin Sullivan, a self-confessed left-winger, asked Hattersley to sit for a portrait. "I am a Labour supporter but probably not to Roy's liking," says the artist. "I remember him saying to me that Jeremy Corbyn would never get in."

The work was created as part of Benjamin's artistic residency at The Reform Club, which was established as a political hub for Whigs and radicals in 1836. He was commissioned to paint a series of portraits of the Reform's elite, an updated collection to complement existing works by the Victorian painter Eyre Crowe.

Raised in Sheffield until the age of 10, Benjamin was intrigued by Roy's Yorkshire heritage, so duly approached him for the portrait. "I immediately told him I was a Sheffield United fan," he says. "He is a dyed-in-the-wool Sheffield Wednesday fan so, of course, that caused a bit of aggro. We didn't really talk politics – he came across as quite interested in the arts, so we actually spoke a lot about painting."

The portrait was made in just three sittings, something that encouraged the artist to loosen up his painting style



with broader brushstrokes and a muted background to keep the focus on the subject. Roy is captured with his mouth open, as if he were about to counter a point, but the pose was not orchestrated – it's simply how he sits. "He's got a distinctive look," Benjamin notes. "It was never a tricky portrait to do in terms of making it look like him. He's got an unusual colouring, there's quite a lot of orange pigment in there – I think he's probably quite fair skinned."

Benjamin's other Reform Club portraits include Labour peer Lord Borrie QC and Bletchley Park codebreaker John Croft, but Roy remains one of the artist's personal favourites. "I don't know what he thinks of it, but it's sometimes best not to know."

**Ben's portrait features in the Royal Society of Portrait Painters Annual Exhibition 2016, which runs from 5-20 May at Mall Galleries, London SW1. [www.benjaminsullivan.co.uk](http://www.benjaminsullivan.co.uk)**

### TOP TIP

Choosing a viewpoint lower than eye-level is a neat way of making a sitter appear more imposing

**ABOVE** Benjamin Sullivan, *Lord Hattersley*, oil on board, 31x26cm



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# In Search of Frida

FOR HER LATEST PROJECT, ILLUSTRATOR **NINA COSFORD** SPENT THREE WEEKS IN MEXICO RESEARCHING THE LIFE AND WORK OF ARTIST **FRIDA KAHLO**.  
 "IT WAS LIKE A PROPER PILGRIMAGE," SHE TELLS **STEVE PILL**

With tight deadlines and even tighter budgets, the reality for most jobbing illustrators is that "picture research" often amounts to nothing more than a trawl through Google images or some other internet image library. For her latest project, however, Hastings illustrator Nina Cosford decided she was going to break with convention and really try to get to grips with her subject.

Frida Kahlo is the fourth in author Zena Alkayat's *Life Portraits* series, a collection of beautifully illustrated biographies of iconic female creatives. Nina has provided the imagery for all three previous titles (*Jane Austen*, *Virginia Woolf* and *Coco Chanel*), but for this particular book she wanted to push herself a little further.

"When you look at the books I did before, *Virginia Woolf* was set in London and Sussex, *Jane Austen* was Hampshire and Bath, while even *Coco Chanel* was just a hop across to Paris," explains the illustrator. "I've been to all those places, it's all Georgian, Victorian architecture that I've grown up with, and it is really familiar to me, culturally.

When you look at Frida everything is different, from the architecture to the trees and the wildlife, to the language, the colours... She's a very different icon to the others too. There is so much more personal information about her."

Suitably enthused and with a rare deadline extension, Nina and her partner Ali booked a three-week trip to Mexico with one destination in mind: La Casa Azul – or "The Blue House" – Kahlo's home for the majority of her life.

The couple originally planned to pivot their trip around Mexico City and the house in particular, until friends recommended a more winding trail that would take them from the Caribbean coast up through the mountains, down to the south of the country, before finishing at La Casa Azul. "Ending at Frida Kahlo's house was a really nice thing to look forward to for three weeks," says Nina. "It was like a proper pilgrimage. It meant that we were starting off in a really different part of Mexico and we were seeing the landscape change."

The journey began in the ancient walled town of Tulum, >





POSY

WOMAN IN  
TRADITIONAL  
NATIVE DRESS  
AT MARKET IN  
SAN CRISTÓBAL  
DE LAS CASAS



PERRO de CHORIZO

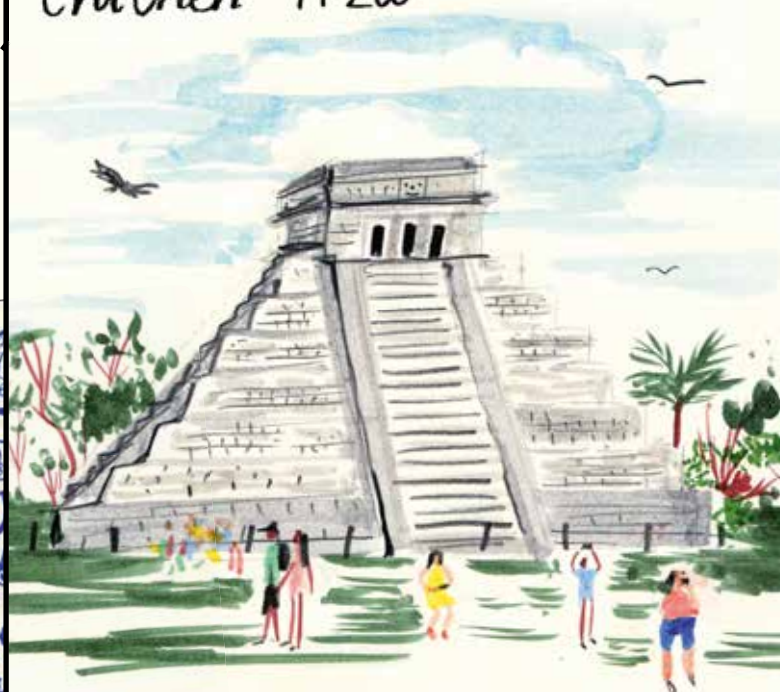


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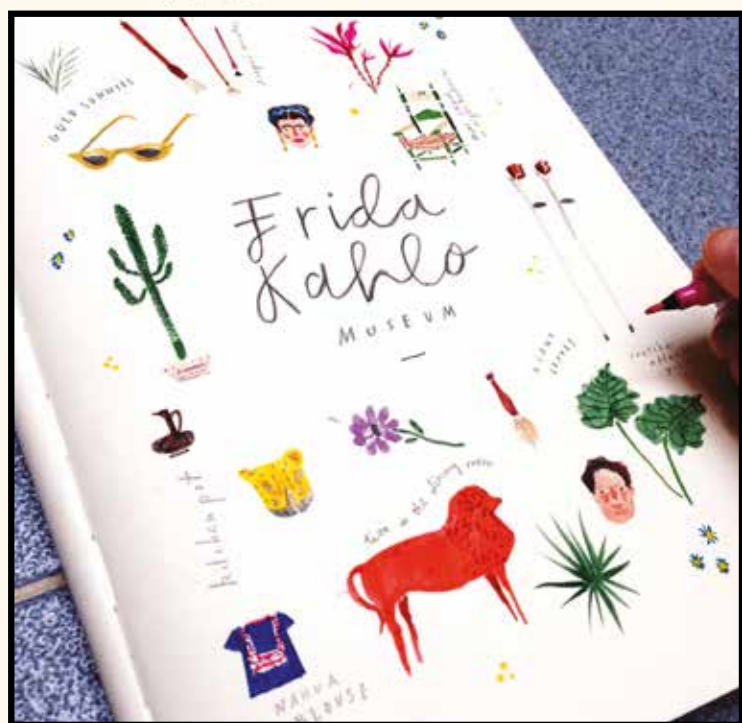
Chichen Itza







## Sketching



Cactus



# FRIDA'S KITCHEN



Tehuana top







before taking in the ancient Mayan temples of Chichén Itzá and Palenque. With so many mountains to navigate, trains are hard to come by in Mexico, so Nina found herself staring out of bus windows for hours on end. Drawing constantly in her Moleskine sketchbooks throughout, the illustrator kept a visual record of the sights, the people and the changing landscape.

"The way of life changes as the landscape changes," she notes. "Up into the mountains, the climate was getting colder and the architecture was starting to get more colonial. You were starting to see more Catholicism coming in, and the churches were starting to get more ornate."

The couple continued on via the highland town of San Cristóbal de las Casas and on to the foothills of the Sierra Madre and the gorgeous city of Oaxaca. Kahlo's mother, Matilde, was born here, so much of the artist's dress sense and visual identity were inspired by the area. The local markets provided Nina with a great chance to sample this first-hand. "It was so exciting to see all these handmade objects, from vinyl tablecloths and papier-mâché masks to little wrestler figurines and woven baskets or rugs. It was a whole new visual world really."

As well as providing Nina with the chance to pick up a few souvenirs ("I was tempted to buy a traditional Tehuana-style top like Frida Kahlo wore but then I thought, 'I don't think I can pull that look off in Hastings!'" ), it also allowed her to get a better sense of the origins, inspirations and motivations behind Frida Kahlo's art.

"Everyday life in Mexico has got such a beauty to it and there's a lot of ceremony in what they do. Even the way they decorate the meat market is beautiful. They've got bunting and tassels and plastic shrines and tinsel. It is really charming and it really helped me get an insight into what Frida loved about her country. It's obviously different seeing

it as an outsider or non-native, but you can see why she took such pride in her culture and its respect for nature as well. It helped me get a glimpse of what she saw."

Having soaked up the culture and heritage of Frida Kahlo, Nina was ready to head to Mexico City and the final stop on her itinerary: La Casa Azul – so-called because of the building's brilliant Cobalt Blue walls.

Situated on a street corner and built around a central courtyard, the house is an intrinsic part of the Frida Kahlo story. The artist was born here in 1907, grew up here during the Mexican Revolution and later returned with her artist husband, Diego Rivera. After a lifetime racked with illness and heartbreak, she died of a pulmonary embolism on 13 July 1954, upstairs in bed at the Blue House. When Rivera died three years after, the building was donated to the state and today it serves as a shrine to both artists' work and remains one of the most popular museums in the whole of Mexico.

Nina's partner Ali made a video of their visit to La Casa Azul and the look of concentration on the illustrator's face is formidable ("Sometimes I've got my tongue hanging out," she laughs). Her style may appear naïve, but there is a real intensity of observation and curation to the artworks she produces. "I really tried to walk around and pretend the other tourists weren't there so I could imagine I was just hanging out at Frida's house," she says. "I just wanted to get her aesthetic across and a sense of her day-to-day life, which is an aim of all four books really – to see each of them as people and not just the legacy they left behind. It's really exciting to bring these figures into a modern day context and relate to them as people."

Years spent location drawing as part of her illustration degree at Kingston and battling with the elements on Hastings beach had prepared Nina for busy, distracting >





environments such as this. With her “artillery belt” stocked with Tombow and Faber-Castell brush pens and her trusty red colouring pencil, she spent hours in the house and gardens, documenting as many of Kahlo’s personal effects as possible, from her art materials and doll collections to her gold sunglasses and Nahua blouses. The house even displays Frida’s wooden leg, which she used following a partial amputation as a result of gangrene.

As the day wore on, the crowds dispersed but Nina found herself becoming increasingly irritated by the presence of one particular man in a suit, who kept blocking her view of the gardens and wandering into her photographs.

“We found out it was the president of Finland that we were getting annoyed at,” she says, laughing with the benefit of hindsight. “After he left, two snipers who had been protecting him climbed down from the roof with shotguns. That was a bit scary.”

With the pilgrimage complete, Nina flew home with a head full of memories and a sketchbook full of ideas. The task was now to turn these into a body of illustrations that did justice to such a complex and revered subject.

“Part of me did feel a pressure to represent her in a way that is so loyal to not just her art, but her fashion, her visual identity, her politics and her romantic beliefs,” admits Nina. “I didn’t feel daunted though, I felt more excited definitely. It was just such a rich visual world to step into and I could really relate to that as an artist as well.”

Four books into the popular *Life Portraits* series with Frances Lincoln, Nina and Zena have clearly developed a strong working relationship, based on a mutual understanding of each other’s strengths. “It works really nicely together,” says the illustrator. “The way that Zena has simplified the stories is amazing. It’s done in a way that is

not patronising but it also covers so much and it’s very sensitively written. I think that works well with the style of my paintings and drawings – there is a certain lightness to it, but it does touch on deeper stuff as well. It’s about not being too intimidating for someone to pick up and it’s about a feeling of that person, an introduction and an essence of them. You can’t put everything in a book.”

Without the luxury of time or space that comes with a two-hour documentary or a 500-page biography, economy is the key to the success of these delightful books. Curating a wealth of visual information proved an exciting challenge for Nina and the experience of her three-week pilgrimage gave her new and powerful insights to draw upon.

“What I find so amazing about Frida is the combination of strength and fragility she has. She’s got such polarising sides to her – she was vulnerable and ill, but at the same time she was such a strong character and so charismatic and really feisty,” she says.

“We had to try very hard to balance this light aesthetic approach with these hard-hitting facts. It’s not light reading, really. Each one of these women [in the *Life Portraits* series] had quite a tragic tale. None of them had contented relationships and you wonder what might have happened if they were all happily married.

“None of them had children and you just think, ‘Is that the essence of what spurred them on to make work and create things or make a legacy for themselves – because they didn’t have that home life, they didn’t have that happy, steady union with a partner, they didn’t leave children behind?’ Would they be these icons if they’d have had any of that?”

**Zena Alkayat and Nina Cosford’s *Life Portraits – Frida Kahlo* is published by Frances Lincoln, RRP £12. [www.ninacosford.com](http://www.ninacosford.com)**





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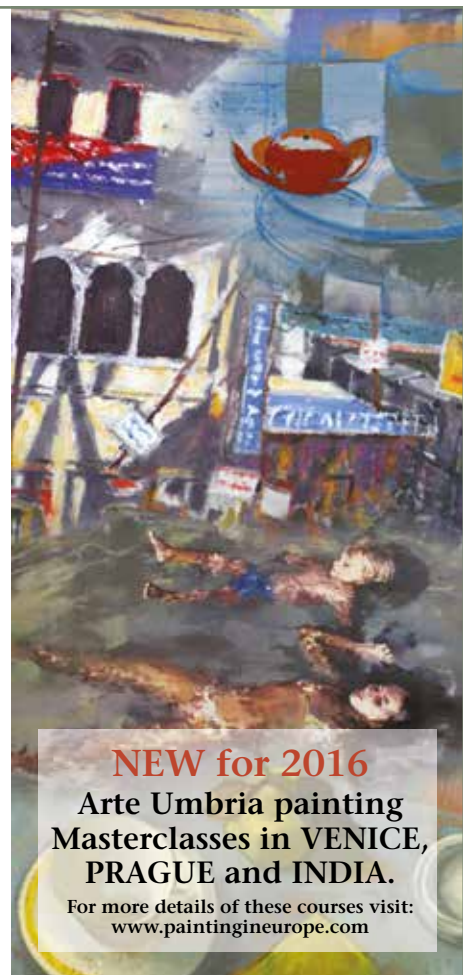
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# THE WORKING ARTIST

FINDING A GALLERY FOR YOUR ART  
ISN'T AS HARD AS YOU THINK, SAYS  
OUR COLUMNIST **LAURA BOSWELL**



Finding a gallery for your work may seem a daunting prospect, but I am keen to take some of the mystery out of the process for anyone new to the game.

First, let's start with the basics. You need a body of work. It doesn't have to be huge, but it must be an honest reflection of you, not artwork you think will sell or please a particular gallery. Show the work yourself first through an open studio or local event so that you can build your confidence and get unbiased feedback from the public. You will also need to set your initial prices and do remember that prices should always remain the same for the client wherever they buy it. If you get to this stage with good feedback from the public and confidence that your work is financially viable, you'll need some paperwork.

Think about your work and your identity as an artist and write an artist statement and a CV. Both should be concise, clear and simple. Keep the statement conversational and try to explain a bit about how and why you create your work. The CV should be factual and ordered chronologically.

Don't be put off if you feel that you lack experience. Galleries will appreciate that all artists have to begin somewhere and many are glad to meet 'emerging' talents, whatever their age – I was 40 before I began my second career as an artist.

