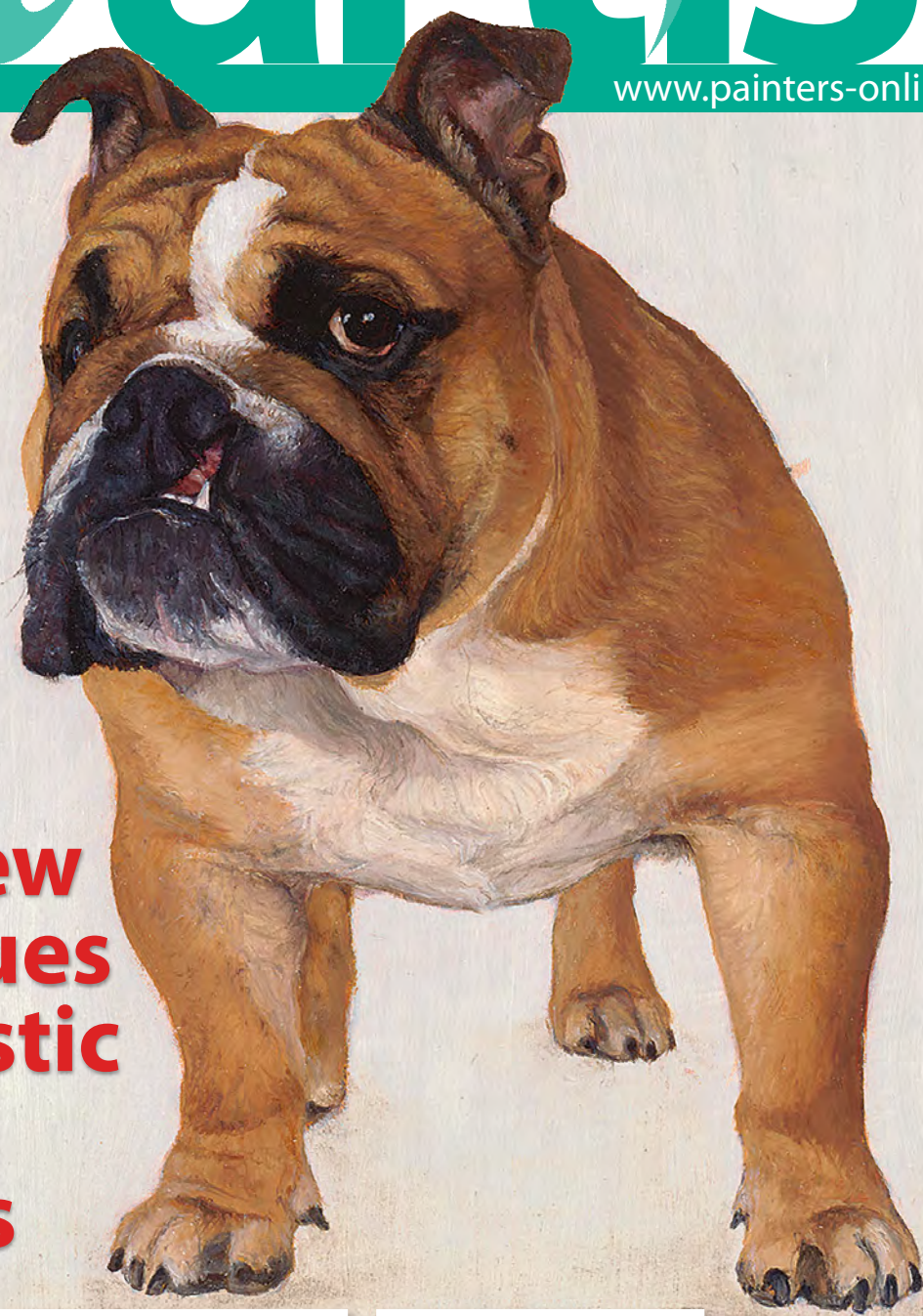


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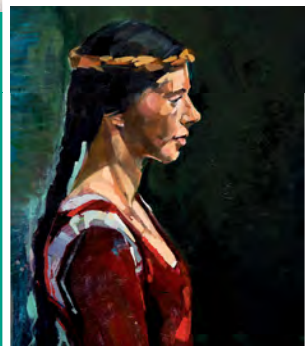
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should be sent to: *The Artist*, Circulation

Dept, Caxton House, 63/65 High Street,

Tenterden, Kent TN30 6BD. Tel: 01580

763673

**Rates are:**

UK – £39.99 (includes Northern Ireland);

EC member countries – €67;

USA – \$80 (air freight); Canada – \$92 (air

freight). All other countries £50 (air freight).

Payments by credit card are taken in sterling

at £50. Foreign currency prices include bank

charges. Periodicals postage paid at Rahway,

NJ. US subscribers only: Send address

corrections to *The Artist*, c/o Mercury

Airfreight International Ltd, 365 Blair Road,

Avenel, NJ 07001

**News-trade distribution by:**

Warners Group Publications plc. Tel: 01778

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*theartist* is printed by Warners Midlands

PLC, The Maltings, Manor Lane, Bourne,

Lincolnshire PE10 9PH and published every

four weeks by THE ARTISTS' PUBLISHING

COMPANY LTD

*theartist* Caxton House, 63/65 High

Street, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6BD Telephone

01580 763673 Fax 01580 765411

Advertising 01778 392048

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# WELCOME from the editor

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

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The birth of Abstract Expressionism in the late 1940s in New York and the USA rocked the art world and shortly afterwards shook up the thinking and approach of artists in the UK, some of whose teaching influenced my own painting as an art student in the late 1970s.

Its spirit and cultural effects were the reason for my subsequent choice of PhD subject: the rise of abstract painting and sculpture in the UK in the 1960s, and the impact of American art and art criticism during that period. Essentially I wanted to understand the background to the kind of art teaching and styles of painting being championed and encouraged by my art tutors at the time, including Terry Frost, Mali Morris and John Hoyland, all of whom were influenced in one way or another by the arrival of Abstract Expressionism here in the late 1950s. I was therefore particularly excited to attend the press view, and wasn't disappointed.

No survey of this phenomenon has taken place in this country since the late 1950s, so if you've ever wondered about the history of the development of Abstract Expressionism, this new exhibition at the Royal Academy provides the answers, as well as indisputable treasures amongst the 163 works by 30 artists. The show works well on various levels: demographically, historically, culturally, putting the phenomenon into its social context, and monographically. All the key figures are here: Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, Clyfford Still, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning and Barnett Newman among them. We see in the first room how many of the artists saw themselves (Rothko's early self-portrait is a surprise) and their early work in which figuration still featured strongly.