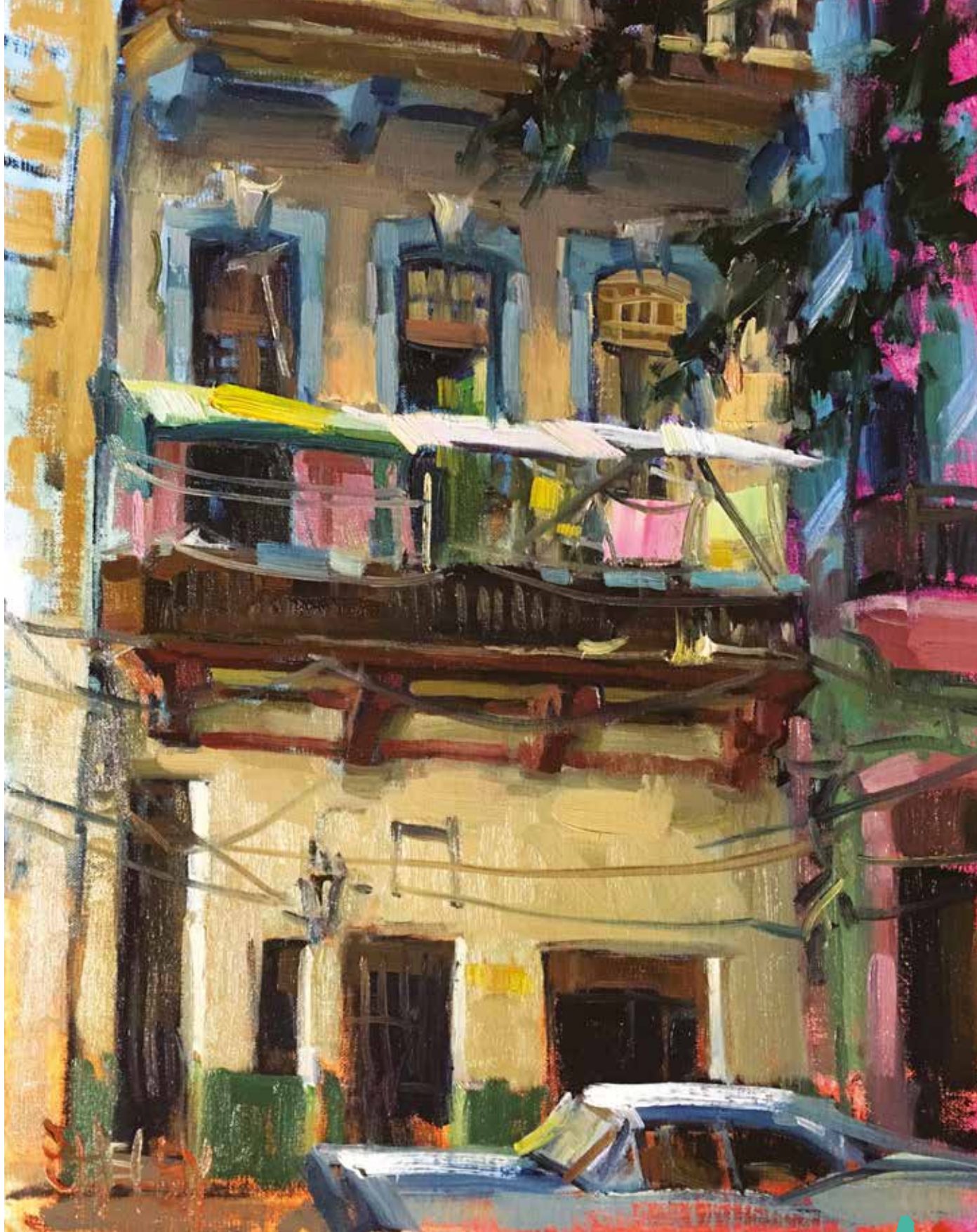
You will need good photos of your work – just the art itself, no frames or background. The gallery will probably only ask for four to six images, but I suggest photographing all your work as a matter of course – it can be useful for your website and social media. Consider taking publicity pictures too: a headshot and perhaps a few of you at work.

Armed with the above, you should feel confident enough to begin looking for galleries that suit your style of work. It is important to do your research if you want this to be a profitable and reliable relationship. Make a gallery list. I began by looking at fellow printmakers and where they were showing. Look at the work each gallery sells online. Would yours be at home among it? Study the gallery's exhibition schedule too. Artists who appear repeatedly are the ones selling regularly and probably reflect what works best in that gallery. Visit the most likely in person if you can, but just to view, not to introduce yourself. That comes later and I will cover that, along with gallery etiquette, finances and other questions in next month's column.  
[www.lauraboswell.co.uk](http://www.lauraboswell.co.uk)

“  
**GALLERIES WILL  
APPRECIATE THAT  
ALL ARTISTS BEGIN  
SOMEWHERE**  
”

**ABOVE** Barrow  
Beach, After the  
Rainstorm (detail),  
linocut print,  
57x28cm





# PAINTING IN *Cuba*

WHEN **SYMI JACKSON** OF ROSEMARY & CO. JOINED A GROUP OF PLEIN-AIR PAINTERS IN CUBA, IT OFFERED A UNIQUE CHANCE TO SAMPLE THE FADED GLAMOUR OF THIS CARIBBEAN ISLAND



## IN OLD HAVANA, IT FELT LIKE THE CLOCKS HAD STOPPED AND WE HAD TRAVELLED BACK IN TIME TO THE 1950S



Last month, 100 plein air painters packed their brushes and travelled to Cuba for the trip of a lifetime. Arranged by a US publisher, this was to be the largest group of artists to visit the Caribbean island in its history. The timing was perfect, not least for the chance to visit this jewel of a country before it changes.

Since the end of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the country has remained under Communist Party rule with trade embargos and food rationing ensuring that it feels as if you're stepping into a bygone era, from the vintage cars and traditional bars, to the unkempt buildings and the rural working countryside. A more relaxed approach by president Raúl Castro could see changes taking effect soon, but myself and my mother, Rosemary & Co. brushes owner Rosemary Jackson were lucky enough to be invited along on this trip to see Cuba at an important time in its history.

Our hosts told us to expect the unexpected and say goodbye to the Western certainties. On the first day wandering around the streets of Old Havana, this was certainly true. It was here that the changes were immediately apparent; it felt like the clocks had stopped and we had travelled back in time to the 1950s.

The buildings were often crumbling, with patchy paintwork and reconstruction of sorts occurring everywhere you looked. Yet despite the dilapidated state of much of the capital city, there was a great deal of beauty and a very clear dignity among the Cuban people.

The city provided a plethora of painting opportunities at every turn: stunning architecture, revolutionary propaganda and the typical hustle and bustle of city life, not to mention live music on almost every street corner. "Nothing prepared me for the beauty of the crumbling patina of Havana," said watercolourist Glen Knowles. "I was reminded again and again of the faded glory of Venice. Havana is one of the most beautiful cities in the world."



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP** Larry Moore, *Chez Che*, oil on panel, 30x30cm; Artists paint the classic cars; Larry Moore, *The Floradita*, oil on panel, 30x30cm **OPPOSITE PAGE** Shelby Keefe, *Windows*, oil on linen, 35x28cm

The agenda for the week was simple: paint, paint, paint. Or, as participating artist Roger Rossi put it: "Our goal was to experience the atmosphere of Cuba as it has become since the revolution in 1959 and capture the images on canvas before changes come and modernise the island."

The group spent much of its time in Old and Central Havana, though each day provided new adventures with opportunities to head out into the countryside and visit the sugar plantations and the local fishing village of Cojimar, a favourite of the author Ernest Hemingway.

"Painting in one small town, I got into the 'zone' and was painting away," recalls artist Charlie Hunter. "As I reached the end, I put down the brush and nearly jumped out of >





**“I WAS SO MOVED BY THE ENTHUSIASM  
OF THE CUBAN PEOPLE FOR THE ART WE  
WERE CREATING” – KATHY ANDERSON**



my skin when 20 or so Cubans – who, it turned out, had been stood behind me, intently and silently watching as I painted – broke into applause.”

Fellow painter Kathy Anderson was equally inspired by the local support. “I was so moved by the enthusiasm of the Cuban people for the art we were creating. Everywhere we painted, a crowd would gather in minutes, with laughter and offers to help with anything they could.”

The most refreshing feeling for the artists was to paint without the commercial pressure. Each artist was there for their own reasons; whether that was to relax with friends, create reference studies for future studio paintings or simply to soak up the culture and sights of Cuba itself.

Prior to his visit, American painter Larry Moore was relishing the prospect of painting the classic cars and period architecture. The rich, saturated colours of the Havana streets provided him with an unexpected practical challenge while he was there though. Accustomed to painting with a basic palette of warm and cool primaries, he spent much of the first day struggling to get the mixes right. “My first attempts ended up a bit busy because the subject matter was busy. I found a better way was to build the composition up with a range of premixed values and then add colour where needed. In one painting, for example, I used an odd three-colour palette of Manganese Blue, Indian Yellow and Burnt Sienna, and added in a few pure colour notes on top. That did the trick.”

While the painters got to grips with mixing colours, Rosemary and I spent much of our time walking through the back streets of Old Havana in search of local artists. At the beginning of the trip, our host had asked the group to gift any old brushes, half-used tubes of paint or unwanted panels, which we would then hand over to the locals.

The generosity of the visiting artists was extremely humbling. Each morning, Rosemary and I collected a new







bag of materials and headed to a local art market to hand them out to the Cuban painters selling work there. A little walk from the centre, the market was a vibrant space, filled from floor to ceiling with canvases from hundreds of local artists. There was a real sense that you wouldn't leave there without purchasing something.

We went back nearly every day and enjoyed being among the hustle and bustle, talking with the local artists and finding out more about what they were creating and encouraging them to continue making such beautiful pieces. In doing so, it quickly became clear that they had very few materials, and what they did have was in dire condition. As brush makers, Rosemary and I were bewildered to see what they could create with brushes that you or I would have thrown away many years ago.

As a company, Rosemary & Co. also donated \$5,000 worth of brushes throughout the week and made sure the artists were given brush cleaner to give them the chance to extend the lifespan of their tools. We both left knowing just how much these donations will enrich their artworks.

After returning to the UK, we have decided to continue this project and create our own art materials bank, whereby people can send us their unwanted art supplies that will then be distributed to those artists who don't have what so many of us take for granted – both in the UK and overseas [see details at the end of the article if you would like to make a donation].

When the work was done, we filled our evenings with lots of great Caribbean food and Cuba Libre cocktails at the local restaurants. One evening, we took a trip to the legendary Buena Vista Social Club to soak up the authentic sounds of Cuban music, while another night at the

world-renowned Tropicana Club was never to be forgotten, with the cabaret dancers providing a talking point for all. Visiting a cigar factory in Old Havana was another highlight. The smell of tobacco hits you the very second you walk through the doors, not least because the workers are allowed to smoke unlimited cigars in the factory throughout the working day. The workers busy hand-rolling cigars was a sight many artists were keen to paint.

Looking back on our trip to Cuba, there are so many vivid memories that I'll cherish from our time there. I'd advise anyone wanting to visit and paint this beautiful island to travel with the same mantra I did: expect the unexpected, but don't expect anything at the same time. It seemed to work for me, and allowed me to enjoy the trip so much more.

The 100 artists whom I travelled with sought to capture an impression of Cuba in early 2016, yet to look at their paintings out of context, this could easily be another place in time. I'd urge you to go there before things change and I am thankful for my opportunity to visit.

We left Havana with plenty of artwork bought from the local artists too, as did so many of the other artists on the trip. It's testament that artists support other artists, regardless of where you are from. We can all see the beauty in something, and I'm proud to hang my Cuban art in my home.

**To donate any of your unwanted art materials, please contact Symi Jackson directly at [symi@rosemaryandco.com](mailto:symi@rosemaryandco.com).**

**To find out more about the artists featured in the article, visit [www.kathyandersonstudio.com](http://www.kathyandersonstudio.com), [www.hunter-studio.com](http://www.hunter-studio.com), [www.studioshelby.com](http://www.studioshelby.com), [www.glenknowlesfineart.com](http://www.glenknowlesfineart.com), [www.larrymoorestudios.com](http://www.larrymoorestudios.com), [www.anettepower.com](http://www.anettepower.com), [www.jeannereavis.com](http://www.jeannereavis.com) and [www.paintingsbyrogerrossi.com](http://www.paintingsbyrogerrossi.com)**

**TOP LEFT** Larry Moore, *Red Hot and Blue*, oil on panel, 30x30cm  
**TOP RIGHT** Kathy Anderson, *Flowers for Sale*, oil on canvas, 25x20cm  
**OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP** Glen Knowles, *Migdalía Gonzalez Olive*, watercolour on paper, 29x42cm; Anette Power, *Slow and Steady*, oil on panel, 30x40cm; Artist Jeanne Reavis in Havana







10 MINUTES WITH...

# LUCY DICKENS

AHEAD OF A NEW EXHIBITION OF HER PAINTINGS, THE GREAT, GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER OF CHARLES DICKENS DISCUSSES THE ART OF PEOPLE WATCHING AND REVEALS WHY THE RITZ LONDON BECAME HER UNLIKELY MUSE. INTERVIEW: **KATIE MCCABE**. PHOTO: **TOM DUNKLEY**

**You've focused on The Ritz in London for your latest series of paintings. Why did it interest you?**

I went in there to have a cup of coffee and thought there might be some drawing opportunities. They let you sit and watch, which I have done for many hours. My parents had a date at The Ritz when my mother was 18, before they were married. The history and the colours appeal to me. This is one of the only London hotels that keeps those slightly decadent fabrics. I love the golds, and the low lighting. Now, I've done it to death [as a subject]; you work on something and then move on to the next.

**Do you invent stories about the people in your work?**

I tend to not listen in. I find if you're sitting in the corner, things happen. The way I work is quite instinctive. There are several obsessions that I have: I love flags, I love groups of uniform and I am an avid people watcher, that obsession never wavers. It's all very theatrical.

**Are you satirising your subjects in The Ritz series?**

It's very tongue-in-cheek. People are eating scones and cream at 11am with someone playing piano, it's mad. I am making a bit of fun, but not in a mean way.

**You're related to Charles Dickens. Do you think that pushed you towards the arts in any way?**

It's completely natural. I have three sisters who are all incredibly arty and another two siblings who just aren't. I think it was in the family, though my father never pushed it. It was never talked about. But I feel very proud of [my great, great grandfather]. Especially when I read that amazing biography, *Charles Dickens: A Life*, by Claire Tomalin. Fascinating. In a way he reminded me of my father, he was just so clever and wonderful.

**Do you have a favourite Dickens novel?**

*Great Expectations*. Like all of his novels, it's hilarious and sad at the same time. *A Christmas Carol* is the one that my dad used to read to us when we were young. I always loved that. But I am not a great scholar of Dickens.

**You started out as a stylist and fashion magazine editor for Condé Nast. What motivated you to pursue painting?**

I was pregnant, and I had been doing little illustrations for *Vogue* and *Brides*. I didn't want to spend my whole life with the people there. I left when I was 29. It was a case of feeling unfulfilled and it was a very strong pull. I taught myself to draw again, really. I wanted to paint, but as I

hadn't got the proper schooling, I thought that maybe I shouldn't even try. In the end, I worked it out for myself, which I think is how I'd like to do things. I tried all these different styles until I found my own. I feel I have a very strong style now.

**You mainly work in oils. Why do they suit your style?**

I literally think in oils. I have a strong idea of what I'm going to paint from my rough sketch, and then I paint straight onto the canvas. I find oils easy to work with. As I use thin layers of paint, I can change things immediately without waiting for the canvas to dry.

**Your work has become more colourful in recent years.**

**What brought on the change?**

It's almost like I was doing [darker paintings] because it's what was expected of me at the time. I don't do that anymore. I am painting in a much freer way. I'll be painting until I am 90; if I live until then, I know I will still have a paintbrush in my hand. I cannot let go of it.

**"IF I LIVE UNTIL I'M 90 I KNOW I'LL STILL HAVE A PAINTBRUSH IN MY HAND... I CANNOT LET GO OF IT"**

**What advice do you have for artists who wanted to introduce 'people-watching' into their painting?**

You've got to get out there with your sketchbook and be patient. If you've got a camera that's all well and good, but really you've got to draw people. If you haven't got the composition right, forget it. I find it exhausting actually; it's the composition, the light, the colour – there is so much to think about in this style of painting. It is very full on.

**Unlike many grittier London paintings, your work remains optimistic. How do you feel about the city today?**

Colour makes me optimistic. When there are grey days like today, it's quite difficult as you go out and see things you just don't want to paint, and that's why you end up in places like The Ritz because they are just so joyous and dotty. I hope people don't think I'm just completely frivolous, it sounds like I spend my whole life in The Ritz and I don't... But I must say they do a very good cup of coffee.

**Lucy's next exhibition runs from 27 April to 13 May at the Osborne Studio Gallery, London SW1. [www.lucydickens.com](http://www.lucydickens.com)**



"I FOUND MYSELF TRAVELLING IN THE  
COMPANY OF PEOPLE LIKE

**CECIL BEATON AND IVOR NOVELLO...**  
I PROBABLY OVERSTAYED MY WELCOME  
BUT I HAD A MARVELLOUS TIME!"



*President Ronald And Nancy  
Reagan, Living Room, Bel-Air, 1992,  
watercolour and gouache on board*





# GRAND DESIGNS

A FIRST UK RETROSPECTIVE OF WORK BY THE 93-YEAR-OLD AMERICAN ARTIST **JEREMIAH GOODMAN** WILL CAST A SPOTLIGHT ON HIS EVOCATIVE WATERCOLOURS AND ALSO PROVIDE A WINDOW INTO A WORLD OF WEALTHY CLIENTS AND ELEGANT INTERIORS, AS **KATIE MCCABE** DISCOVERS

Art and architecture have always been natural bedfellows. Together, they capture the cultural zeitgeist from one century to the next, working simultaneously to change the way we see the world, from the grandeur and excess of the Baroque to the functionality of the Bauhaus school. With interior design the relationship to art, while less obvious, is just as rich. Both disciplines can be used as a means to explore colour, balance and beauty, while also acting as an important means of self-expression. Nobody exemplifies the connection between these two worlds like American artist Jeremiah Goodman, whose illustrious paintings of famous interiors predate the widespread use of photography.

For much of his career, Jeremiah's artistic skills have been the secret weapon of high-end design firms. Architectural drawings can help create a methodical outline, an idea of a space, but Jeremiah's job has always been to fill in the coldness of those lines, conjuring the emotion and atmosphere of a room that would otherwise be impossible to describe.

Born in 1922 in Niagara Falls, New York, Jeremiah is a child of the Great Depression, when opportunities were scarce and having a steady job was the ultimate goal. But even as a 12-year-old in his hometown of Buffalo, he told his teachers he planned to become "a freelance artist". He later ventured to New York City at 18 to attend the Franklin School of Professional Art and then the Parsons School of Design.

Originally meant to be in the advertising class, the school needed someone on the interiors course who could draw. "Since I was poor and on scholarship and had little say, they threw me into it," he says. "Unnaturally or naturally, I was the best artist in the class."

Back then, Jeremiah was fixed on the idea of

becoming a set designer, gaining his first work experience with Joseph B Platt, who'd worked in the art department on films such as *Rebecca* and *Gone with the Wind*, but the young artist was kept on illustration and sketching work. While he never quite made it into the movies, it didn't keep him away from the stars.

In 1948, a chance meeting with Sir John Gielgud changed the artist's life. Once the actor invited Jeremiah to join his inner circle, Goodman's client roster began to resemble an Academy Awards guestlist. "It was all very *Brideshead Revisited* in those days," he says, referring to Evelyn Waugh's iconic 1940s novel. "I found myself travelling in the company of people like Cecil Beaton and Ivor Novello, a great star at the time who went nowhere without an entourage. I was invited to stay at glorious country houses, and, being young and brash and American, and not knowing the rules, I probably overstayed my welcome at most of them. But I had a marvellous time. John really was a gentleman. Cecil Beaton, now that's another story..." he says, but ever the gentleman, that's as much as he'll reveal.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, Jeremiah made his living chiefly as a commercial illustrator, creating covers and spreads for magazines including *Interior Design*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*.

It was this skill for illustrating rooms that stole the imagination of celebrities and designers alike. His work presented a beautiful contradiction in visual styles: using broad brushstrokes, Jeremiah somehow made images that were both meticulous and abstract, conveying a sense of dramatic romance with accurate dimensions and precise detail.

Of course, the exclusive social circles he moved in helped with the commissions. Over the years the likes >









of composer Richard Rodgers, photographer Bruce Weber and former US president Ronald Reagan all invited him to paint sumptuous portraits of their homes. "Nancy [Reagan, former First Lady] was very cordial," he says. "I may have taken a peep in her refrigerator."

By mid-century, the biggest names in the New York elite all wanted a Jeremiah original, yet his "most memorable" job remains the Park Avenue apartment of formidable fashion editor Diana Vreeland. Designed by Billy Baldwin, Vreeland famously decreed that she wanted her room to look like "a garden, but a garden in hell", with every inch of her sitting room doused in a scarlet, from the curtains to the red lacquer picture frames. "Could I live in this room? Probably not, but it made one hell of a painting!" admits the artist.

He was also granted access to Greta Garbo's home when a friend of the actress employed Jeremiah to paint it as a gift. "The spirit of the room was just what you would expect for an internationally famous film actress. Her art collection was remarkable."

Not all his projects went to plan. American architect and inventor Buckminster Fuller, once called on Jeremiah to paint a presentation for the 1964 New York World's Fair but "Bucky", as the artist calls him, wasn't quite convinced by his improvisation. "He told me that never had he seen anything so wrong look so right," shrugs the 93-year-old today. "You can't win them all!"

Until the 1960s, he created all his works on the spot, painting with a combination of watercolour and gouache on illustration boards. Today he still prefers this method, but explains that getting such lengthy access to star's homes is trickier. "In recent years, I've often worked from photos, notes and sketches."

The beauty of Jeremiah's work is that he doesn't just render a space, but the presence of the individual who owns it. In his paintings, we can imagine Garbo moving through the room with a long-stem cigarette, or Vreeland pausing to adjust a vase of red peonies. There's a romance to the process, and a feeling he describes with a borrowed Brazilian term, *saudade*. "It is the most marvellous word. It is about a feeling of



## USING BROAD BRUSHSTROKES, JEREMIAH MAKES IMAGES THAT ARE BOTH METICULOUS AND ABSTRACT

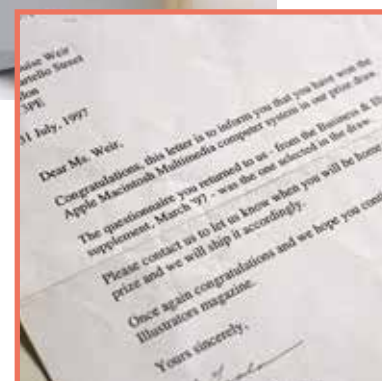
having been somewhere before. It is similar to dreams and you feel that you had another life because it is so foreign to your actual life, and that the reality of your dream bewilders you. *Saudade* means a longing for something that you can't quite put your finger on."

When Jeremiah began his glittering career, he was out there on his own, whereas now interiors can be recorded in countless forms, from a computer-aided design to an informal iPhone snap. Nevertheless there's something about the "visceral, organic" quality of his art that he believes will never be matched by a digital photo. Undaunted, the nonagenarian continues to complete commissions whenever he can, even using the social network Instagram to post his art online. "But I don't send emails," he says. "I'm old school." ***Jeremiah! Inspired Interiors* runs from 19 April to 1 July at the American Museum in Britain, Bath.** [www.americanmuseum.org](http://www.americanmuseum.org)

**ABOVE** Leonard Stanley, *Bedroom*, 1976, watercolour and gouache on board

**TOP LEFT** A young Jeremiah hard at work in the 1950s  
**OPPOSITE PAGE** Cecil Beaton, *Winter Garden, Reddish House*, 2002, watercolour and gouache on board





## IN THE STUDIO

# SIMON PEMBERTON

AS HE PREPS FOR A NEW EXHIBITION, THE AWARD-WINNING ILLUSTRATOR REVEALS WHY HE OWES IT ALL TO ARTISTS & ILLUSTRATORS. WORDS AND PHOTOS: **STEVE PILL**

### Congratulations on scooping Best Editorial Illustration at last year's V&A Illustration Awards.

Thanks. I always expect with illustration competitions that they want a quirky idea and mine was just a landscape. It showed that people could just appreciate something on its own terms.

### You've been illustrating for almost 20 years. Have you noticed a change in the nature of the work available?

Yes, when we left college, there were lots of computer magazines commissioning illustration and you'd get book covers more easily too. That died for a while as they started giving them to designers instead, but I think that's starting to come back.

### When do you get the call now?

When people want something quite painterly. I made the labels for Taylors of Harrogate coffee about seven or eight years ago and that was a really important commission for me. I had no packaging and nothing landscape related in my portfolio at all but they picked out these brush marks in my portfolio and said, 'This is what we want to see'.

### Did that affect the direction you took?

Yeah, it was an eye opener. I knew that I enjoyed being quite expressive, but to see how clever they were in picking up on that tiny aspect of my previous work and how it could be used, it was really intelligent and I couldn't have predicted that. At the end of it, I had this huge body of looser landscape work and I moved into doing much more loose, conceptual things.

### LETTER OF NOTE

Simon's partner Louise won an Apple Mac in an *Artists & Illustrators* competition in 1997. They still keep the old computer in the studio today.





#### MAKING A MARK

Although Simon builds his final illustrations on the computer, it all begins in his sketchbook. He makes observational drawings on location and picks out interesting marks to use.



## I USE LAYERS OF BRUSHMARKS TO GIVE A SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE IN A LANDSCAPE

#### You don't usually find landscape artists in a basement studio in Central London. What gives?

To be honest, I try and spend as little time in the studio as possible. I'm a mountain biker and I live near Epping Forest. I don't really mind where I work – I spend about three months a year out of London visiting family. I grew up on the Wirral and I've realised recently how much that environment has affected me.

#### How do you get that sense of space in a landscape?

What I do is quite abstract so a lot of the perspectives aren't real. It would be quite difficult to recreate some of the images in nature. In some cases, it's just a series of strata – layers of brushmarks to give you a sense of the perspective going away into the distance. A tiny horizon line can give it real drama too.

#### When did you first move into this studio?

About 1997. It wasn't trendy around here then and no one wanted it – rent was £290 for the whole space. I moved here with two other illustrators, my partner Louise and Andrew Foster. We were at St Martins together. We did the place up and made it our own. We started an illustration collective called Monster.

#### Is it true that Artists & Illustrators played a part in your early success?

Yes, Louise won a Mac computer in an Artists &

Illustrators competition. We were just out of college and I was working with Polaroid emulsions and getting frustrated basically. After winning the computer, my whole portfolio just went hyperbolic overnight – there was all this stuff I could do that I couldn't do before. I don't know what we'd have done without that computer. Getting it meant we could catch that wave and be in the right place at the right time.

#### Tell us about your forthcoming exhibition.

It was originally going to be a show about Epping Forest because the gallery had seen some work I did for *Privateer*, a mountain biking magazine, but they came back and said we'd like you to do an illustration show. They want it to be about where the dividing line is between illustration work and personal work.

**Simon Pemberton – The Art of Illustration runs from 5-31 May at Gibberd Gallery, Harlow, Essex.**  
[www.simonpemberton.com](http://www.simonpemberton.com)



#### COFFEE (BIG) BREAK

A commission to illustrate Taylors of Harrogate coffee packets proved pivotal for Simon, after the client encouraged him to pursue a more loose, expressive style.



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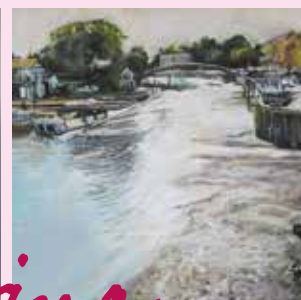
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# MAY

TIPS • ADVICE • IDEAS

## PAINTING HIGHLIGHTS

BOTANICAL ARTIST **SIMON WILLIAMS** ON CREATING SUBTLE LIGHT EFFECTS

When using gouache, highlights can be added with white paint, though this depends on the choice of subject. A white will show up nicely against a subject with a deep intensity of colour, but a paler subject will struggle to have enough strength for the white to show.

A Zinc White is usually provided in gouache starter sets, but for highlighting a Permanent White is worth purchasing. This is a cleaner and much more opaque colour that does not have the blue-grey tinge of Zinc White. Because of the dryness with which white gouache needs to be applied for highlights, it is best to use a hatching or stippling technique. Hatching is a good technique for achieving a smooth highlight surface.

The example shown below is of an ivy-leaf sketchbook study where the green paint could be applied fairly dark and dense, as shown on the right-hand side of the leaf. The lighter, more opaque colours and highlights were layered over the top.

Highlights applied with stippling work well on a textured surface – for example, the glossy wet centres of certain fruits or the more diffuse highlights upon pears.

This is an extract from Simon's first book, *Botanical Painting with Gouache*, published by Batsford, RRP £19.99. [www.swillustrations.com](http://www.swillustrations.com)



**TOP TIP**  
Use fresh white paint and clean water for the best highlights

1. For a smoother surface finish, rather than using hatching lines I flatten the brush to a paddle shape with my fingers.



2. I then dip this flat brush in the palette to pick up some white paint and gently stroke it on to highlight, as shown here.





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## HOW TO DRAW FORESHORTENED FIGURES

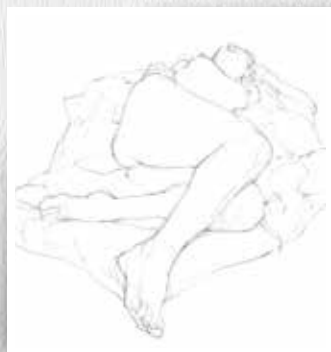
Expectations of how we think a subject should look often interfere with our observations, making it difficult to draw objectively. 'Foreshortening' describes the optical distortions created by the effects of perspective on a subject and means that the length along your line of sight will appear relatively shorter than a comparable length across your line of sight.

For example, a reclining figure seen from the side fits the proportions we expect whereas the same figure seen from near the feet can look almost landscape-like, with a tiny head and huge feet. Whatever your subject – from tree trunks to reclining figures – here are a few ways to deal with foreshortening.

**1** Imagine a box around your subject and mark in the top, bottom, left and right limits to get an early impression of the overall proportion.



**2** Here is the foreshortened figure, lying along the line of sight. To help you make more objective observations, simplify your subject into big shapes before getting caught up in detail.



**3** Check vertical and horizontal relationships by holding your pencil at arm's length and closing one eye to 'flatten' what you see. Run your thumb along the pencil to measure the width of the subject, then turn your pencil and see how many times that width fits into the length.

Jake's new book, *Life Drawing in 15 Minutes*, is published by Ilex Press, RRP £9.99. [www.jakespicerart.co.uk](http://www.jakespicerart.co.uk)



### WHAT IS... STAND OIL?

Stand oil is a form of linseed oil that has been heated in a vacuum for a period of time. Translucent and viscous, it can be used in conjunction with turps as an oil painting medium when a smoother finish or better colour retention is required. Try it when glazing to hide brushmarks.



### MEASURING UP

**ROB LUNN** REVEALS A HANDY, CHEAP WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR DRAWING SKILLS

A plumb bob (or plumb line) is used to gauge a straight vertical line in order to increase the accuracy of your draughtsmanship. Plumb bobs can be made by simply tying a weight to a length of string – fishing weights are ideal for this. Place the weight on the floor between yourself and the subject and, holding the string loosely, raise your arm until the line becomes taut and creates a straight vertical line from floor to hand. Marking this line on your paper, you can see where key elements intersect the line and draw them in accordingly. The line can also be held between two out-stretched arms to measure areas off against each other.

Rob runs a Life Drawing Workshop in aid of Alzheimer's Society on 21 May at Bath Artists' Studios. [www.roblunn.co.uk/workshops.html](http://www.roblunn.co.uk/workshops.html)





### DID YOU KNOW?

Sennelier L'Aquarelle watercolours are made with real honey. The French manufacturer's recipe dates back to the Impressionist era. While the addition of the bee by-product makes for more luminous colours and smoother washes, we still wouldn't recommend spreading it on your toast!



### MASTER TIPS: AMEDEO MODIGLIANI

DISCOVER THE PAINTING TECHNIQUES OF THE WORLD'S BEST ARTISTS

Despite only living until the age of 35, Italian painter Amedeo Modigliani had a profound effect on European art at the turn of the 20th century.

His graphic paintings often appear very straightforward, having been based on African tribal masks or medieval art, yet when seen close up they reveal a remarkable variety in brushwork. In portraits such as 1918's *Alice*, he subtly altered the application of the oil paint throughout.

The flesh tones were thickly applied in short, round impasto strokes to bring focus to the face, while the dark background on the right was rendered in longer, thinner linear strokes.

Modigliani also added texture to the hair by scraping long lines through the black-brown surface and suggests patterns on the model's dress sleeves with short, swirling marks.



### CANVAS OPINION

RADOSLAV TOPALOV ON CHOOSING THE RIGHT SUPPORT

#### 1 Texture

If you want to make a small or medium-sized picture with lots of detail, then go for a fine grain. For larger paintings, you will be better off with a rougher surface, as it works better with very large brushes.

#### 2 Fabric

The two most popular choices are linen and cotton. While cotton is cheaper, the texture can be very uniform, which might be appropriate depending on taste and subject matter. Linen has a more interesting texture and is more durable, but this comes at a cost.

#### 3 Priming

Take note of whether a canvas is pre-primed. Oil-primed canvases are the most durable and expensive. They also keep the paint looking fresh for longer and provide a slippery paint surface. Acrylic-primed canvases, meanwhile, provide a very good, economic alternative.



### BOOK OF THE MONTH

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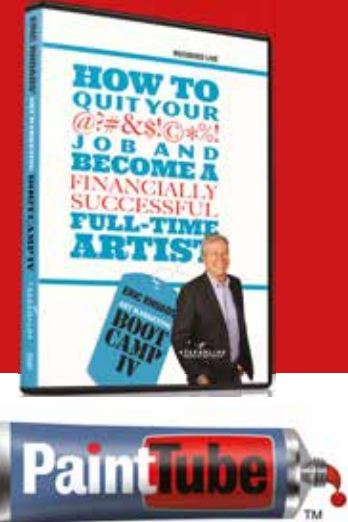
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# Your painting problems *solved!*

## PLUS

Award-winning artist Andy Pankhurst answers your queries on page 50

## 27 PAGES OF PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS INCLUDING...

### DEPTH IN A LANDSCAPE

Quick tricks to bring a third dimension to your paintings

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### COLOUR HARMONY

Five simple strategies for unifying your compositions

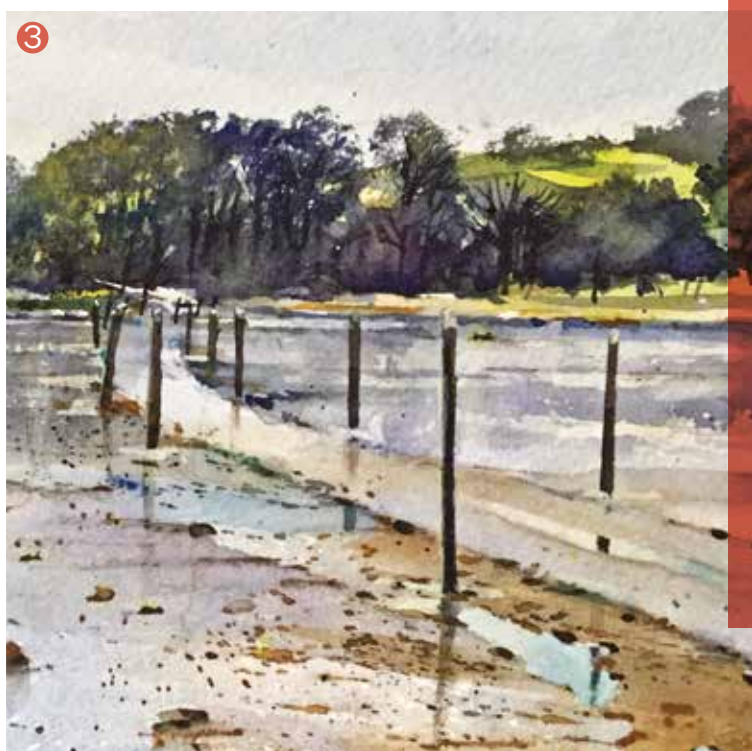
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### FINDING FOCUS

Learn how to draw the viewer's eye cleverly

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## PROBLEM: INCORRECT MARKS

If you can't fix a mistake, dramatic cropping can still leave you with a sellable artwork, says **Siân Dudley**

Sometimes there is nothing for it but to accept that a mistake, or even a series of mistakes, is beyond correction. If you've stained or scored the surface badly and tried to correct the mistake, it is tempting to leap to the conclusion that all is lost and scrap the entire painting. However, while the localised area around the mistake may be beyond repair, it's not to say that the rest of the picture doesn't have value to it – particularly in larger works on paper.

How often have you gone to throw away a failed painting and thought it was a shame to waste a particular passage of the painting? Being experimental by nature, I usually have a number of paintings that are in the reject pile because of mistakes that I can't fix. Rather than throw them away I look at the elements I like within each painting, and consider whether there are smaller parts within the whole that would make a painting in its own right. Essentially, what I am trying to do is crop out the bad bits and look for an entirely different image within the old work. These smaller paintings can then be mounted and wrapped, ready to sell. As these cut sections are often quite small, I don't charge much for them but they prove popular as gifts.