Then we move into the first of the monographic galleries focusing on individual artists, with a look at Gorky's significance. He assimilated the work of Cubism and Surrealism, as well as Kandinsky's work using highly thinned paint soaked into the canvas, and fused the lessons learnt into a new abstract language. In the galleries devoted to Pollock we see two of his most iconic masterpieces hung opposite each other: *Mural* 1943 and *Blue Poles* 1952. The massive scale of the 1943 mural, commissioned by Peggy Guggenheim for her Manhattan townhouse, was unprecedented at the time and it had a seismic impact. It established a daring free handling of paint and on an epic scale that engaged the energies of the artist's entire body in the making of the piece.

Abstract Expressionism is also about colourfield painting and one of the highlights of this show is probably the RA's octagonal gallery, which contains some of Rothko's late canvases. These luminous expanses of oranges, yellows, deep maroons and greens are mesmerising. This gallery was certainly a personal favourite.

There isn't enough space to list the many reasons to recommend a visit, but another practical one is the fact that most of the paintings are large enough to be seen above the huge crowds that this blockbuster show will deservedly attract.

*Abstract Expressionism* is on show at the Royal Academy until January 2, 2017 [www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)

Best wishes

*Sally*

Sally Bulgin Publishing Editor



Alison Elliott **Frank Nichols**, oil on gesso panel, 4×4½in (10×12cm). See pages 12 to 15

Let us know what you think at • [theartistletters@tapc.co.uk](mailto:theartistletters@tapc.co.uk) • [www.painters-online.co.uk/forum](http://www.painters-online.co.uk/forum) • [www.facebook.com/paintersonline](http://www.facebook.com/paintersonline) • [twitter.com/artpublishing](https://twitter.com/artpublishing)





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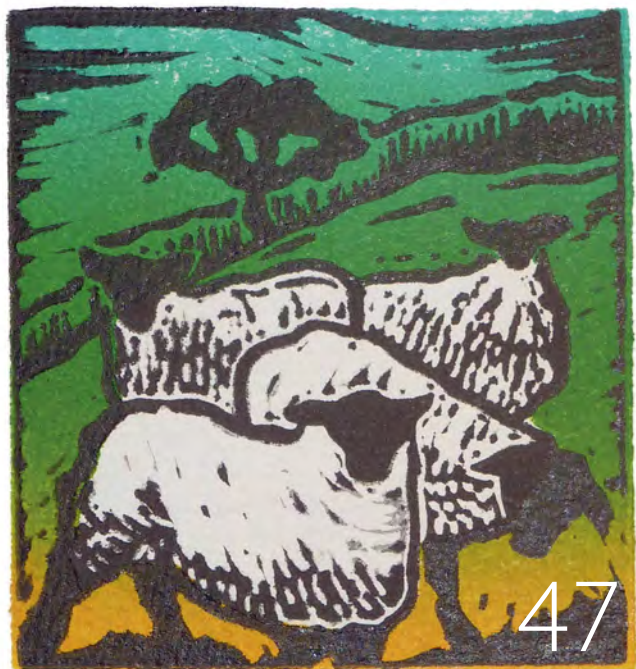
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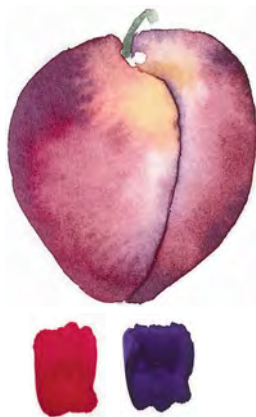
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## EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS



**Ken Howard OBE, RA** studied at Hornsey School of Art and the Royal College of Art. He is a member of the NEAC, ROI, RWS, RWA and RBA. He exhibits extensively and has won numerous awards.



**Jason Bowyer NEAC, RP, PS** studied at Camberwell School of Art and the Royal Academy Schools. He is the founder of the NEAC Drawing School and exhibits his work widely.



**Bernard Dunstan RA** studied at Byam Shaw School of Art and the Slade School. He taught at the Camberwell and Byam Shaw Schools of Art among others. He exhibits widely including in the annual exhibitions of the NEAC, of which he is a member, and RA.



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

# NEXT MONTH IN *the* artist

## FEATURES

### ► MASTERCLASS

**David Curtis** explains why railway stations make such great subject matter as he demonstrates a recent watercolour painting of London's Victoria Station



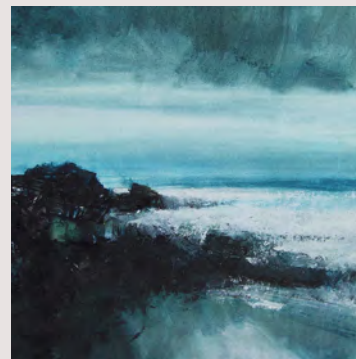
### ◀ IN CONVERSATION

Winner of this year's *The Artist Award* in the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation Wildlife Artist of the Year exhibition, Swedish artist **Gunnar Tryggmo** reveals his approach and working methods

## PRACTICALS

**Peter Brown** reveals why and how he paints big in his studio as he demonstrates a recent street scene in oils

► How to use your iPad to test alterations to a composition before committing the changes to the work itself, by **David Parfitt**



## PLUS

- **Ann Witheridge** advises on colour choices and flesh tones for figure paintings
- Follow **Penny German's** demonstration and paint flowers *alla prima* in oils
- Make your mark with marker pens with **Robert Dutton**, who encourages you to use them for your mixed-media paintings and sketchbook studies
- How to paint cats successfully in watercolour by **Marjolein Kruijt**

## PLUS

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- How to choose the right brush, type, size and shape for your work, by **Ian Sidaway**

**And much more! Don't miss out: our December issue is on sale from November 4**



## ★ STAR LETTER

### Open competitions

Over the years I have entered quite a few open competitions, including the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 2014, when one of my paintings was shortlisted. This meant handing it in. Wow – me going to the Royal Academy to hand in a painting!

I decided to make a weekend of it and travelled down to London from Cumbria with my two children. After the weekend was over, with train fares, accommodation, food and a shopping spree with two fashion-conscious teenagers, I had spent around £1,500. Not only that, but I had to travel back to London to collect the painting following its rejection some few weeks later. No explanation, no feedback, nothing. Just a smile as it was handed back.

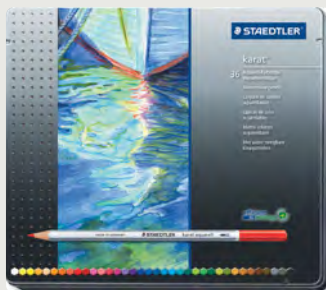
Last year I entered the Jerwood Drawing Prize and again travelled to London to hand in the work, followed by my immediate return to Cumbria. The drawing was rejected so the following weekend I made the same journey. And yet again, no feedback, no explanation; just free bubble-wrap.

I wouldn't mind but I'm a fairly successful artist back home. And lest anyone thinks it's the less well-known artists who are rejected, another very well-known and very successful local artist was rejected also!

I'll admit rejection is a real kick in the teeth, but I plan to enter the Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize, again in London – nothing ventured, nothing gained.

**Eddie Potts, by email**

*This month's winner will receive a tin of 36 Karat Aquarell 125 professional watercolour pencils, which can be used dry or blended with water, courtesy of Steadtler, worth £61.92. For more information about Steadtler products, visit [www.staedtler.co.uk](http://www.staedtler.co.uk)*



### Flower power

Having read Dennis Swainton's letter in the October issue about opening tubes of paint, I can offer the solution: Lakeland Jar Opener Lid Grippers, a wonderful plastic gadget that works every time. They come in packs of two, price £1.99, and look like large flat purple flowers about 15cm in diameter. Although designed to open kitchen jars, they work perfectly, even on very small paint tubes. I keep one with my acrylics, another with my watercolours. You can also use the two together, one to grip the top whilst holding the base with the other.

I teach an art group and have bought lots of these for my members, who find them very effective as a cheap, cheerful and perfect solution. Give them a try!

**Janet Hunt, by email**

### Transportable art

Most of us have limited wall space so I had the idea of making my art to sell as limited-edition scarves, with the idea that my scarves will be brought to life through their owners.

An artist at core, I founded my brand Ruth Dent with the mission of transitioning ideas between paint, print and thread. All our scarves start their lives as paintings. The designs are limited to ensure exclusivity and, as such, our scarves are intended to be collectible pieces.

Unlike wall art, our creative designs can easily be transported. By wrapping my customers in a work of art, I am effectively enabling my art to travel and gather its own stories and memories.

**Ruth Dent, by email**

### Make a brush case

I thought I'd pass on these basic instructions for cash-strapped people of indeterminate age. If they can prime a canvas and measure up frames this will be a doddle.

Take a thickish, clean, used pillow ticking (feathers removed) and adjust to approximately 21×21in (53.5×53.5cm) – in my case this only entailed trimming the open end – and fold in the raw end to neaten. Fold



up approximately 5 or 6in (12.5 or 15cm), insert a ribbon or tape on the right-hand side and machine top-stitch all round. Stitch about 12 or 13 channels of about 1½in (4cm) wide – if the channel on the far right is wide enough it will take a ruler. Job done!

**Judith Butler, by email**

### Great experience

I am a keen amateur who has been painting for three years in oils. This year I entered an open competition, the Buxton Spa Prize 2016. The whole experience was great. The competition was structured so that entrants had to paint something chosen at random. This gave me a purpose in my painting and a deadline to work to. I also attended the prize night, where everyone was so friendly, the art was amazing and the winners well-deserved.

I recently returned to collect my work from the exhibition and discovered to my delight that I had sold a painting! I really can recommend giving competitions a go.

**Paul Ward, by email**

### Anatomical studies

I enjoyed reading Ann Witheridge's article on anatomy in the September issue. I have been interested in this subject for some time and

have bought books as well as apps for my tablet. They have been excellent in some aspects but deficient in enabling me to really understand the parts and how everything fits together. Recently I bought a life-size model skeleton and at last I have been able to 'get' as well as feel the complex shapes of some bones, such as the scapula, and also understand the whole at a deeper level. It has been a very worthwhile investment.

**Michael Jules Lang, by email**

### Improving figures

I am really enjoying the articles by Ann Witheridge on improving our figure painting (see pages 44 to 46, and the August, September and October issues of *The Artist*). I am rubbish at this subject but with Ann's help I am finding it just a bit easier. Hopefully I will improve with practice!

**Nina Laking, by email**



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Image: Benjamin Andreas, *Hoxton Square Daytime*

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# THE ART WORLD

NEWS, VIEWS, INFORMATION AND SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE ART WORLD

*compiled by Deborah Wanstall*



▲ David Bomberg *Ghetto Theatre*, 1920, oil on canvas, 29¼×24½in (74.5×62cm)

## ART OUT OF CHAOS

With a range of styles from Impressionism, Expressionism, Vorticism and Social Realism, **Out of Chaos: Art, Identity and Migration** at Laing Art Gallery has 50 powerful works by international artists, including Frank Auerbach, David Bomberg, Marc Chagall, Chaim Soutine and Alfred Wolmark, drawn from the collection of the Ben Uri Gallery.

**Out of Chaos: Art, Identity and Migration** is at the Laing Art Gallery, New Bridge Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8AG, from October 15 to February 26. Admission is £7, concessions available. The gallery is closed on Mondays. Telephone 0191 278 1611; <https://laingartgallery.org.uk>





# INSPIRED BY COLOUR

The works of Winifred Nicholson are brought together at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art in an exhibition co-curated by her grandson, Jovan Nicholson. With particular focus on her treatment of light and colour, works selected include still lifes, landscapes, portraits and experiments with abstraction. Nicholson's prism paintings are a key feature of this show, many of which are previously unseen.

**Winifred Nicholson: Liberation of Colour** is at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Centre Square, Middlesbrough TS1 2AZ from October 22 to February 12. Admission is free. Telephone 01642 931232; [www.visitmima.com](http://www.visitmima.com)

◀ **Winifred Nicholson Tablecloth**, c1934, oil on board, 26½×21½in (67.5×54.5cm)

● **Jakar International Ltd**, art materials suppliers and UK distributor of Caran d'Ache colour and drawing materials, has announced the death of **Kenneth Sacki**, father of the current managing director, Paul Sacki. Kenneth, who was involved in the business until 2015, was well known in the art industry.

● **Cambridge Envisaged** is an exhibition of paintings by Peter Corr, Paul Janssens and Caroline Forward at the Michaelhouse Centre, Trinity Street, Cambridge CB2 1SU from November 8 to 19. Admission is free. Telephone 01223 309167. All works will be for sale.

## MODERN PAINTERS

The Saatchi Gallery's exhibition **Painters' Painters** focuses on a group of artists whose work is inspiring a younger generation – the artists of tomorrow – emerging from leading art schools. These distinctive, non-conformist artists are Richard Aldrich, David Brian Smith, Dexter Dalwood, Raffi Kalenderian, Ansel Krut, Martin Maloney, Bjarne Melgaard, Ryan Mosley and David Salle.