If you're distraught at an offending mark in the middle of your potential masterpiece, it can be really tricky to see beyond that error. Do try to let go of your original idea and look at the painting afresh. This is often easier after a break – sending your painting for a spell in a cupboard can help.

## SALVAGE YOUR ART!

Three quick steps to crop your failed pictures

**1** Cut up an old piece of mountboard or card into two large L-shapes. Arrange them opposite to one another to create a rectangular aperture. With an open mind, move the L-shapes across your failed painting, keeping them together and varying the width and height of the aperture as you go.

**2** Look at the elements you did like and try to find mini pictures within your painting. Focus on finding interesting passages of painting or areas around key elements – in a landscape, this might be the vanishing point or a large tree, perhaps. (If you are computer savvy you could scan the image and crop it digitally to find the smaller images).

**3** Once you are happy that you have found a pleasing section within your painting, draw around the aperture inside the two L-shapes. Set them aside and use a craft knife and ruler to cut out the relevant section. If you plan to mount and sell the salvaged section, don't forget to leave a border around the desired image that can sit behind the mount.



## PROBLEM: NO DEPTH IN A LANDSCAPE

Rob Dudley shows how clever colour choices and working back to front can increase the sense of depth

**1** Working from sketches and photos, give careful consideration to the overall design of your finished image. I wanted to lead the viewer's eye into the painting from the foreground wall and on towards the middle distance and horizon. The fence posts on top of the wall provided a useful perspectival device to help with this. The posts appear to get smaller as they recede, seemingly going further into the painting. Plan your colours and tones too – reserve the palest tones and cooler, bluest colours for the distant fields and hills.

**2** With a plan in place, sketch your design onto stretched watercolour paper and mask any highlights you wish to preserve. When the masking fluid is dry, tilt the page at a slight angle and dampen the sky area and the distant hills with clean water. Use a size 10 pointed sable to paint the sky with a mix of Winsor Blue (Green Shade) and Raw Sienna. Keep the colour strong at the top and paler towards the horizon to further the sense of distance.

Wash in the distant hills with Cobalt Blue and the fields with Green Gold and Winsor Green (Blue Shade), making sure that the mix is more pigment-heavy in the foreground.

**3** Work on the background first. Use a size 4 sable with mixes of Green Gold, Cobalt Blue and Ultramarine to add some features to the fields near the horizon – trees or field boundaries, for example. Emphasise the sense of

depth by keeping the colours and tones very pale here to suggest atmospheric perspective. Keep details to a minimum and relate the size of objects to the distant surroundings. Allow to dry.

**TOP TIP:** Use paler colours and tones in the distance to set them back

**4** Turn your attentions to the middle distance. Using a size 4 sable with strong mixes of Green Gold and the Winsor Green, work on the main tree and hedgerow. As the colours begin to dry, drop in some Ultramarine to the shadows. Allow to dry.

**5** Now move to the foreground. Use a size 10 sable to paint the wall and its shadow with strong, warm mixes of Neutral Tint, Burnt Sienna, Ultramarine and Green Gold. These richer colours make the wall appear to move forward in the painting. As a general rule: warmer colours appear to come forward, while cooler colours recede. Allow to dry.

**6** Add details in the foreground now to emphasise that this is the area “in focus” and closest to you. Remove the masking fluid. Use a size 4 sable with a strong mix of Ultramarine and Burnt Sienna to paint the fence posts and stones in the wall. Avoid adding too much detail to the wall or the sense of distance would be lost, as the further objects are from the viewer, the less detail is apparent.

Paint the gate red to contrast with the green field. By choosing complementary colours, the warmer colour (the red) appears to come forward in the composition.

To finish, use a damp brush to lift out a few lighter stone shapes in the foreground wall. Deepen the shadow colours too where required.

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## READER PROBLEMS

You asked, we answered. Leading artist and tutor **Andy Pankhurst** responds to your pressing painting questions with some words of wisdom gained during three decades at the top

**I would like to know how to mix watercolour greens that look natural for a landscape painting?**

Priscilla George, via Facebook

**Andy Pankhurst:** “All greens can look ‘natural’ in landscape painting, depending on how you use them. Never underestimate nature – in painting, we can never be extreme enough. The art of watercolour painting is to think of your white paper as the ‘light’. The aim is to tint the paper and build up the image using as many transparent layers of colour as necessary. Watercolour is not designed to be used in an opaque manner like a designers’ gouache or acrylic.

“If you are finding your greens too bright, try adding a little complementary red. This will move your colour from a pure saturated value towards an earthy brown hue.”

**When painting a figure, especially realistically, how do you decide what palette to use? Other than the obvious ethnicity consideration, how would you determine the colours?**

Debbie Hall, via Facebook

**Andy:** “It all depends on how we interpret and understand the meaning of ‘realistically’. Colour is determined by the light and surrounding space. If your subject is next to a green wall, for example, the light can reflect off this surface and create a green tinge to your subject. We know that the local colour of our subject is not green, yet we will perceive green. It is therefore important to not have a preconceived idea of what colour we are – colours interact with one another and there are all sorts of illusions our brain has to contend with.

“For a basic figurative palette, I would suggest a warm and cool of all three primary colours with a white – Titanium being the whitest, most opaque option. Secondary colours can be made from the warm and cool primaries, and all three primaries combined make various browns. Adding white can make greys of varying temperatures, but note the palette contains no black – if you’re learning about colour, you may otherwise be tempted to just darken mixtures with black and not think about their true colour value.

“This basic palette will help you understand general colour mixing before introducing the temperature complexities of earth colours to your palette. Ochre (either



a natural or synthetic iron oxide) is a case in point. Iron oxide (a reddish colour) is often used in the manufacture of a tube colour known as ‘Flesh Tint’. However, the confusing name goes back to the idea of a preconceived local colour. Flesh Tint is a very warm colour, but don’t take it for granted that it is part of the recipe you need for any given sitter. Every situation is unique and different.”

**What’s the best way to varnish a finished oil painting?**

Adam Jackson, via email

**Andy:** “The most important thing to remember is that the oil painting must be dry – not just touch dry. Traditionally this takes at least six months, otherwise the varnish could become part of the paint film itself. One would normally varnish a picture using a varnishing brush, applying the

**ABOVE** Andy Pankhurst, *M Standing*, oil on panel, 117x67cm



**After sketching out my composition, I often struggle to know whether to start painting the foreground or the background first. How can I overcome this?**

Megski Lancs, via Facebook

**Andy:** “Try to think of your picture as one complete whole – a pattern of differing relationships of colours of varying luminosity, tone and temperature. Once the canvas is covered and you develop these relationships, the sensation of space between foreground and background may develop more naturally.”



varnish in thin layers and brushing it out in different directions once the picture is covered.

“To lessen the viscosity of the varnish beforehand and allow for thinner layers, gently warm the varnish by pouring it into a glass jar and placing it in a saucepan of hot (not boiling) water. The varnishing is best done in a warm, dust-free environment. After an hour, stand the painting vertically and face it inwards so that dust cannot fall onto the surface. The varnish should be brushed out so that drips will not appear once lifted from horizontal position.

“If you do not like a glossy finish, then finish off with a matt varnish (this contains wax and has to be warmed up to change from cloudy to clear) and of course you do lose some richness. Normally an oil painting, once finished, has an uneven surface of areas of dull (paint that has sunk), and oily patches. An even layer of gloss unifies the whole surface and brings out the original richness and purpose of the oil paint.”

**Could you tell me what consistency of paint should be on the palette? I often get it too thick or too thin, and find it messes up the painting.**

Prabha Panth, via Facebook

**Andy:** “The consistency in terms of an oil painting’s structure – the golden rule to adding a medium is ‘lean to fat’. The lean is the turps, the fat the oil (linseed). For example, you may start a picture by thinning the paint down a little with turps (not too much as you then break down the binder (which is the oil) and you’ll be left with pigment, which will flake off with subsequent layers on top).

“As you build up your picture, you may need to add some linseed oil to the turps to prevent the oil being sucked up into the preceding paint layers, causing sinking. Towards the end of a picture, just add oil only. If too much oil was within the first layers, they will be more flexible, making the top brittle, which means it could flake off. If you’re not doing so already, mix your paint with a palette knife (not spatula), this will help get a desirable consistency.”

**I paint in oils and I have almost finished my first portrait painting without any help, but I am being a bit tentative because of it. How many layers of paint would you recommend when working on skin? And also, some of the paint layers are quite thin so the pencil lines are still showing through. Should I paint over them completely? Help please!**

Charmaine Barber, via Facebook

**Andy:** “The necessary number of paint layers depends upon when you get the colour right – as in, what is right for the picture. There shouldn’t be any rules on such matters – think how smooth Lucian Freud’s early works from the late 1940s or early 1950s were in comparison with his very late portraits, for example.

“If you find the paint layers are becoming too thick or clogged up, gently scrape them back using a number 10 rounded scalpel blade.

**ABOVE** Andy Pankhurst, *Lark*, oil on canvas, 51x66cm

**BELOW** Andy Pankhurst, *Mar*, oil on canvas, 61x74cm





## PAINTING PROBLEMS

**RIGHT** Andy Pankhurst, *The Majestic Broccoli Tree*, oil on panel, 40x34.5cm

**BELOW** Andy Pankhurst, *Beside the Sea II*, oil on canvas, 90x127cm

“Regarding pencil lines showing through, I can think of many great masterpieces where one sees pencil marks showing, including some Cézanne oil paintings, for example. Paint them out if they are visually harming or destroying the idea of what you wish your painting to be about, but otherwise there is no need.”

**I always seem to struggle with the rendering of different kinds of edges in oils. Hard edges are the easiest ones to make, but how are soft edges accomplished in practice?**  
Emilia Leinonen, via email

**Andy:** “I wouldn’t recommend pushing and pulling the paint to blend it as this mixes and muddies your colour. I suggest you spend a lot of time working on your actual palette first, mixing various contrasting colours before you start. If you want a spontaneous look, consider spending more time mixing the colours than you will on the actual act of applying the paint. You can then identify the mixtures on the palette that are dramatically different and will make for hard, clear contrasting edges, and those that will make for softer modulations.

“If the stories of Van Gogh painting a picture in 40 minutes are true, he must have worked in this way – that time being spent physically applying the paint to the canvas, not the mixing of the colours.”



**Can I use acrylic gesso over a dry oil painting?**

Lee Becher, via email

**Andy:** “This is absolutely not advisable. Acrylic does not adhere to oil. Remember also that you can paint both oil and acrylic onto an acrylic-primed canvas, but only oil onto an oil-primed canvas.”



**What is the best type of fixative to use to prevent a big pile of dust accumulating at the bottom of a framed pastel painting?**

Peter Baker, email

**Andy:** “To prevent a big pile of dust, firstly think about which type of paper you are going to draw on. Paper with more texture versus smooth will hold the dry mediums of charcoal or pastel better. There are lots of good fixatives on the market that help bind them together. Degas had his own recipe to fix his drawings with of which he apparently kept secret to his dying day.

“To use the fixative, spray various ‘gentle’ layers over your work, making sure you do not ‘flood’ the drawing, and wait for the fixative to dry between sprays. Beware, the more layers, the darker the overall drawing will become – this cannot be avoided when fixing a work.”

**Andy exhibits with Browse & Darby, London W1.**

**[www.browseanddarby.co.uk](http://www.browseanddarby.co.uk). He also teaches on the Royal Academy's Academic Programmes. For details, contact (020) 7300 5641 or visit <http://roy.ac/classes>**





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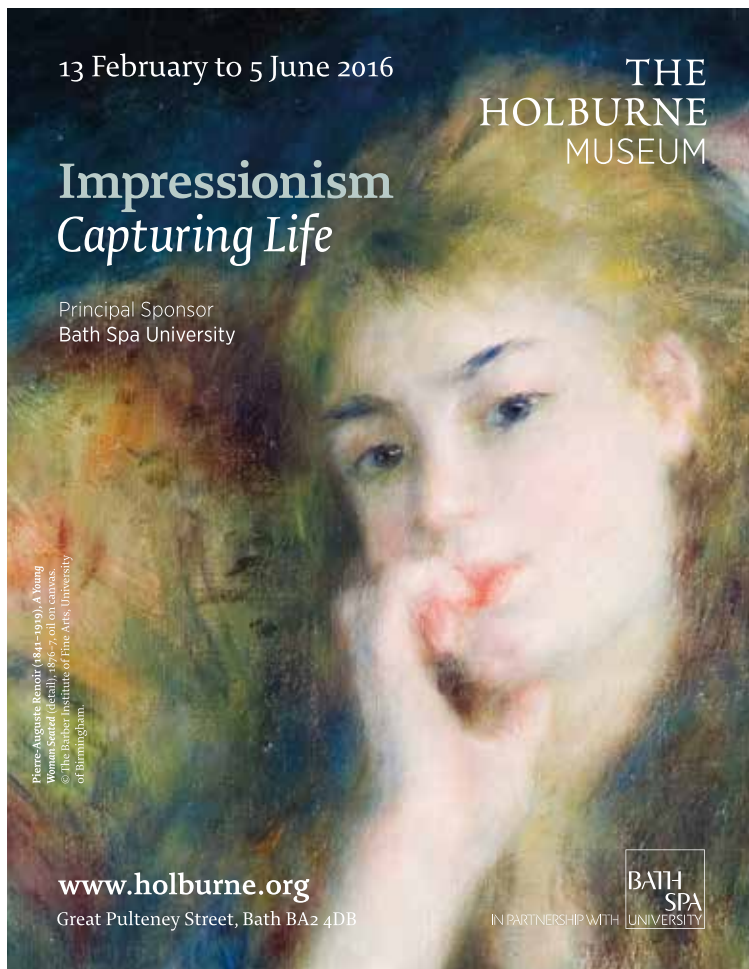
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Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), A Young Woman Seated (detail), 1896-7, oil on canvas.  
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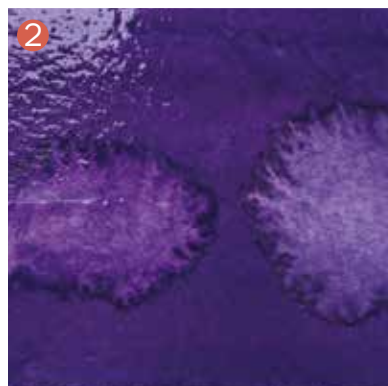
## PROBLEM: UNWANTED ACCIDENTS

Siân Dudley shows you some quick and easy ways to correct mistakes made in watercolour

By the very nature of watercolour as a medium, mistakes are unavoidable. The unpredictability is part of the joy. Before taking action to correct any 'mistakes', start by asking yourself if the marks actually add to your finished image. If not, what follows are some tips for correcting some of the more common offending marks.

Before we begin, it is worth noting that there is one commonly occurring mistake that compounds all others – making a correction too quickly. Paint that appears surface dry may still be damp enough underneath that the addition of extra water will cause the pigment to move easily. This can increase the mistake or cause further unwanted marks to appear. Bear in mind that some mistakes are best left until completely dry before any attempt is made to rectify them.

Check if paint is dry enough by touching the area with the back of your fingers (see below), which are more sensitive to temperature than the tips. If the paint feels colder than dry, unpainted paper then it is still too damp to work upon and you will need to wait a little longer before making any corrections.



## CAULIFLOWERS

Cauliflowers are a delicious vegetable, but far less palatable if they appear in a watercolour. They occur when wet paint drops into an area of partially dry paint; the added water pushes the pigment to the edge of the newly-wet area. Since the original paint is likely to be drying unevenly anyway, the newly wet area also dries unevenly, giving the characteristic 'cauliflower' effect. They will develop over time as the paint dries.

Tonally the edges of cauliflowers will appear darker than the surrounding paint, while the centres are often lighter, making them difficult to ignore.

**1** It is essential that you wait until the area is completely dry before attempting the following correction. Failure to do so will result in a larger cauliflower or more appearing.

**2** Carefully dampen the whole area, extending your working area beyond the offending cauliflower to allow yourself room to work. Here the purple area has been wet to the edges and around the second cauliflower.

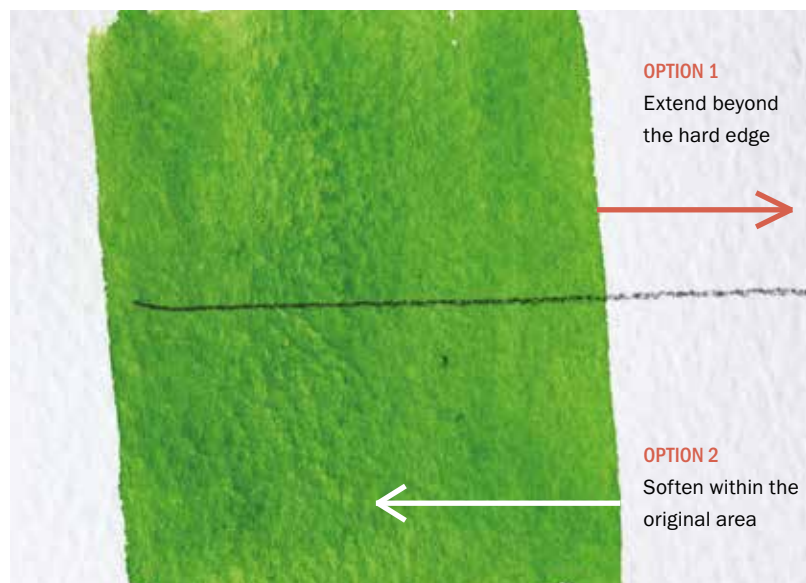
**3** Let the paint soften for a moment, then use a soft, slightly damp brush to gently and carefully manipulate the offending paint. Gently and carefully lift out the excess paint from the dark areas. It may be possible to re-establish graded tones by spreading the damp paint, but stop as soon as brushstrokes appear.

**4** Dampen – or even wet – an area that extends beyond the original cauliflower. Starting at the centre, carefully repaint the area, matching colour and tone to the surrounding paint. Do not take the paint to the edge of the wetted area – allow it to fade across the join instead, leaving a soft, blended edge.