**Painters' Painters** is at the Saatchi Gallery, Duke of York's HQ, King's Road, London SW3, from November 30 to February 28. Admission is free. [www.saatchigallery.com](http://www.saatchigallery.com)



▲ **Dexter Dalwood Kurt Cobain's Greenhouse**, 2000, oil on canvas, 84¼×101½in (214×258cm)

## DERWENT ART PRIZE

Agim Sulaj has been awarded the £6,000 First Prize in this year's **Derwent Art Prize**, an international open competition of works created in pencil. The size and visual impact of Sulaj's work *Refugees* (below) impressed the judges, who selected it from over 1,000 entries. All shortlisted works will be on show from October 30 to November 19 at Trowbridge Arts, Trowbridge Town Hall, Market Street, Market Street, Trowbridge, Wilts BA14 8EQ, Telephone 01225 774306; [www.trowbridgearts.com](http://www.trowbridgearts.com)

For details of how to enter the next Derwent Art Prize, see our Guide to Open Competitions and Exhibitions, published in our January 2017 issue, and [www.derwent-artprize.com](http://www.derwent-artprize.com)



◀ **Agim Sulaj Refugees**, graphite, 59×67in (150×170cm)



**Ray Campbell-Smith (1916–2016)**

**His Final Collection** is a posthumous exhibition of watercolours at St Julian's Club, Underriver, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0RX, from October 13 to November 24. Original illustrations and previously unseen works are included in the exhibition. All works will be for sale, with proceeds to St Barnardo's children's charity. Ray was an editorial consultant and contributor to our sister magazine *Leisure Painter* for many years.

## FORTY STILL LIFES

Forty years of still-life paintings by Eric Rimmington are on show at Bohun Gallery, which has represented him for three of the four decades. This is his eighth solo exhibition at the gallery and it features over 40 works dating between 1978 and 2016, all of which are for sale.

**Eric Rimmington: Still Life** is at the Bohun Gallery, 15 Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 1AB from November 5 to 29. Admission is free. The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm. Telephone 01491 576228; [www.bohungallery.co.uk](http://www.bohungallery.co.uk)



▲ Eric Rimmington *Mantelpiece*, 1978, oil on canvas, 30×30in (76×76cm)

## PAINTERSONLINE EDITOR'S GALLERY CHOICE

This month's editor's choice from our website gallery is by Andrew Shimmin, who comments:

*'I particularly enjoy painting subjects that reflect old dilapidated buildings and machinery where the elements and weather have taken its toll on the surfaces over the years. The photograph that inspired this painting reminded me of the work of Edward Hopper, an artist I draw on often for inspiration. Watercolour was the obvious choice as it gave me the ideal opportunity to capture the subtle tones between light and shade, giving the painting a sense of nostalgia with a nod to modern American realism.'*

*'I built up the image gradually on Winsor & Newton 300gsm Not watercolour paper with wet-in-wet washes to achieve the base tones. I then set about the finer details until I was satisfied that I had captured the textures, essence and mood of the scene in the painting. My palette consisted mainly of the earth colours: raw and burnt sienna, burnt umber, new gamboge and cadmium yellow, plus Payne's grey, cobalt blue, cadmium red, scarlet lake and Naples yellow.'*



▲ Andrew Shimmin *American Gas Station*, watercolour, 8¼×13¼in (22×35cm). On show in our online gallery at [www.painters-online.co.uk](http://www.painters-online.co.uk)

To upload images of your own work and receive valuable feedback, go to our website and click on the link to the gallery. This is a free service.

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# Contemporary old master

**Alison Elliott**'s photographically accurate portraits of animals are painted with an almost obsessional level of detail using traditional methods, as Robin Spalding discovers



▲ *Fledalji*, oil on canvas, 88¼× 72in (224×183cm).

'In 2005 *Country Life* magazine featured an article on George Stubbs in which they commissioned the photographer Brian Moody to create a contemporary equivalent of some of his best-known paintings, one of which was *Whistlejacket*. I bought the rights to use this photograph in order to create my own painting. The horse was an Arabian horse called Fledalji.'

Alison Elliott manages to do something truly remarkable with paint. She brings her subjects to life with a combination of closely observed detail and traditional painterly methods, updating the techniques of the old masters for a contemporary audience.

It is Alison's attention to the minutiae of an animal's form that sets her apart from other animal portrait artists. Her paintings show a deep admiration for her subjects, a love which is demonstrated by the intimacy and almost obsessional level of detail that she manages to achieve. She has a natural affinity with animals and her paintings often reflect a deep understanding of the character of each subject. 'I would call myself an animal portrait artist,' she says. 'It is part of my creative process to identify the animal and to communicate the ideas and subjects that reflect their character.'

## Inspiration

'I work in a similar way to the photographer Richard Bailey, who strips the photograph down to just the bare essentials. Like Bailey I focus only on the subject, "cutting it out" from its environment. This minimal approach places the animal at the epicentre of the painting, with no peripheral distractions to draw the viewers' attention from the portrait. I don't feel the need to add anything else. Less is more.'

This commitment to capturing the subject is most evident in her large horse paintings, in which veins ripple across the surface of the animal's skin, networking over the flesh and outlining the musculature moving beneath. Her horses are painstakingly composed from thousands of tiny brushstrokes, built up in layers over periods as long as a year.





◀ *Stivalery BJ*, oil on canvas, 41¼×63in (106×160cm).

'I set up a photoshoot where this Arabian horse was based. I hung a 12ft (3.5m) canvas backdrop and photographed her standing. I photograph dogs in the same way, although they come to the studio.'

▼ *Boy*, oil on canvas, 50×80in (127×203cm).

'Boy was a six-month old giraffe that I photographed in South Australia. When I saw him he projected an aura of vulnerability and beauty. I just had to stand still to watch him. This is how all my projects begin.'

## Scale

Each painting starts with a consultation with the subject's owner to identify the animal's character. This usually involves both owner and animal visiting her studio for the initial photographs from which the paintings are produced. Getting these initial images right is crucial to the success of the finished work. She uses a Canon 5D Mark II camera and a fixed aperture 50mm lens to achieve the necessary clarity of the image and true-to-life colours that she finds essential to making an accurate representation of the subject.

Once a single photograph is selected to work from, Alison decides on the scale of the painting by projecting her chosen image onto a paper backdrop. Many of her earlier paintings are life size – most impressively *Fledalji* (bottom left) and *Boy* (right), which are both painted at 1:1 scale. In newer works, such as *Li Mei* (page 15) the painting exceeds life size, which is becoming a more common occurrence in her practice.

These decisions about scale are very important to the effectiveness of the finished work. The larger paintings such as *Fledalji* create a huge impact on the viewer – they dominate the space and are both awe inspiring and majestic.

In addition, Alison paints miniatures of smaller animals. These two strands of working co-exist and often help to inform each other, with some miniatures graduating to larger paintings. Her miniatures are mostly made to commission as portraits of much-loved pets and are usually sized between 4×4½in (10×12cm) and 7×9½in (18×24cm).

These small works invite the viewer to draw near to appreciate the detail. Because of their size, they can be fitted into even the most crowded home and







◀ **Frank Nichols**, oil on gesso panel, 4×4½in (10×12cm).

'I was particularly drawn to Frank Nichols as he was born with a hair lip. When he came to the studio for the photo shoot he drank from a spray bottle for water, which I found so endearing! He projected so much confidence and happiness, which I aimed to capture in the painting.'

as a result are proving to be exceptionally popular with commercial galleries.

### Materials and techniques

Alison is completely self-taught, having learnt the majority of her working process from books and magazines. 'I learnt from reading and experimenting with different techniques and supports until I began to feel comfortable with what I was doing. It's taken me years to get to the stage I am at now and I still feel constantly challenged by the medium.'

'I consider myself to be a classical artist and I try to continue the traditional working methods of the Old Masters whenever possible. I'm a great believer in the efficacy of time-honoured techniques and I also favour high-quality, traditional materials. I buy most of my supplies from Russell & Chapple in London. If I am going to devote months to creating a painting I strongly believe that it is best to choose the highest quality materials that I can afford.'

'Russell & Chapple produce my canvases, which are double oil-primed French linen stretched onto custom-made exhibition stretchers. Linen has a much smoother surface than the more open weave canvases, which makes it the perfect base for highly detailed working.'

'I use Old Holland oils which are very high quality and have a great range of colours. My palette is flake white No.1, cadmium red purple, ivory black extra, burnt sienna, burnt umber, raw sienna light, nickel titanium yellow, Naples

yellow extra, Old Holland warm grey light, Old Holland blue-grey, ultramarine blue, Parisian (Prussian) blue extra and Mars yellow. These colours provide the necessary range to capture the animal accurately and give the painting a characteristic tonality that is particular to my style.'

'I buy all my brushes from Rosemary & Co. I use a number of different sizes and shapes – for the finer details I use their pure kolinsky filbert 0, flat bright sable mix 2, pointed sable mix 3/0 2/0 and 0. I also use their golden synthetic spotters 3/0 0 and 1, and the eclipse stubby flats 0, 1 and 2.'

### Layers of detail

'Once I've made the decision about the size of the work, I order a canvas of the correct dimensions. I start by applying the imprimatura, usually a warm neutral colour such as burnt sienna mixed with a little white, with a large brush. After a few minutes I wipe it off with a clean cotton rag to leave a uniformly coloured ground. At its simplest, this process is about economy of paint, however it can also give the painting a luminous, reflective quality.'

'The photograph I've chosen to work from is then projected onto the canvas and I draw an outline of the subject over the projected image, with as much

detail as possible. Then I block in the lowlights and highlights, without any detail, so that the whole canvas is covered, after which I start to build up the detail in layers. With each layer I add to the level of detail with progressively finer marks using gradually smaller brushes. I use an array of different sizes and shapes for the different elements of each painting.'

'Each painting takes four layers to get to the most precise level of detail. This is the same for both miniatures and my larger canvases, although of course the larger canvases take considerably more time. The fourth and final layer is what I call a tweaking layer, done to bring out the finest of details such as eyelashes, highlights on hair and light in the animal's eyes. I use the pure kolinsky filbert size 0 for this because it keeps a strong point.'



▶ **Visindar**, oil on canvas, 48×76in (122×193cm).

'My work has always been about detail. I want each subject to come to life, so much so that I can almost feel them breathing, rather like a *tableau vivant*.'



## Final touches

'Once the painting is finished I leave it for about a week, until touch-dry, then apply Roberson Retouching Varnish. I find this is a good way to protect the painting from dust and grease without interfering with the drying process.

Technically an oil painting needs at least six months to dry completely but if you are constantly working and selling paintings, you can't wait six months. Retouching varnish gives that essential layer of protection for sending your paintings out to exhibitions. It also gives them a lovely finish that brings out the colours – the darks especially.

'However, be careful when varnishing a painting that relies on subtleties of colour, as the varnish can increase the contrast considerably. I don't varnish my large works because the risk that this might change the painting is too high.

'I don't usually frame my work but I do sell my miniatures with a custom-made presentation box. This is for protection, so that the clients can make the decision about framing themselves. It's also a lovely way of wrapping up the commission as a package, especially if it is a gift.'

TA



▲ *Li Mei*, oil on canvas, 43¼×43¼in (110×110cm).

'The scale of the finished painting is a completely subconscious decision, as every subject will dictate their finished size on the canvas.'



### Alison Elliott

studied at Winchester College of Art and Newcastle Polytechnic. She has exhibited with the Society of Equestrian Artists, at Palace House in Newmarket and at Tattersalls Yearling Sales. In October 2014 she won the Curwen Gallery Prize for Figurative Painting and in July 2015 had her first major solo exhibition with them. Her painting *Betty Boop* was selected for the Columbia Threadneedle Prize in 2015. She is represented by Curwen Gallery, [www.curwengallery.co.uk](http://www.curwengallery.co.uk), and Osborne Studio Gallery, [www.osg.uk.com](http://www.osg.uk.com). [www.alison-elliott.com](http://www.alison-elliott.com)



# Portraits, thick and fast

**Emma Copley** works quickly from a combination of direct observation and her own photos. She explains how, in her latest series of portraits, she explores colour and form with thick layers of oil paint

I am drawn to my studio each day out of a desire to express myself with colour and texture. I paint with oils on wood and gouache on paper. I use gouache when teaching, and for quick colour studies when travelling. However, oil on wood is my preferred method. I paint quickly with thick paint on a smooth hard surface, wet-into-wet with oils, carving out forms and building up texture. My finished oil paintings should be viewed closely so you can see the fingerprints, lumps and bumps.

## Basic process

Using the photo as a starting point I create the composition on panel and eliminate areas in order to intensify the emotion I am trying to express. I must complete my paintings quickly or I lose the spark that first triggered my inspiration. My largest works are 60×36in (153.2×91.5cm) and my smallest are 8×10in (20.5×25.5cm). From the start I work in muted tones, using greys tinted with primary colours, ending with an infusion of bright colour that relates closely to these. I spend a lot of time looking at my palette and mixing groups of colour that match my memory. My brushstrokes vary between smooth, slow, thoughtful marks and fast,

► *Charcoal study, 16½×11¾in (42×30cm). Working from photographs, my gestural drawings are made quickly, with an intuitive combination of tone and line, as though the sitter were actually in front of me in the studio*

thick, gestural layers of paint.

If I struggle with a piece, I study the work of artists I admire, for example Alice Neel for her portrait likenesses, Van Gogh for his visceral use of paint and colour, David Lynch's films, particularly his moody and mysterious treatment of character and place, and Pierre Bonnard for his evocative colours. My paintings change with time and each collection is an extension of the previous. I strive for simplicity and a clear expression of what I see.