## HARD EDGES

Hard edges occur when the pigment travels to the edge of a wet area and settles there. This can happen if your board is at an angle (water runs downhill), or if you have flooded an area to add more colour and washed the pigment to the edge in the process. There are two options when correcting a hard edge – see right.



### OPTION 1

Use a clean brush and clean water to dampen an area that extends beyond the edge. Apply the water to a larger area than you think you need, so you have room to blur the edges. Mix up a matching colour and paint wet-in-wet across the hard edge.



### OPTION 2

Use a clean brush and clean water to dampen the area and wait a few moments to allow the paint to soften. Using a soft brush at an angle, work towards the hard edge, gently lifting more paint as appropriate until you have a softly blended edge.

**TOP TIP:** When you want to make a correction to a particular part of a watercolour painting, be sure to apply clean water to a wider area than the mistake itself. This extra dampness allows you to soften and extend the edges of the original mistake and blend it into your painting.

## UNWANTED DRIPS

If you drip paint and want to remove it, then act fast. Dab it off with kitchen roll as quickly as possible. If the paint has started to dry, dampen an area across and around the drips, wait for the paint to soften and gently lift it off.

Sometimes you can even creatively incorporate the drips into your image. In the example opposite, a red blob was transformed into a buoy resting on the sand. Changes such as this are often easier than trying to remove the marks completely.

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## PROBLEM: THE COLOURS ARE CLASHING

Kevin Scully suggests five simple strategies to help balance colours and unify your paintings

### 1 Tone your support

The most basic way of achieving harmony in an oil or acrylic painting is by applying a toned ground using one of the colours that is going to be part of the range in which you will be working.

For example, if you are planning to make a painting in a predominantly blue-green range, you could first lay down a mid-tone of a bluish green, which will then unify all the variations in the range of colours that you use during your painting.

This colour should be thinned down so that it doesn't become too overpowering, but instead provides a backdrop for the main event, particularly if it is not completely obliterated, and is instead allowed to peep through in certain areas. This is ideal if you are planning a fairly moody, monochromatic painting with no harsh contrasts.

### 2 Choose a neutral base

An alternative to this strategy is to use a neutral colour for your ground, and this too can be allowed to show in certain places. This subdued, neutral colour then acts as a foil for the stronger colours that are applied subsequently.

In *Red Wine, Red Grapes*, the canvas was initially given a thin wash of Raw Umber with a touch of Ultramarine added. This colour is still evident, particularly in the background. Although various colours have been overlaid in other areas, a kind of unity is maintained because they're also fairly thin. Harmony can also be achieved by combining cool colours with warm ones – here, the warm colours in the red range contrast well with the cooler blues. This is particularly noticeable where the pale blue highlights have been flicked on some of the red objects.

Likewise, some of the red was introduced into the cooler tablecloth and glass. This juxtaposition of blue on red and red on blue helps to tie those contrasting colours together. If objects in a still life painting are looking a little too rigid, try softening their edges slightly by taking some of the paint used for the objects and blending it into the background colour here and there, whilst being careful not to lose their inherent structure and shape.



**LEFT** *Red Wine, Red Grapes*, oil on board, 30x30cm  
**RIGHT** *Mortar and Pestle*, gouache on paper, 36x28cm  
**ABOVE** *Lilies and Fruit*, oil on board, 30x30cm  
All paintings by Kevin Scully

**TOP TIP:** One of the best ways to ensure your painting has a unified palette is to echo certain key colours across all parts of the paper or canvas. For example, if a rich red is the dominant colour of your painting's main subject, then try to introduce very subtle tints of that same colour in the other unexpected corners of the image.



### 3 Limit your palette

If you are struggling to obtain a greater sense of harmony in your paintings, try switching to a limited palette of colours. Paintings can become too busy and incoherent if you include too many colours, as this can be confusing to the viewer's eye. To avoid this, try using just two colours.

Blue and orange are complementary colours, and appear as opposites on the 12-part colour wheel containing the tertiary colours, and are therefore happily placed side by side in a painting. Using these two colours as the basis of your colour scheme means many intermediate tones can be created by mixing them together in different proportions. By adopting a policy of placing a muted form of orange next to a brighter blue and vice versa in your painting, you will be able to control where the focus is directed, even when the viewer is unaware of it.



### 4 Echo colours subtly

If you are struggling to create a dominant focal point whilst retaining harmony in your paintings, try toning down the rest of the colours in your subject and creating subtle echoes of the main colour elsewhere.

In *Mortar and Pestle*, the subdued colour scheme is a vehicle for the picture's main focal point: the blue and white flowers in the jug. This is a simple approach that creates harmony in a very subtle way.

The painting contains a very limited colour range, and at first glance the viewer may not be aware that the rather monochromatic background contains tints of all the colours used to paint the objects on the table.

The white tablecloth contains touches of the blue and the green used for the flowers, where these colours have been mixed together with white to form the shadows. These colours can also be detected elsewhere in the painting, including the white panel behind the jug. Likewise, tints that include the brown colour of the wooden handle of the pestle can also be seen distributed throughout the painting.



### 5 Work with complementaries

The sense of harmony in the painting *Lilies and Fruit* was created by a different technique again. The background was divided diagonally with the cool blue at the top and the warm red-orange hues at the bottom. These two colours are complementaries – they sit opposite one another on a colour wheel.

This approach could split the painting in half, but by echoing the colours on opposite sides of the diagonal and using a neutral focus to tie things together further, harmony was maintained. The fairly monochromatic green and white lilies overlap both the cool blue background and the warm red-orange foreground, helping to tie those two opposing colour temperatures together. Touches of blue were added to the lower half of the painting to further strengthen the basic complementary theory.





## **PROBLEM: MY LIFE DRAWINGS ARE LACKING EXCITEMENT**

Draw Brighton tutor **Shelley Morrow** sets a simple exercise to help you enliven your figure sketches by adding a splash of watercolour

### **THE EXERCISE**

Next time you go to a life class, try drawing with watercolour rather than pencil or charcoal. It is helpful to have a really expressive model who can hold a variety of poses. The poses don't have to be wild and dramatic; quiet and gentle ones work equally well. When working quickly, it is more important to capture the gesture of the pose, rather than a true likeness of the model.

### **DURATION**

Opt for short sittings: anything from two to 30 minutes. Watercolour lends itself perfectly to spontaneity, movement and vibrancy, so work quickly for the best results.

### **WHAT YOU WILL LEARN**

Drawing with a brush loaded with watercolour will help you to focus on the figure as a whole rather than zooming in on the detail too soon. This in turn, will help you gain a sense of proportion. Working quickly can make the task easier. There isn't time to be indecisive and often our first instincts can be correct. It will teach you spontaneity, how to be selective and leave out everything that is not essential.

Mistakes will be made but learn to accept them. Try to analyse what worked and what didn't. Experiment and play. It can feel like watercolour has a life of its own or is difficult to control but it is also full of surprises, so take advantage of this quality and try not to control it too much.

### **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO**

It's important to be prepared. If you are planning to paint in a life class, it's a good idea to check your kit and give yourself a good 10 minutes to get your materials ready to go. You want to feel fairly relaxed before you start and not flustered. Use a drawing board and lay it fairly horizontal, as the wet paint will run – sitting is a good option. If you have a lot of standing poses, you may want to sit on a high stool to make yourself roughly the same height as the model. Try different positions to see what suits you best.

Get your paint mixed and ready before the session starts and have two jars of clear water – you will soon dirty your first pot and need a clean one ready. Kitchen roll is useful for mopping up excess liquid from your paper or brush.

If you are unsure about the correct colour and consistency of watercolour to use then have a separate sheet to test upon. Your brush needs to be wet before you start – sometimes I start with the faintest of brushstrokes, using the coloured water from the water jar, just to trace the subject and get a feel of where things should be. I will



## RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

Watercolour tubes are better than pans for mixing up fresh colour quickly for shorter poses. If you are new to life drawing with watercolour, stick with one colour you like – the aim is not to depict flesh tones, but to explore the qualities of the medium.

Chinese and Squirrel mop brushes are very versatile as you can get lovely broad, fluid strokes, as well as very fine ones. Pipettes can be useful for adding more water to your paint and save you from dirtying your water with paint-covered brushes. Porcelain palettes wash well and they don't tend to stain like plastic ones.



then add some stronger colour allowing the paint to spread in these wetted areas. Any areas I don't want to be wet I can either dab off with kitchen roll or a clean, damp brush. The paint will look lighter when dry so bear that in mind and experiment with it beforehand to see how it looks.

Life drawing can often be overwhelming so it is a good idea before you start to decide what you would like to achieve. Be methodical and tackle each problem in turn. For example, if you have problems with composition, then make this your only challenge – ignore things like colour or line at this stage and instead work on placing the figure and fitting all elements onto the page. Work on small sheets for this (A5 or A6, for example) and apply blobs of paint to roughly suggest the figure in the space.

If you find proportion difficult, consider painting silhouettes – they can help you to place one part of the body in relation to another. By filling in the shape of the body without defining any of the internal features, you can avoid getting bogged down in the details. It is surprising how much information can be read from a silhouette too.

It doesn't matter in which order you tackle each of your problems, the main thing is to focus on one problem at a

time and once you have gained the confidence and skill in those problems, you can begin to combine them together.

Watercolour works particularly well when it comes to gesture and expression. I use gesture as the main focus of my drawings, and watercolour gives me the spontaneity and freedom I need to express this. The paint can run and spread in unpredictable ways offering an extra dimension to the drawing. Changes take place as the paint dries and can leave unexpected results. It is a practical opportunity to work with colour and learn about it as you go.

When using a life model, think of the shorter poses more like brush drawings than actual paintings – the aim is to capture the turns, twists and tensions of the model, rather than an accurate representation of him or her. If you are working on a longer pose, you will have more time to experiment with introducing colours and adding detail, but be careful not to overwork the painting as it can easily become flattened and dull.

[www.shelleymorrow.com](http://www.shelleymorrow.com)

## THE NEXT STEP

Mastered these basics? Shelley Morrow suggests three new challenges to try

### 1 Scale it up

Changing your scale can offer different perspectives. If you have been working on a small scale, you could try working larger – switch A5 to A4, or A4 to A3, for example. Working larger gives you the freedom to be more expressive.

Likewise, if you have been working larger, try scaling down. With less paper to cover, you can get more information down in a shorter period and learn to work in a more economical way.

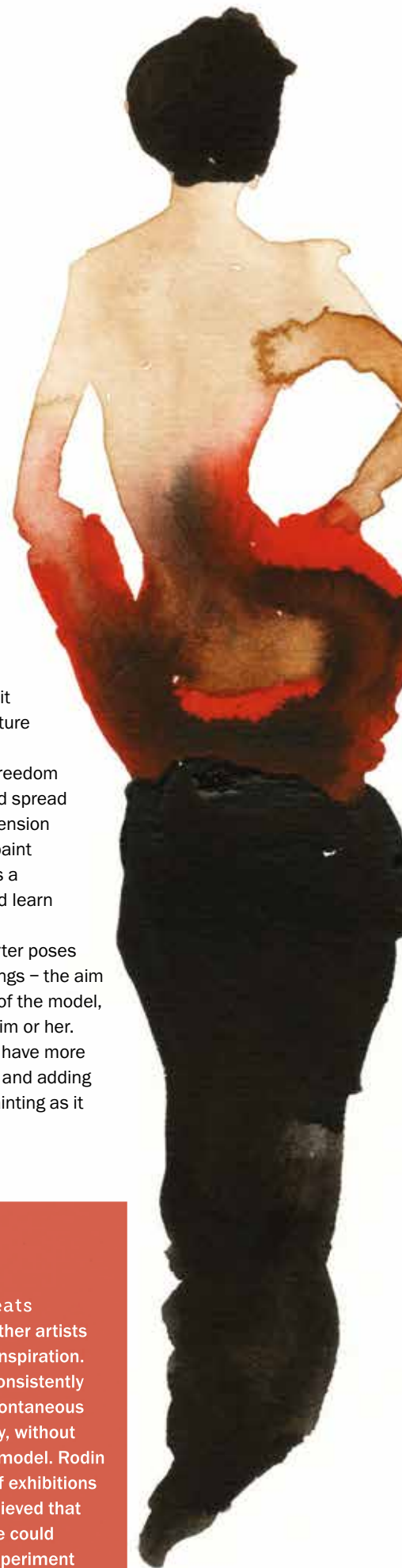
### 2 Mix media

Try combining watercolour with other media. Create a loose watercolour figure drawing and, while still wet, add contour lines in charcoal pencil. The charcoal will intensify in the wet areas, leaving lovely deep, rich, black lines.

Water-soluble crayons are another option. Add contour lines in crayon first, then loosely wash darker areas in watercolour. The colour from the crayon should merge with the wet paint, giving interesting results.

### 3 Look to the greats

Studying work by other artists can give you plenty of inspiration. Rodin's drawings are consistently fluid with sweeping, spontaneous lines. He drew spiritedly, without taking his eyes off the model. Rodin authorised a number of exhibitions of his drawings and believed that the freedom of his style could inspire other artists. Experiment and be adventurous, don't worry too much about how you should use the materials, just see what works.





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# QUICK FIXES

Katie McCabe offers 17 simple tips to help you through your painting woes

**1** Applied too much watercolour to your page? Take a clean, wet brush (a round one will do) and gently lift out the excess colour. Allow the water to diffuse the pigment and soften the edges with careful strokes.

**2** If you create a dent in your canvas, spray the back with warm (not hot) water. As the water begins to evaporate, the canvas should shrink into shape. Introduce the water gradually, repeating the step if necessary, but avoid saturating the material.



**3** Oil paintings can take forever to dry. Try adding a fast-drying medium like Schmincke's Rapid Medium or Winsor & Newton's Liquin to your paint to speed things up – they also increase flow and transparency.

**4** When stored incorrectly (particularly at the wrong temperature), masking fluid can go off. If this happens, it can become difficult to remove from the paper. Use the tip of a scalpel to carefully lift the edges of dried fluid and peel away slowly.

**5** Prepare for a portrait painting by making a chart of potential skin tone swatches. This can act as your reference guide when you are struggling with the painting.

**6** If you've introduced a pastel that's too dark for subsequent layers, don't fight the pigment. Instead go straight in with a regular rubber (such as a Staedtler Mars Plastic eraser). You could even remove excess pigment with a clean rag or tissue.



**7** Overworked your coloured pencil drawing? Remove heavy areas of colour by gently pressing over them with a kneaded eraser.

**8** To prevent the shape of your watercolour finishing on a hard edge, try wetting the paper around it. This will prevent the pigment from pooling around the hard edges and leave a softer finish.

**9** Acrylics tend to darken as they dry, creating a sinking effect. To bring lightness to your painting, use sandpaper to gently pare back the paint until the brighter tone returns.

**10** When charcoal dust interferes with your creative process, grab a soft brush (such as a baby's hairbrush) to sweep away the fragments or blot them a slice of white bread.



**11** Add impact to your landscape by drawing in small figures at a far point in the painting (such as a hilltop or cliff). This can help to draw the viewer's eye into the painting and also provide a sense of scale.

**12** To create a realistic textured or weathered surface, such as rusted metal or ageing wood, try layering acrylic in rough, dry strokes.

**13** If your oil paintings are plagued by cracks, take a look at your paint's consistency. Cracks appear when lower layers of paint dry before the upper layers. Use the 'fat over lean' approach to prevent unwanted oil fissures.

**14** If you're lacking drama and movement when painting cloudy skies, try experimenting with different brushes. Mix top-quality sable brushes with cheap synthetics to get variation in your strokes.

**15** Making a start on a blank canvas or sheet of paper can be daunting. Break the ice by tackling the white with an under-painting in acrylic, using a wide, flat synthetic brush.

**16** A mistake on a larger area of a watercolour painting can be remedied with the 'flooding method'. Run the paper under a slow-running cold tap. Assist the movement of the paint with a brush if necessary. Dry the painting at an angle (to prevent running) before starting over.

**17** Fighting windy weather when painting *en plein air*? Consider scaling things down. A smaller board is less likely to be blown about, which makes for a less stressful and more productive session. For more practical painting and drawing advice, please visit [www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/how-to](http://www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/how-to)



## PROBLEM: MUDDY COLOURS

**Siân Dudley** reveals her rules for keeping your hues bright and fresh

Watercolour is, by its very nature, a transparent medium. There is a lightness and freshness achievable in watercolour unlike that of any other medium, yet muddy paintings abound.

Prevention is the best cure here. Attempted corrections can worsen the effect. Understanding how and why the colours become muddy will help you to avoid the effect.

A watercolour wash or stroke is basically made up of two elements – the water and the paint pigment. Both elements can have a bearing on the muddiness of your colours.

### THE WATER

Any amount of pigment in the water will combine with the pigment in your brush as the paint is applied to the paper. This is especially true if there is even a smidgen of a strong pigment (Winsor Violet, for example) in the water and you are attempting to paint with a paler, weaker pigment (any yellow). The result will be a muddy, brown yellow. At the very least the yellow will lose its clarity and freshness.

The first solution is a simple one. Always keep two jars of water to hand as you paint: one for cleaning pigment off your brushes that you can allow to get murky and one kept clean for painting with. If you don't have easy access to a sink, it helps to keep a large jug of clean water and a bucket handy too. When your jars show signs of colour, empty the contents into the bucket and refresh them from the jug.