## Portraits

My latest work explores the figure and colour, temperature and contrast. The

colour palette and some of the figures are inspired by a painting of flowers I made and by Masaccio's frescoes in Florence's Brancacci Chapel. As usual my subjects are my family and friends.

I begin by trawling through the hundreds of photos I have on my phone and print off images that catch my eye. Usually images where the body has an interesting form, or the expression in the face is particularly captivating. Once I have my images printed I pin them up in my studio and create charcoal drawings from them. I complete these gesture drawings in a rush, using quick marks and an intuitive combination of tone and line, as if I

have the actual people sitting for me in the studio in timed poses.

Once I have these complete, I edit again, choosing just a few drawings that I find the most interesting, compositionally and emotionally. By this time I have whittled it down to ten possible figurative compositions.

My next step is to choose what size and shape panel to create these pieces on. It helps to consider how I would like them displayed, close together in groups or spread out. Using sandpaper and high quality gesso I smooth and prime my boards in a meditative state. I always have music playing. It is important that the painting feels intimate, sensual. Painting is a sensory experience and it is very important for me to convey this. All my works contain a piece of me.

I do not use any medium with my oil paint, I don't like the smell or the toxicity. I only use turps to clean my brushes. I work quickly and try to complete each piece in a sitting to capture the energy in ►p18





## DEMONSTRATION *Mae and Joe*

I began by mixing a greeny blue-black and a mid-tone grey from that black. Little by little I removed small chunks of paint from this giant pile of grey, and tinted each one with a colour until I had 11 tinted grey tones to work with. Then I made two highlights on my palette: red mixed with white, and lemon yellow mixed with white. I scraped and spread the remaining mid-tone grey all over the smooth wooden panel, completely covering the surface



### ◀ STAGE ONE

I chose a pale colour to draw in the figures, beginning with the heads and working my way to the outer extremities, referencing my gesture drawings. My challenge was not to use too many dark colours for shadows and contrast, rather to make the colour do the work, and to use colour intuitively to express emotion

### ▲ STAGE TWO

I used a cool alizarin crimson red grey for the shadow areas and a pale, light blue grey for other mid-tone shadows. Once I was happy that enough of the figure was depicted and the pose could be seen, I stepped back

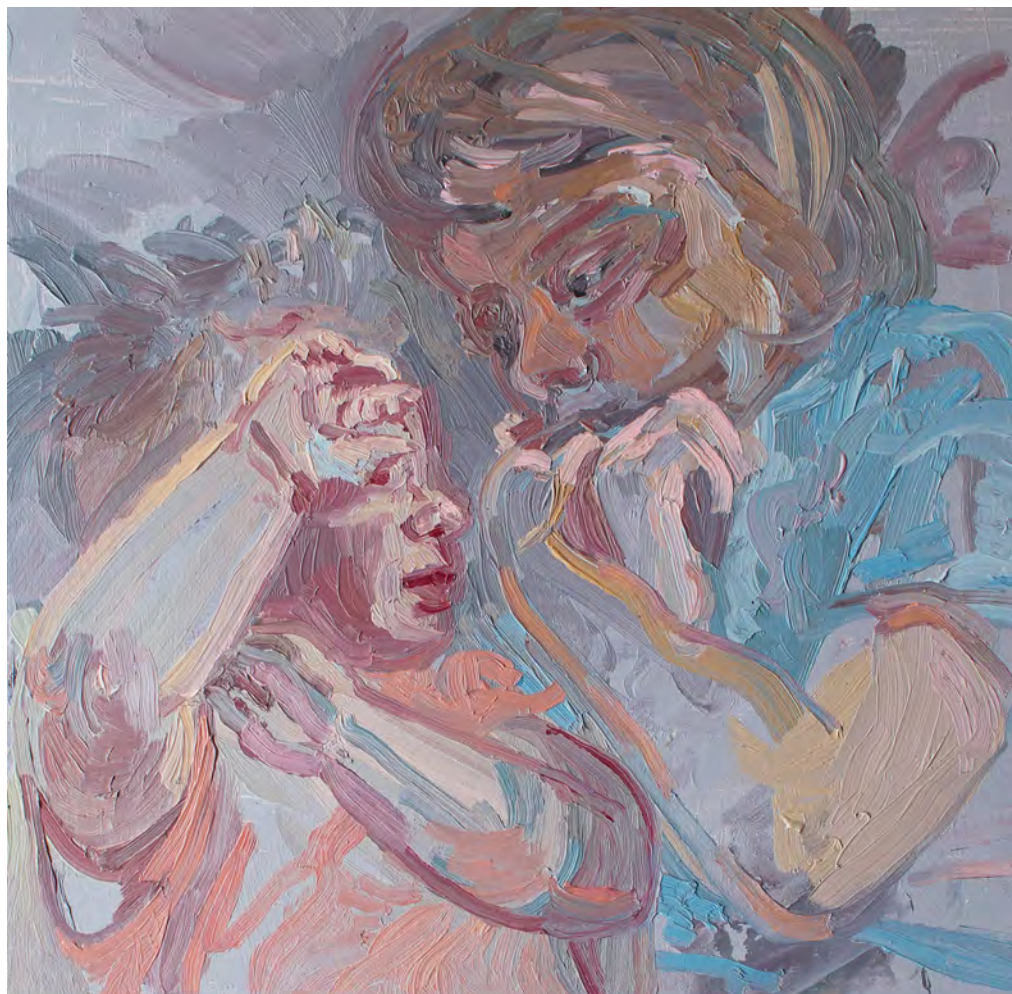
## MATERIALS

- A large towel and a small container of Sansodor for cleaning brushes
- Da Vinci and Winsor & Newton brushes
- Winsor & Newton palette knife
- Rags for painting
- Winsor & Newton, sometimes Daler-Rowney Georgian, oils: cadmium red, alizarin crimson, permanent rose, lemon yellow, yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, ultramarine blue, cobalt, cerulean blue, titanium white
- Wood panel and Winsor & Newton acrylic gesso
- Two homemade Perspex palettes for mixing colour

### ► FINISHED PAINTING

*Mae and Joe*, oil on board, 13×8½in (33×32cm).

I added some dull warm skin tones using cadmium yellow and cerulean blue mixed into yellow ochre and mid-tone grey, and clearer highlights of white and lemon yellow and grey/red, white and grey. Slightly darker tones of ultramarine blue and yellow ochre were mixed with my black and grey for a little contrast. At this stage, usually about two to three hours into painting, I stop myself and move on to the next one







▲ Owen, charcoal study, 16½×11½in (42×30cm)

the first few marks made. So far I have made four paintings like this and I am glad that I stopped when I did. I feel that when I begin my next few in this series, which are much larger and involve three to four figures, I will hold off using the darker blue grey as contrast.

I hope the paintings draw people closer and cause confusion, stimulate curiosity and exude sensuality, through the use of thick provocative brushstrokes, emotional colour and the physicality of paint.

## Some advice

Find artists, writers, filmmakers, photographers or designers that inspire you and study their work through documentation, sketching and photographing. You never know what the spark will be that ignites your next painting, or series.

Sharing your work with peers, in a space where you can explore new ideas, documentation and visual research, is a great thing. Not only do you develop your ability to speak about your work, you are forced to think critically about it. I would encourage you to take notes and write about your



▲ Owen, oil on board, 12×8½in (30×22cm). Again I began by painting on a grey wet surface with three tinted greys: alizarin crimson grey, cerulean blue grey, lemon and cadmium yellow grey, and a little white to mix. Detail was added with highlights and darker contrasting shadows. I mixed lemon yellow with white to get a bright highlight and dulled it down slightly with some cadmium yellow. I created deeper reds using grey, alizarin crimson and permanent rose to warm up some flesh tones

work also. I find the best time to do this is right after I have shared work with peers, or given a lecture, when ideas are fresh in my mind. Writing and speaking about my work helps me see it from a new perspective and challenges me to come up with new ideas. Sharing your work with other artists and designers will do the same. Visual research can take the form of a collection of inspiring images, sketchbooks, notes on art, or sketching from artists' work you admire. I believe that emphasising content and encouraging risk taking is necessary to support any artist's personal development.

TA



## Emma Copley

was born in Dublin and studied fine art at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), USA. A practising artist and teacher, she has been shortlisted for many awards and exhibits regularly. Emma has had two paintings selected for the ING Discerning Eye Exhibition 2016, to be held at the Mall Galleries, The Mall, London, from November 16 to 27. She was shortlisted for the 2016 Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize, the *Sunday Times* Watercolour Competition and selected for the Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize. In 2015 she was a semi-finalist in the Sky Arts Landscape Artist of the Year competition.

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



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# PAINT IN VIETNAM with Peter Brown NEAC, ROI



Join the well-known and highly respected artist Peter Brown, aka 'Pete the Street', in one of Vietnam's most exotic, atmospheric and compelling locations. The Unesco World Heritage town of Hoi An in central Vietnam is a kaleidoscope of vivid colours, street life and architectural styles.

This painting holiday is ideal for experienced and intermediate students who aspire to achieve a very exciting and different portfolio of work. Peter will encourage you to learn by example and provide guidance when needed. Tuition, demonstrations and critiques will not be provided. Peter will be working in oils but all media are welcome. This is a rare opportunity to share time with, and experience the life of a hard-working artist. Students who travelled to Arles and Florence with Peter had

a wonderful adventure capturing every corner of these towns, producing lots of work and learning much from him. Peter is a humorous, enthusiastic and inspirational guest artist.

**Hoi An** is a busy riverside town with a huge variety of painting material to suit everyone. Emerald green rice paddies, girls in traditional dress and wearing palm leaf conical hats, fishermen in small wooden rafts, children riding buffalos, markets full of exotic fruits and vegetables, ramshackle tailor shops, Chinese temples with brightly coloured demonic-looking deities and dragons, a Japanese-covered bridge, former merchants' houses and old tea warehouses, alleyways decorated with lanterns, scooters, bicycles, a full moon festival and so much more.... If this isn't enough to satisfy your palette then there are the nearby idyllic Cham Islands, the ancient temple ruins of My Son and a pristine coastline lined with casuarina and pandan trees.

Accommodation is in a charming colonial hotel in the old town with 24 en-suite bedrooms, a restaurant and a tranquil garden. Scheduled flights are direct to Hanoi with a good connection to Danang, which is 30km north of Hoi An. Breakfasts and dinners are included and a travel escort from the UK will accompany you to take care of all the arrangements.



▲ *Udaipur, Midday*, oil by Peter Brown

- 8 to 12 intermediate and experienced students
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- Single supplement £250

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The Artist has been offering overseas painting holidays with renowned tutors since 1990. These holidays are organised by fully licensed operator Spencer Scott Travel Services Ltd CAA ATOL 3471. Other holidays in 2017 include Amsterdam with Ken Howard RA, Southern Italy with Richard Pikesley, South of France with Lachlan Goudie, India with Hazel Soan, and Belgium & Holland with Pamela Kay.



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

# CHARITY Painting Competition

See your work published in  
*The Artist* or **Leisure Painter** in our  
2016 Christmas greetings message



▲ Winner of last year's competition for *The Artist* Morag Paskins  
*Christmas Lights*, Brushes 1.2.2 on iPad

Once again we are substituting the sending of Christmas cards by the publication of a special Christmas and New Year message in our January 2017 issues, published in December. Help us by entering our competition, from which we will select a winning image to feature in our special Christmas greeting, PLUS we will make a donation of £200 to the charity of your choice

## HOW TO ENTER

There are two categories:

- *Leisure Painter* category for the amateur painter
- *The Artist* category for painters with more experience and professional artists

Please submit a jpg digital entry at [www.painters-online.co.uk](http://www.painters-online.co.uk) and click on the link to Competitions. Your entry must reflect the festive season, and it can be produced in any medium. Closing date for entries is November 4, 2016. Winners will be notified by November 11, 2016 and the winning artists will be asked to supply a hi-resolution digital image of the selected work by November 18 for inclusion in the magazines.

Judges: Sally Bulgin, editor *The Artist*  
and Ingrid Lyon, editor *Leisure Painter*

### CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

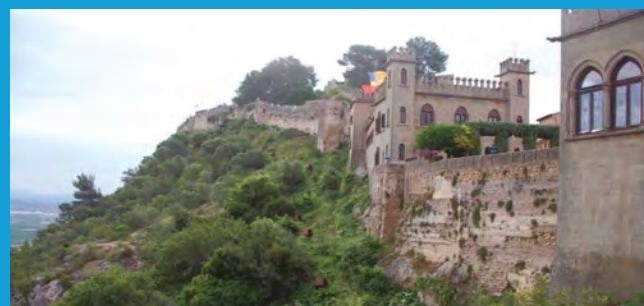
- 1 Only one entry per artist please.
- 2 Log in or register on [www.painters-online.co.uk](http://www.painters-online.co.uk) to submit your entries. Follow the link to Competitions.
- 3 Winning entrants will be informed by November 11, 2016.
- 4 The judges' decision is final. The judges reserve the right to use an alternative image should no suitable image be submitted

amongst the competition entries and no correspondence can be entered into.  
5 By entering our competition you agree to allow *The Artist* and *Leisure Painter* to publish, republish and repurpose your artwork in both print and digital formats, including but not limited to magazines, websites, databases and as part of downloadable digital products.