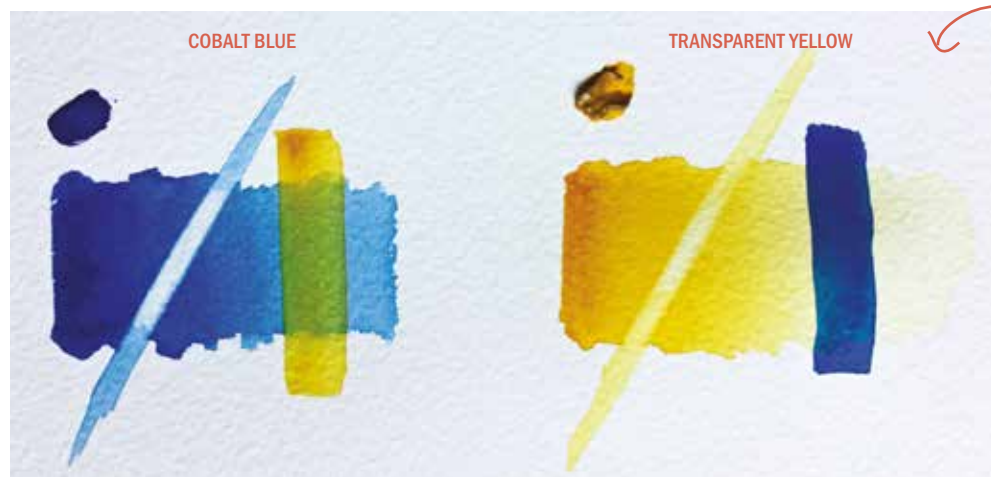
Remember that painting from a larger water container is not a solution either. Larger containers take a bit longer for your water to acquire enough pigment to muddy your colours, but it is a delay, not a cure.

### THE PAINT

The particular pigments you choose can make a huge difference to whether your colours muddy or not. Earth colours, for example, (your siennas, ochres and umbers) are so-called not only because they are natural hues, but also because they come from the ground. As a result, they tend to be opaque and more prone to muddying.

Over the course of a painting, opaque colours will move and mix more readily than transparent ones. This makes it more difficult to use them for glazing techniques, while also making it easier to muddy them.

Get to know the qualities each of the paints in your chosen palette – experiment with them on a sheet of paper to find which move easily when wet, which stain and which can be painted over more easily. Look for the opacity ratings on the paint tubes and remember that opaque colours are more chalky than transparent paints. Plan your painting in advance by considering how, where and when each colour might be applied.



#### OPACITY COMPARISON

Notice how when the Transparent Yellow is applied over the Cobalt Blue, the colour underneath is visible, whereas when the blue is applied over the yellow, it almost completely obscures it.



## PROBLEM: MANAGING THE WETNESS OF WATERCOLOUR

Struggling to control water and washes?

Artist **Rob Dudley** answers your watercolour queries

Watercolour without water is just 'colour'. Understanding the role that water plays in the painting process is fundamental to the success of a watercolour. Many factors affect how the water behaves, including paper type, ambient temperature, humidity and the angle of your paper.

### HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD I ADD?

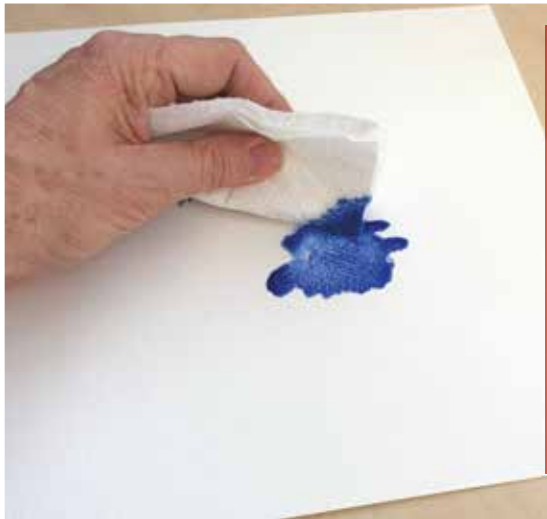
The ratio of water to pigment dictates the strength of the final wash – too much water and a wash can dry to a pale disappointment; too little water and a wash will not flow. The time spent experimenting and observing washes is well worth the effort, but a good rule of thumb is: the more water added, the paler the dried wash.

Working on damp paper can give beautiful soft effects, but can often lead to insipid results. The temptation is to flood the paper with water and

immediately apply a wash, while forgetting that the extra water will dilute the wash further and weaken the final colour. Avoid this by allowing time for the paper to absorb the water before applying the wash. Also remember that a wash applied to damp paper should be stronger than one applied to dry paper.

Knowing how long to let the paper soak takes practice, but looking at the surface of the paper can give you a few clues. A glossy surface tends to indicate a lot of water, while a less shiny surface is a sign it has soaked in.

**TOP TIP:** Before you apply a paint stroke to the page, try to identify how wet the paper currently is. Pre-empting how the paint will behave when it is applied will help you to control your watercolours.



### HOW CAN I REMOVE EXCESS WATER SAFELY?

The problems that almost inevitably occur with the addition of too much water on the painting's surface can be dealt with in a few ways.

Firstly, if there is only a little excess water, it may be possible to lay the board flat and wait patiently for the painting to dry a little before proceeding.

If there is too much water, try

instead to gently soak some of it up. Dip the tip of a dry brush into the offending puddle and allow the bristles to soak up the excess – this is known as 'capillary action'.

The same effect can be achieved by carefully dipping the corner of a piece of kitchen roll into the excess water. Both of these methods will likely result in pigment being removed too. To correct this, wait for the area to dry and then reapply.

### HOW CAN I CONTROL PAINTING WET-IN-WET?

Contrary to expectations, working wet-in-wet can actually give the artist more control, not less. It allows you to manipulate the paint by moving it with a brush or tilting the board to encourage the flow in a particular direction. When painting wet-in-wet, the water can be used like a reverse masking fluid. The paint will only flow into the areas in which water has been applied.

In the example on the right, I began by applying clear water to the paper on all the areas in which I wanted

paint to settle, including the wall shadows and the trees. Adding paint to the wetted area caused the colour to run into these areas, while the dry parts remained white.

Likewise, if clean water is applied to the paper in a criss-cross manner (inset), adding paint causes the colour to shoot along the clear streams. This can be used to represent tangles of branches or hair in a portrait. If you find that paint runs into the wrong area, ensure the surface next to the bit you are working on is properly dry.

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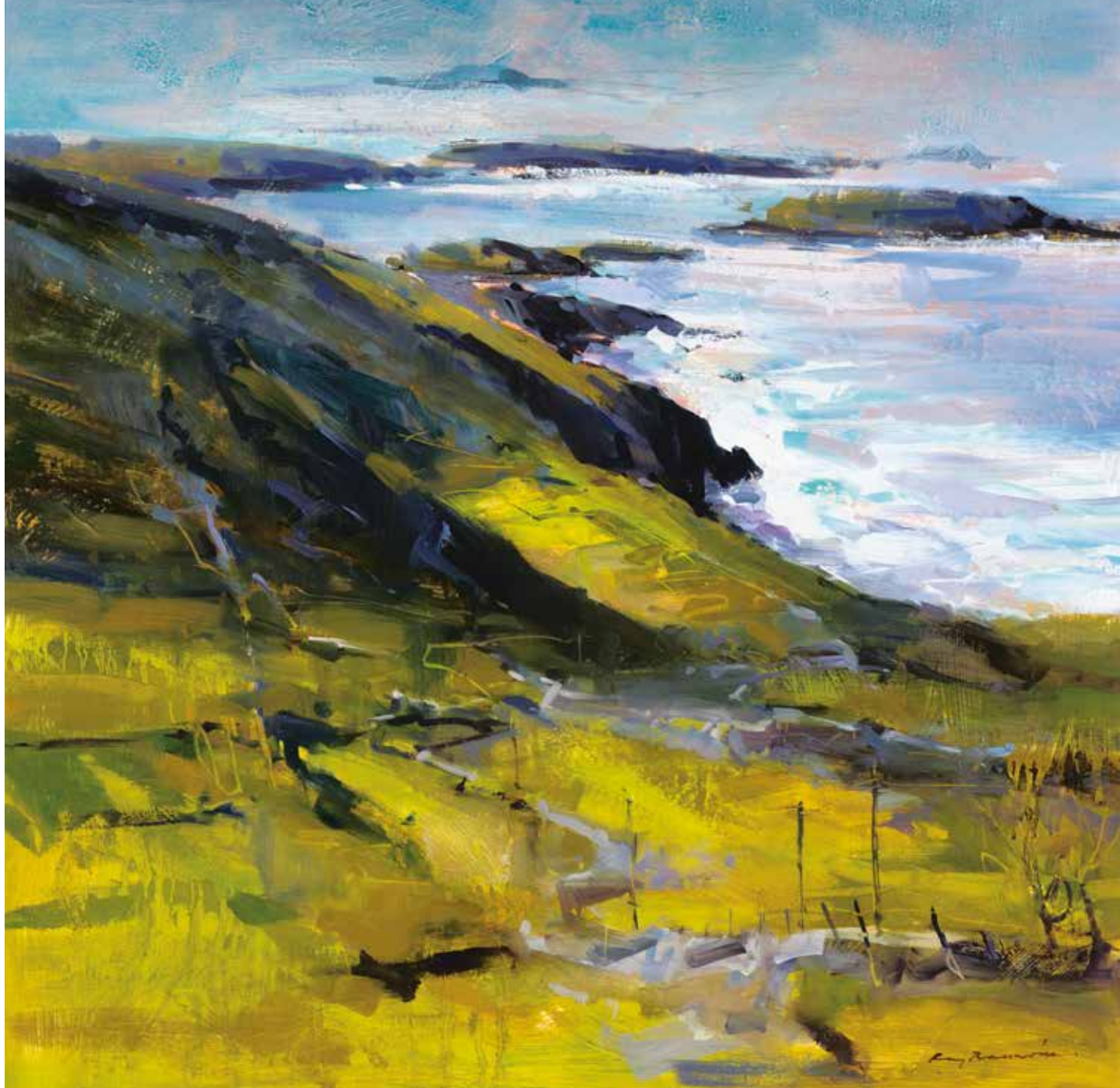


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## PROBLEM: PAINTING GREENS

Master painter **Ray Balkwill** reveals his strategy for tackling the colour that every landscape artist dreads

Despite its connotation as a restful and harmonious colour, green has also proved to be a problematic one for most painters. There are three main reasons for this. The first, rather surprisingly, is just seeing the colour green; with literally thousands of different shades to be found in nature, identifying them accurately is not easy. The second is mixing green, something most newcomers to painting struggle with. And thirdly, actually using green in a painting. It's a particularly difficult colour to harmonise and has a powerful tendency to overwhelm a painting.

Summer foliage provides the greatest abundance of greens in the landscape, so this tends to be the most difficult season to paint convincingly. Importantly, green demands variety and few things are more detrimental to a landscape painting than a monotony of green. Success here depends as much on your powers of observation, as it does on your skills at colour mixing.

Although it was some years ago, I can still recall my first painting trip to the West Coast of Ireland. In fact, it's as vivid as some of the greens that I encountered there. If the subject was not challenging enough, it was also my first experience of working on location in oils.

I am a strong advocate of painting *en plein air* and besides the obvious enjoyment gained, a big advantage is that one is able to observe all the nuances of colour and tone in the subject. However, because the eye perceives a colour in relationship to those around it, when one is faced with a very green landscape, the colours tend to merge together. Seeing a colour in isolation helps assess its true value, so when I am working on location I find the best way to judge colours accurately is by using a 'colour isolator'.

Though it sounds scientific, a colour isolator can be made very simply by punching a 5mm hole into a piece of cardboard. Hold the card about 15cm away from your eyes, close one eye and point the hole towards the particular area of colour you are keen to identify. By isolating it from the various hues that surround it, it will help you to assess it much more successfully.

**ABOVE** Ray Balkwill, *Sun and Shade, Kenmare*, oil on canvas, 36x36cm



## PAINTING PROBLEMS

### MIXING GREENS

You may wonder why it's necessary to mix greens at all, when there are so many readily available in tubes or pans from the manufacturers. Reaching for these colours may seem a convenient option, but generally they tend to be on the harsh and unnatural side. I also believe that the purchase and use of too many pre-mixed greens discourages mixing, which ultimately leads to more limited work.

Mixing your own greens from yellows and blues is still by far the best way to obtain a greater sense of realism. You will not only come up with a wider range of shades, but you will also create colours that are more likely to harmonise. In theory, blue and yellow make green, yet in practice mixing any old yellow and blue could end up with a muddy colour. Ultramarine Blue, for example, has a reddish undertone or bias, while Lemon Yellow has a greenish one. These red and green undertones are complementary colours so when they are mixed together the result is a muddier green-grey.

To mix a 'clean' green, it is best to choose the right blue and the right yellow for the particular shade you require. Yellow will influence the nature of the green more than blue does, so if you require a sharp, cool green, for instance, use a cool yellow such as Lemon Yellow. If you want a warm green, choose a warm yellow such as Cadmium Yellow. Adding any warm colour to blue and yellow will extend the range still further. Adding a touch of its complementary colour can also 'knock back' colours that are too intense – useful for setting things back within a landscape.

Natural greens often contain a hint of red, but again this must be managed carefully, as it can neutralise the

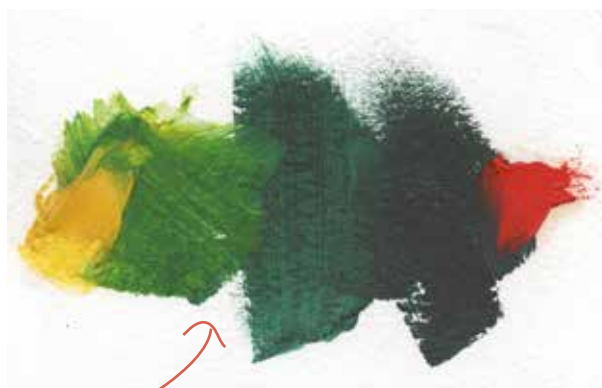
#### HARMONIOUS COLOUR MIXING

Adding red can modify a green, making it a warmer and subtler colour.



#### VIRIDIAN

Viridian is the base of all true green pigment. In oils I use it as my main green, adding red to darken it and yellow to lighten it.



mixtures. Some painters use Ivory Black or Payne's Grey with Lemon Yellow to mix green, but in my experience this can go muddy in the wrong hands.

Nevertheless, there is one pre-mixed green that I find invaluable in oils and that is Viridian. Viridian is the base of all true green pigment; a rich, deep and slightly bluish colour that is relatively transparent and mixes to a variety of pleasing hues. When I paint in oils, I often use Viridian as my main base green, adding red to darken it and yellow to lighten it.

**BELOW** Ray Balkwill,  
*Summer Fields*,  
oil on  
canvas, 36x36cm







### CHOOSING A GREEN

Whether you choose to work in acrylic, oil, watercolour or gouache, it is well worth making a colour chart to show you at a glance the potential range of mixes that can be obtained from various blues and yellows. These charts will initially help to familiarise you with your chosen palette, as well as providing a useful reference going forward.

When painting in soft pastel, there are such a wide range of greens, I would suggest keeping your selection simple by choosing a light, a medium and a dark value. If you choose a warm- and a cool-biased option for each, you will find you have enough colours to tackle most landscapes.

Of course, there is no getting away from the importance of skilful colour mixing, but rigid rules and too much theory can sometimes quash creativity. Mixing colours should be partly an intuitive exercise, so the next time you are feeling overwhelmed at the prospect of painting a luscious landscape, just remember that you are not alone. Relax and enjoy this emotionally powerful colour for what it is.

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



### COLOUR CHARTS

Making a colour chart will not only familiarise you with the potential range of mixtures, but also provide a useful reference guide for the future – I made this one in watercolour.

### SOFT PASTELS

Keep your selection simple by having a light, medium and dark value in a number of different hues.

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# PROBLEM: MY PAINTING ISN'T WORKING

Tempted to rip it up and start again? Don't be so hasty, says watercolour expert **Kate Osborne**

KATE'S FAILED PAINTING



THE FINAL PAINTING



It is tempting to think of watercolour as a “one strike and you’re out” medium. Make a mistake and it seems hard to regain the freshness of the white paper.

Next time you are faced with a painting that you feel has defeated you, however, don’t throw it away. Put it on one side instead and glance at it occasionally in passing over the next couple of days. Think hard about what it is that you wanted to achieve and what exactly went wrong.

Unsuccessful watercolours can very often be brought back to life by washing them off and working back into the ghost image that remains. I will often attempt a similar painting over the top of the washed-off image, but on a couple of occasions, I have even turned the paper on its side and attempted a completely different composition. Both situations have worked out well.

Crucial to the process is the freedom you gain with that ‘nothing to lose’ attitude. In the original painting of flowers that I will show you how to rework over the next four pages, things began well and it took quite a lot of work before I realised the tones were too flat and the colours lacked life.

I had begun adding detail to the petals too early in the process and that limited my

options as I progressed. Though by no means a disaster, it was still the perfect painting with which to be bold and make a fresh start.

[www.kateosborneart.com](http://www.kateosborneart.com)

## 1 WASH OFF THE OLD IMAGE

When I decide a painting is not working, I take a shower tap to it and wash off either the whole image or the part that offends. Although you won’t get rid of your painting entirely, the water takes off a surprising amount of the paint and leaves you with a ghost image. This can be a useful guide for the composition and also add extra depth or interest to the subsequent painting, while still not interfering with what will follow. Once washed, leave the paper to dry completely.

## 2 DEVELOP THE COLOUR

I start the second painting in the centre with less detail and much deeper colour mixes (including Phthalocyanine Blue with Quinacridone Magenta for the purple rose and Perylene Scarlet with Cadmium Yellow for the red roses). I dropped in clean water and more paint until I achieved the sense of depth I was after.

Avoid the temptation to apply dry watercolour neat from the tube – it will lack the required depth. It is far better to use rich

## KATE’S TOOLS

### • WATERCOLOURS

Quinacridone Magenta, Perylene Scarlet, Cadmium Yellow, Transparent Yellow, Cerulean Blue, Phthalocyanine Blue and Raw Umber, various brands

### • PAPER

Saunders Waterford rough 425gsm watercolour paper

### • BRUSHES

Round Chinese weasel hair brushes, various sizes; Pro Arte Series 9A Prolene Sword Liners, sizes small, medium and large

### • WATER SPRAY BOTTLE

yet still fluid paint and allow it to puddle on the page where added pigment is necessary.

## 3 WORK WITH TEXTURES

To paint the leaves, I used my old rough Chinese brush. The paint breaks up on the rough surface of the paper in a way that you cannot entirely control and gives you interesting marks with some energy to them.

I also worked on the crimson rose, picking out some petal shapes and leaving the larger, lighter areas from the ghost image showing in between. >



**Top tip**  
IF THE EDGES LOOK  
TOO HARD, USE A  
SPRAY BOTTLE WITH  
CLEAN WATER TO  
SOFTEN THEM



#### 4 VARY THE EDGES

Working out from the centre, I continued to move round the painting, picking out the flowers and leaves in rich colour mixes.

I used the hard edge of the orange flower to define the back petals of the crimson rose.

I also added the yellow flowers, deliberately 'losing' some of the edges so that individual flowers and leaves flowed into each other, while also keeping some other edges crisp.

#### 5 TIMING IS CRUCIAL

I felt the bouquet needed a smaller element to contrast with the roses so I added the rosebud. I kept a careful eye on the rest of the painting as the wet puddles dried out, dropping in more paint to the still-damp areas where needed, or adding more water to push paint away and create lighter areas.

Timing is crucial to controlling the extent of the bleeds and creating lovely textures. Adding a little colour from a slightly different

part of the colour spectrum brings an already-painted area to life, so here I added Transparent Yellow to the orange flowers and Cerulean Blue to the purple ones.

#### 6 PAINT THE LEAVES

I mixed a deeper green from Phthalocyanine Blue and Transparent Yellow with a tiny touch of Perylene Scarlet to tone it down. I used this to paint the leaves on the right-hand side of the still life, which was seen more in shadow. You can see the original, washed-off leaves behind these richer greens, the paler foliage working well as a background.

#### 7 BUILD THE VASE

I painted the vase with a mix of Cerulean Blue and Raw Umber (I prefer Daler-Rowney's Raw Umber for this, as I find it is a much deeper shade

than the same colour from other brands), being careful to paint around the negative shape of the daisy. Once the first layer was down, I dropped in Cerulean Blue and clean water, allowing the colours to mix on the page. One of the joys of working wet-in-wet is that your paper becomes a palette in which colours can bleed into one another freely.

#### 8 MAKE A POINT

Here I used the smallest of my Chinese brushes to draw the cow parsley seed heads. Chinese brushes have long hairs and a wonderful fine point, which makes them very responsive drawing tools. Again I am using wet paint – it's tempting to use drier paint from the tube at this point to gain some control, but if you have the right paintbrush this shouldn't be necessary.







## 9 DEFINE NEGATIVE SHAPES

On the right-hand side, I had painted the pink rose quite lightly and defined the daisy through a series of negative shapes. The central rose bud had a little detail added and its stalk drawn down in front of the other rose. I began to look at the shadow areas around the flowers to deepen the tonal range of the painting.

## 10 PAINT THE SHADOWS

I painted the shadows on the left-hand side using Raw Umber, Phthalocyanine Blue and Cerulean Blue to create a negative edge to the vase. I then added the vase's own blue shadow using Phthalocyanine Blue with a little Perylene Scarlet.

I continued to drop more paint into these shadows and backgrounds until the tone was really deep. Watercolour paint loses about a third of its tone when it dries, which can cause disappointment if you don't compensate for it.

## 11 PICK OUT DETAILS

Now it's time to decide how much or how little detail to include. I added the red rosebud on the left and painted some more detail on the rose petals without getting too fiddly.

I painted in the stamens and anthers (the parts of the flower that produce the pollen) on two of the yellow flowers with Cadmium Yellow to stand out. Transparent Yellow is great for mixing lovely clear greens, whereas Cadmium Yellow is a delicious and fairly opaque paint that gives good coverage.

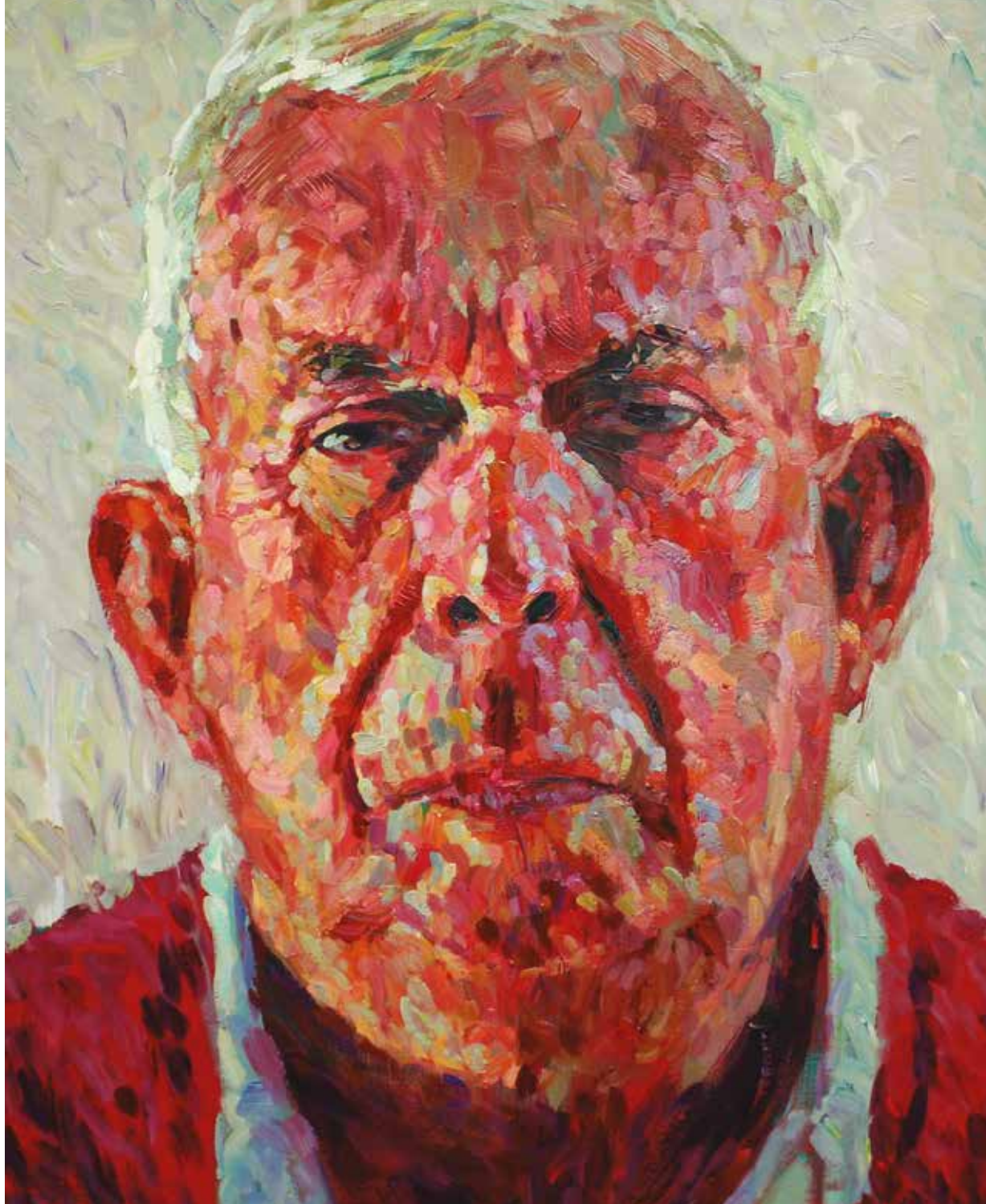
## 12 FINISHING TOUCHES

I finished by adding a few of the chrysanthemum petals on the left-hand side behind the rose, taking care to stop before things started getting too fiddly. I often tell students, "The point at which you start searching for things to do is the point at which you should stop" – even though, as my failed first attempt proves, I don't always manage to follow my own advice!

### Top tip

WAIT FOR PUDDLES  
TO DRY A LITTLE IF  
YOU NEED TO DRAW  
LINES WITH MORE  
CONTROL





#### LEADING LINES

In the first layer of paint, Hashim used confident directional lines to help subtly describe the shape of the face.

### PROBLEM: A LACK OF FOCUS

Bring clarity to your compositions with a few subtle tricks from **Hashim Akib**

Having a strong focus or striking focal point in your paintings is always a useful way to hook in the viewer and provide them with a clear, defined narrative. If you think about every aspect in a painting – subject, colour, tone, drawing, your own involvement – each has a direct impact on the outcome. Thinking things through and understanding where the heart of the painting lies before you start will make the entire process altogether easier. Most scenes have a natural focal point – eyes in a portrait, for example – the key is to make the most of these areas while allowing other areas to just breathe.

There is no right or wrong answer here. A strong focus can be achieved by using or combining various techniques – some artists concentrate on detail, refinement and a very polished finish; some balance moody greys or earthy

#### DANCING COLOURS

With the facial contours in place, Hashim dabbed the colour on top to create a lively finish that draws the eye.





shades with odd shots of colour; others pursue an altogether more abstract route and just play with paint, mark making and bold colour.

There are plenty of ways to create a strong focus, such as using complementary colours or dramatic tonal contrasts in close proximity to the main focal point, or combining a series of soft and hard edges to subtly guide the eye to the required area. If your composition is still undecided, you could select an element to emphasise, or consider placing it in the middle of the painting, as the viewer's inclination is always to look to the centre.

The technique that underpins most of my work is the use of contrasting brush marks. I mainly work in acrylics, which, because of the quick drying time, creates an air of urgency when I paint, resulting in prominent marks, thick passages of paint and, when I'm really under pressure, a raw, edgy quality that some would consider unfinished. Watercolourists can adopt and adapt some of these more pronounced mark making qualities by using wet-on-dry techniques, while oil painters can try working *alla prima* – or directly, in a single sitting.

I do love colour and tone but it is the marks we make that are the most personal expression of ourselves in a painting. Photographs are always flat and I feel that a similarly polished, refined finish in a painting can give away the fact that you're mimicking a two-dimensional image. The brushes, palette knives or other implements you use have a great effect on the marks you make, but something small and refined will have little expressive effect.

The confidence it takes to lay such bold marks lets the viewer know they are in safe hands with every brush mark making a pivotal statement. Even starting with slightly smaller marks and using directional brushstrokes can provide the lead in. Dramatic diagonals and long horizontal or verticals can point the way to the main area of interest, creating a kind of scaffolding to build a painting around for which details and decorative marks can be applied later. For the portrait on the left, I began with

bold, confident strokes made with larger brushes, before adding the smaller marks to provide a sense of movement and contour to the face.

*Venice Steps* (see right) meanwhile uses expressive brushstrokes and emphasises the passage of figures leading to the top. Colours create stepping stones of interest with my most concentrated, considered strokes applied to figures in the back for maximum focus. Large brush marks in the early stages also helped to guide the eye.

The key is to leave these strong undercurrents of marks but be careful not to produce overly-contrived marks otherwise they can look too severe. In *Venice Steps*, the regularity of most of the directional marks was broken up by figures or shadows. Showing off drawing skills by including too much detail only lessens the impact of the main focus of the painting. It's probably one of the most difficult choices you'll ever make in deciding how the information in your reference material dictates the overall impression of the painting.

[www.hashimakib.com](http://www.hashimakib.com)

**TOP TIP:** Try to ensure that the focus of your image is also the area of the painting where you use the smallest, most concentrated strokes

## HOW TO... FIND FOCUS IN A CROWD

**1** Crowd scenes provide no obvious focal point so other tricks are required. Here the figures were sketched out lightly, while a series of thicker strokes all pointed in the direction of the vanishing point.



**2** With the guiding lines in place, you can now break up the severity of them by filling out the figures. Smaller marks suggesting the heads of distant figures were bunched near the focal point, creating energy.



**3** The figures were finished with details like bags or shoes indicated in a few simple strokes. It is tempting to showcase your drawing ability, but you can often sacrifice the impact of the image as a result.





## PROBLEM: NO DEPTH TO YOUR COLOURS

Watercolour master **Mario Andres Robinson** shows a great way to build a picture in layers and get more from your palette

When I view a great work of art, my first reaction is a deep level of appreciation for the artist's skill set. Eventually, I begin to deconstruct the masterpiece, in an attempt to understand each component used to create it. This requires me to look far beyond the surface and deeper into the underlying layers and ultimately onto the ground layer.

In this demonstration, I build a portrait, using thin washes in the ground layers and finishing with slightly thicker glaze layers of colour. This "simple" approach to glazing allows light to reflect off the paper and gives the subject a luminous appearance. Audrey has distinct, chiselled features, which I wanted to showcase. The overhead light source created dramatic shadows on her face, which allowed me to accomplish my goal.

**1** I began by using washes of Burnt Umber and French Ultramarine to establish the subject's facial structure. Using multiple glazes, I layered in the shadow areas to break up the planes of the face. Once I was satisfied with the depth of the darkest shadow areas, I applied a wash over the entire face in order to unify the value range.

**2** I applied a thin glaze of colour (Opera Rose, Raw Sienna and Payne's Gray) over the subject's face, neck, and shoulder, while reinforcing the shadows with an additional layer of the same mixture. I premixed the colour for the hair (Raw Sienna, Burnt Umber and Neutral Tint), which allowed me to work the edges of the hair along with the face to avoid creating a hard line between the face and hairline. I preserved the highlighted areas by applying clean water, prior to pulling colour into it. Attempting to lift colour with water after it's been applied can result in hard watermarks.

**3** I added two washes of Burnt Umber and French Ultramarine to the background to identify the desired value of the face.

Next, I glazed a layer of Burnt Sienna to add warmth to the shadows and applied an additional glaze layer of colour over the flesh tone.

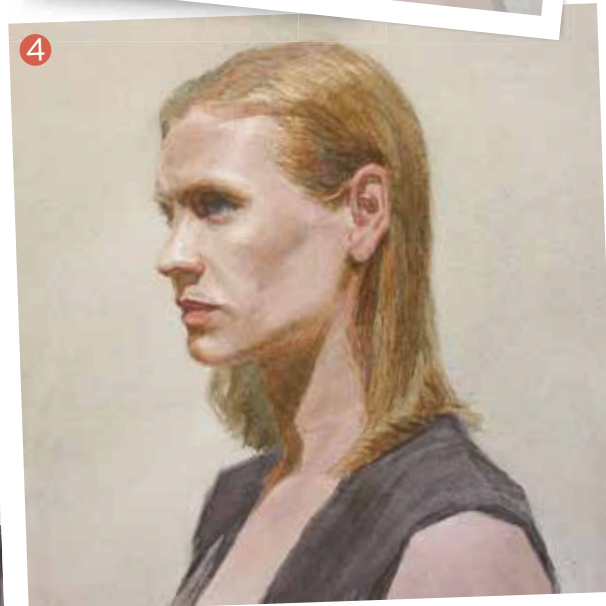
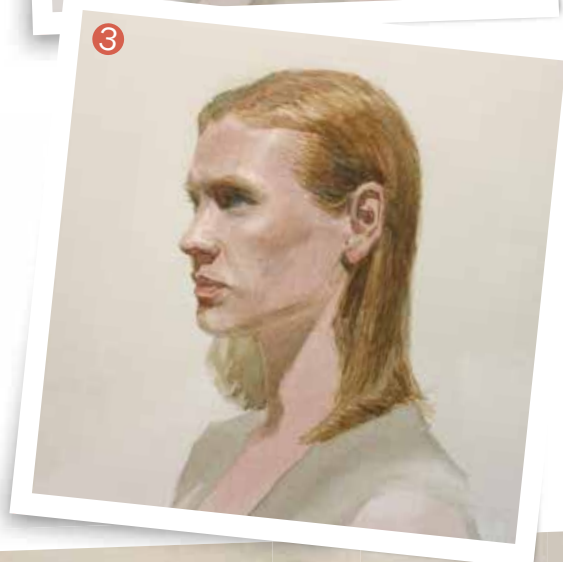
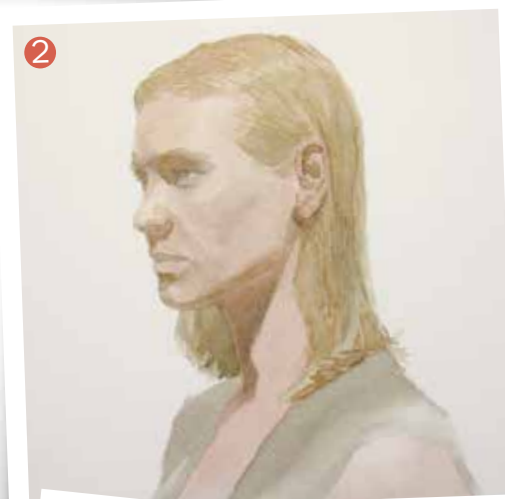
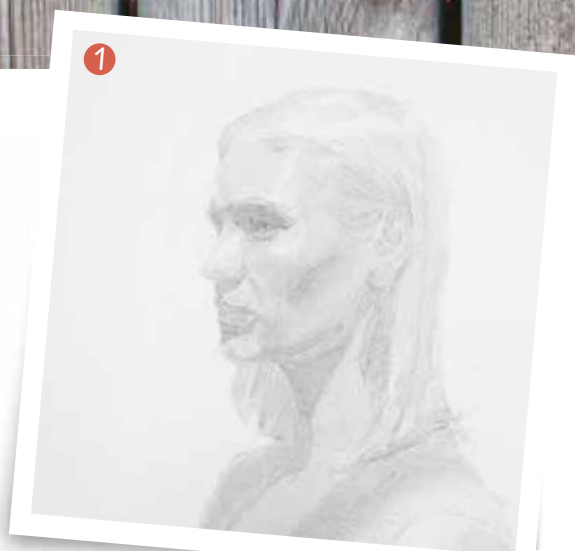
At this stage, my glazes remain thin, due largely to the fair complexion of the model. If the shadow areas are too dark, it creates an unrealistic contrast between them and those areas that are exposed to the light.

**4** After assessing each component of the painting, I determined that the background needed an additional layer of colour, while the shadows required a dark glaze. Therefore, I added a layer of Indanthrene Blue, Sepia and Alizarin Crimson to the dress.

Next, I used a diluted mixture of the "dress colour" to the shadows. I finished by adding a few details to the hair, avoiding the temptation to overwork any particular area.

This is an extract from Mario's new book, *Lessons in Realistic Watercolor*, published by Monacelli Studio. [www.monacellipress.com](http://www.monacellipress.com)

**TOP TIP:** Use a spare piece of identical watercolour paper to make a note of your colour choices – this ensures a unity to the finished painting



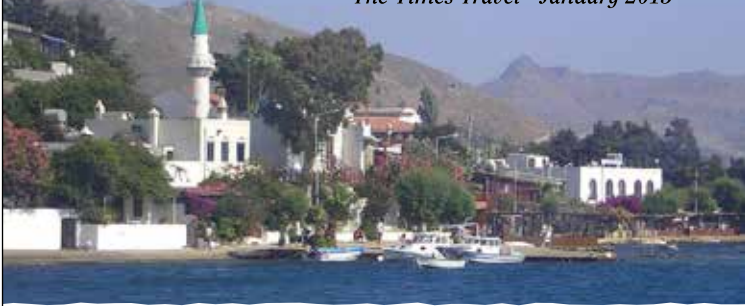




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# PROBLEM: UNINSPIRED COLOUR

Abstract painter **Gerry Dudgeon** shares nine tips for becoming more expressive with your palette

**1** As a semi-abstract landscape painter, I'm fascinated by the way that certain colour combinations can express not only the feeling of a place but also reflect my inner self and evoke a particular mood. Studying colour theory is helpful, but ultimately your use of it has to be personal, so once you've understood things like how to mix colours and how complementary contrasts work, it's important to break the rules and find your own path. As a student, I found *The Art of Colour*, a 1973 book on colour theory by the Swiss painter Johannes Itten to be very useful – I made copies of every single illustration to learn how colour worked.

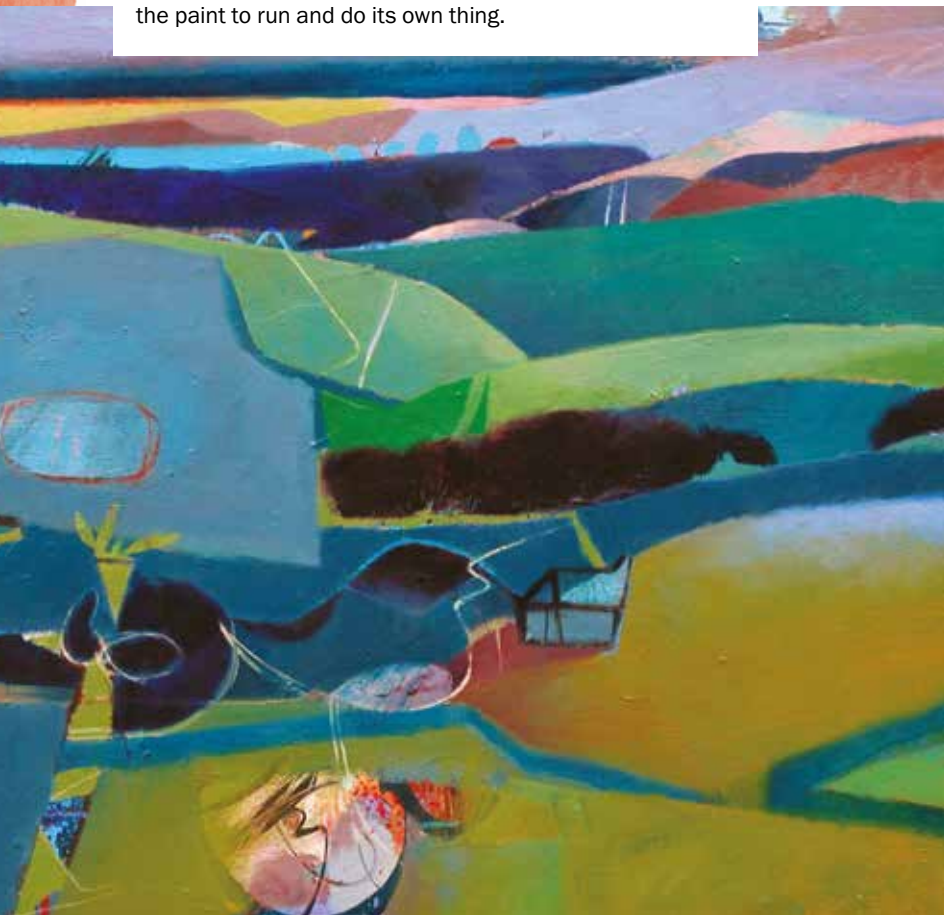
**2** Try improvising to begin with. Start with a blank canvas or page and just enjoy the chemistry of one colour against another without thinking too much about the outcome. I'll often throw and spatter thinned-down acrylic onto the primed canvas while it's on the floor, using mainly warm colours (yellows, ochres, oranges and terracotta reds) mixed to the consistency of watercolour. I finish this prep stage by throwing clear water onto the paint with a decorator's brush to create soft edges and blends, allowing the paint to run and do its own thing.



**3** If you have a core idea in mind rather than a well-worked out plan, creating an experimental base (see tip 2) will allow the painting to suggest colour choices for you as you progress. For example, with my Moroccan-inspired paintings, I want to give a sense of the timeless mystery of the desert environment and the harmony between Man and Nature.

For paintings such as these, I don't want the final images to be merely 'pretty'. It needs to be raw and edgy, and I want the colour combinations to be life-affirming and uplifting as well, so I'll be thinking earthy reds blending into sandy yellows, some dark accents of red-violet in the shadows, and an intense blue in the sky.

**4** If you're using strong, upbeat colours, it's helpful to introduce neutral colour areas too, so the eye can rest in certain places and the composition doesn't become overloaded with saturated colour. Try placing chromatic grey areas, dark tones or whites tinted with Yellow Ochre or Ultramarine Blue next to stronger hues. The tonal balance of the composition is the key: always keep in mind the relative lightness or darkness of your colours and use those contrasts to give the painting visual impact. There are exceptions to this rule, of course – Turner's late landscapes work well without strong tonal contrasts, for example – but this can be a good guide to begin with.



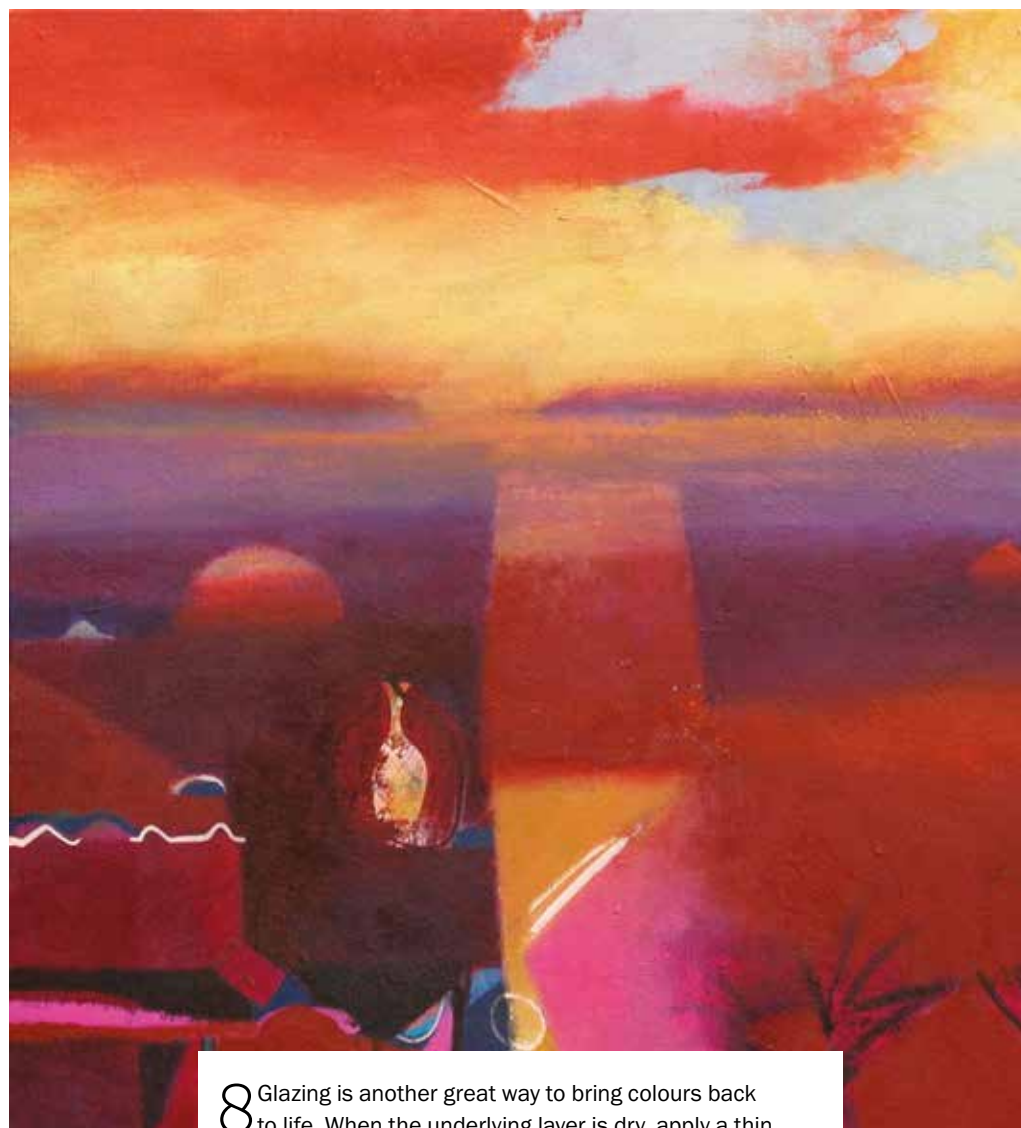




**5** When I'm painting about Nature, greens feature prominently to convey the feeling of verdant growth. I use Phthalo Green as a basis for mixing all my other greens as it can produce a range of warm, organic greens when mixed with Yellow Ochre or Cadmium Orange, good mid-greens when added to other yellows, and cool greens when mixed with Phthalo Blue. Greens can often look dull and inert on their own, so liven them up with touches of contrasting colours such as earth colours, reds or purples.

**6** With acrylic paint especially, colours can sometimes start to look tired and dull after multiple layers are applied, so keep them alive by drawing into them with chalk or oil pastel. Scratch through wet paint to reveal the underlying colours layers, or work over dry paint with oil pastel, before blending and softening the marks with a rag dipped in turps. I fix chalk pastel marks by floating a thin glaze of acrylic gel over them with a palette knife.

**7** We all have colours we love or hate, but it is important to remember that it is how they combine that counts. To expand your palette, try to use colours you don't like or think shouldn't work together. New and unexpected combinations often emerge. I used to hate turquoise, for example, but visiting Morocco made me appreciate how well it combines with earthy reds or Ultramarine Blue.



**8** Glazing is another great way to bring colours back to life. When the underlying layer is dry, apply a thin, transparent wash of paint on top to boost it. Some colours are naturally transparent, such as Alizarin Crimson, Phthalo Green and Ultramarine Blue (check tubes for details), but you can glaze with almost any colour by thinning it with water or adding a glazing medium. Choose a larger brush for fewer brush marks (and hence a smoother finish).

Glazing changes the mood of a painting, lending it an ethereal, spiritual quality. By contrast, opaque colours, which don't allow light to pass through them, feel more material and earth-bound in comparison.

**9** Some of my Dorset and Moroccan work is strongly blue-biased, because I like to convey a more contemplative mood in which the viewer can perhaps imagine how a landscape has changed and been altered over thousands of years by man or by geological forces. With this in mind, I often glaze transparent blues over warmer colours to achieve some surprising new hues.

Try using a wad of wet J Cloth to 'float' the glaze over the surface or blend it into an adjacent colour area. Not only does the cloth act as a blotter to create a mottled texture, but it also allows you to lift out the glaze if you applied it too thickly.

**Unlocking Your Creativity with Gerry Dudgeon runs from 10-15 July at Coombe Farm Studios, Devon. [www.gerrydudgeon.com](http://www.gerrydudgeon.com)**

**TOP TIP:** Mixing media can help you be more expressive with colour. Try using pastels to scratch through still-wet layers of acrylic and oil paint. Charcoal also works nicely with acrylic – and fixes itself too!

**ABOVE** Dawn Glow, acrylic on canvas, 57x51cm

**TOP LEFT** Rain in the Atlas Mountains, acrylic on canvas, 66x76cm

**FAR LEFT** Mapperton Fields, acrylic on canvas, 66x71cm. All paintings by Gerry Dudgeon



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## ARTY FACTS

# QUENTIN BLAKE

STEVE PILL EXPLORES THE LIFE OF THE MUCH-LOVED ENGLISH ILLUSTRATOR

# 1

### HE STARTED EARLY

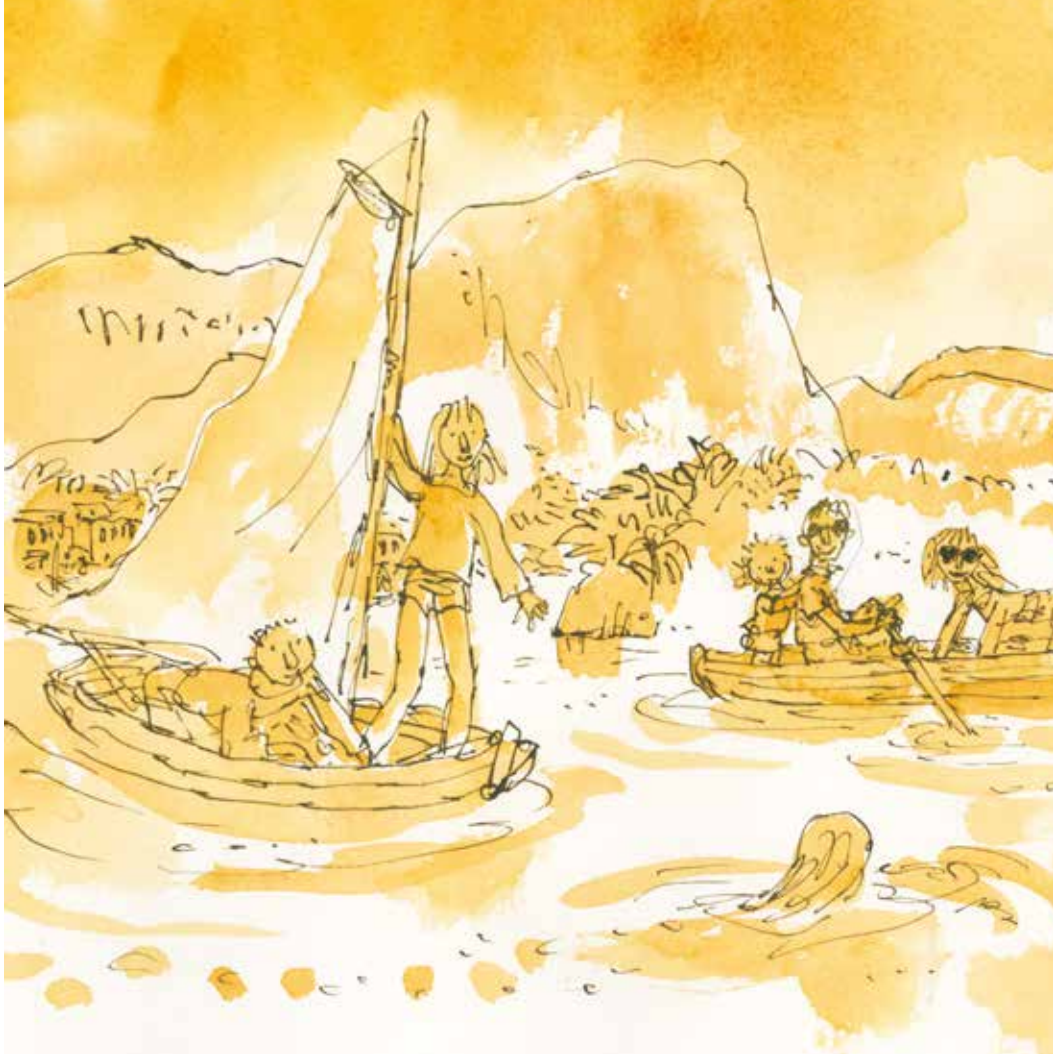
Born on 16 December 1932, Quentin Blake was a precocious artistic talent, becoming the youngest ever contributor to *Punch* magazine at the age of 16.

Nevertheless, Blake surprised his school art teacher by opting to study English Literature at Cambridge. In the new biography, *In the Theatre of the Imagination*, he explains his logic: "I thought, if I go to an art school I might stop reading... but if I go to Cambridge I shan't stop drawing."

# 2

### HE IS SPONTANEOUS WITH COLOUR

Blake has a spontaneous approach to colour, which he applies to his illustrations with watercolour, ink or chinagraph pencil. "I don't have a set of rules about colour and how you use it, I don't think leaves are green, or tree-trunks brown. Colour can add depth, emotion and atmosphere. I don't know how to do it, it's instinctive; some people do roughs in colour but I only ever do black and white – I busk the colour."



# 3

### HE'S VERY ADAPTABLE

Blake's illustrations for Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes* were originally commissioned as black-and-white drawings. Asked to update them in colour and faced with the prospect of drawing them all again, Blake instead turned to the 19th-century French illustrator Gavarni for inspiration. He made lithograph prints of each original, which he then hand-coloured with pale tints, adding waxy black crayon for the shadow areas.

# 4

### HE IS A SURPRISINGLY INFLUENTIAL ARTIST

As head of the Royal College of Art illustration department, Blake taught many leading illustrators including Steven Appleby and Emma Chichester Clark. The breadth of his influence became clear in 2002, however, when a mysterious parcel arrived for his 70th birthday. Inside were handmade birthday postcards from 70 Australian picture-book artists who had been inspired by Blake's own work.

# 5

### HE DOESN'T JUST DRAW FOR KIDS

Aside from his children's books, Blake has also illustrated many classic novels, including *Scoop* by Evelyn Waugh, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes. "It's a very interesting problem to treat it in two colours and to... find those right significant moments," says Blake.

*Quentin Blake – In the Theatre of the Imagination* by Ghislaine Kenyon is published by Bloomsbury, RRP £25.  
[www.bloomsbury.com](http://www.bloomsbury.com)



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