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# Painting loose in watercolour

**Paul Talbot-Greaves** urges you to push your work further towards a looser, more expressive mode and shares tips and techniques that will help you to achieve this

Loose paintings are always attractive to the eye because they generally hold some element of mystery through vague areas and indistinct details. These qualities engage the viewer more than if every nuance is meticulously replicated. It's easy to say but far harder to do, and you really do need to know your subject well before you begin to abstract it successfully.

## Simplification

Simplification is the key here. To simplify a subject, concentrate only on the main building blocks first, rather than attempting to paint the fiddly details or even completing any single area of a scene to a finished stage. The building blocks of any painting are colours, shapes and values. You can separate these in an analytical sense although theoretically they are all tackled at the same time. I generally like to break a landscape down into manageable sections, then within each

of these sections I aim to paint the relevant individual shapes using the appropriate values and colours of my choice. This isn't an automatic process and it does pay to spend a few moments working out your moves prior to putting brush to paper. There are a few techniques for simplifying a subject.

I am also naturally drawn towards seeing every detail, so to filter this out I half screw up my eyes until only shapes and values are visible. By detail I mean every leaf on a tree or the individual bricks in a wall. If you work from photographs that you print from your computer, try printing your images smaller, or just on plain paper, so that a certain amount of these details is lost. If you can't see it, you won't want to paint it! The same applies to where you place your photo reference whilst you are painting. The worst thing you can do is hold the photo in your hand as you will naturally bring it in close to your eyes and this will entice you to paint carefully and absorb more detail

▲ *Walking Through The Woods*, watercolour on Saunders Rough, 7×9in (18×23cm).

This is quite a sketchy painting, completed in a short space of time. Loose colours were brushed on initially, mainly sap green, burnt sienna and raw sienna. When dry I quickly built up the mid-values and darks with rapid brushstrokes. The majority of this painting was simply blocked in and drawn with a brush

than is necessary. If anything, place it at a distance where you find it easy to see the shapes but difficult to make out the minutiae such as brickwork, blades of grass and so on. In a similar way, if you are working from a tablet or laptop, place it at a slight distance as these devices can highlight even more detail than a quality printed photograph. If you are working *en plein air*, half-closing your eyes is the method to use for simplification, or you could make a sketch and use that as your main reference, using the scene in front of



## WATERCOLOUR

you for obtaining values and colours. This process will help to filter out unwanted detail and guide you towards a looser approach. Any distant features can always be simplified to simple shapes, perhaps using softness through wet-into-wet techniques to push the area back.

### Making a drawing

Loose paintings will naturally follow loose drawings. A tight, detailed and accurate lengthy drawing will more than likely lead you to an anxious and over precious painting experience. Try to think of your painting as a sketch rather than a masterpiece that must not falter. Painting is really drawing with a brush, so sketch out only the main shapes in the right proportions and with reasonably correct perspective. Your drawing doesn't need detail because



These figures were sketched with a size 4 squirrel mop brush using neutral tint. I used a flowing rhythm with varying pressures on the brush to generate different thicknesses of line as I drew. The simple sketch took about three minutes

this often leads to filling in pencil lines. When your main shapes are marked in you are ready to go.

To measure proportion, I often use a set of scale dividers to help achieve a quick and correct drawing. First ensure the scale you set on the divider fits the proportion of your working area. Once this is set, everything you measure with one end will be automatically scaled up at the other end. I often mark in one or two strategic points to ensure they are placed correctly and in proportion, then construct the remainder of the drawing freehand.

### Brush use for looser work

If you want to paint looser try using your brush vertically, with the point down, like a pen. This will encourage you to draw and use lovely calligraphic marks. However, the nearer your hand is to the ferrule, the tighter and more detailed those marks will be.

I prefer to stand to paint, holding the brush at the end of the handle with the brush point down. Whilst many people think this looks like an uncontrollable hold, it is actually very comfortable and incredibly controlled. Movements come from the shoulder (as opposed to the wrist if you are sitting down) and even more movement can be generated through a small shift in the thumb and forefinger hold of the brush. Small movements transferred down the brush handle in this way generate larger, positive marks, applied with energy. So by using the shoulder and the thumb and finger I can create big sweeps and

small expressive marks with ease.

Standing means your vision is around arm's-length from your painting, so you get a much broader view of your work in progress, plus fiddly details become harder to paint and therefore they become easier to omit.

It can feel awkward painting this way at first and the flaw to watch out for is the temptation to bend close to your work as though you are sitting down, but it doesn't take long to realise your back is aching if this happens. Make sure you stand upright and be aware of your posture whilst you are painting.

### Brush practice

To gain confidence in painting loosely, make frequent, simple brush sketches on ordinary cartridge paper. These shouldn't be carefully executed, measured drawings, but simple free-flowing line drawings, done only with a brush and fully using the point. I would suggest using a large round brush loaded with a single dark colour. Hold the brush at arm's-length and make a line drawing as though you are using a pencil. Try to achieve varied pressures on the brush so that you make a variety of calligraphic marks throughout your drawing. Keep the sketches to short bursts, say between five and fifteen minutes each. Over time you will notice that this spontaneous way of looking and drawing with your brush transfers into your paintings. Of course when you paint you are using the same process but blocking in shapes, colours and values, instead of simply drawing lines. TA



▲ *Dow Crag*, watercolour on Arches Rough, 10×14in (25.5×35.5cm).

I began with a few roughly sketched lines, then washed in with colours using a size 5 squirrel mop brush. After drying, the painting was worked quite spontaneously, concentrating on the main shapes, colours and values, adding only a little drybrush in the light to depict a hint of detail



### Paul Talbot-Greaves

has been painting for over 20 years and teaches watercolour and acrylic painting in his home county of west Yorkshire. He also runs workshops and demonstrates to art societies throughout the north. Paul can be contacted by email: [information@talbot-greaves.co.uk](mailto:information@talbot-greaves.co.uk) or through his website: [www.talbot-greaves.co.uk](http://www.talbot-greaves.co.uk)



## DEMONSTRATION *Fence Line*



### STAGE ONE

This is how the scale divider works (as illustrated against a finished painting). First, the measuring end is used to take the width of the photograph

### STAGE TWO

Now the reverse end of the scale divider is used to transfer the scaled-up size to the painting

### STAGE THREE

The process is repeated for the image height so that you have a larger rectangle proportioned to the photograph. Each measurement you take to plot the features is then scaled exactly and in proportion. Here I am measuring the height of the grass on the left

### STAGE FOUR

The opposite end is used to find the height of the grass in the painting. I usually use this method to plot or check strategic positions, then complete the drawing freehand in order to keep the lines sketchy and loose

**'First ensure the scale you set on the divider fits the proportion of your working area'**

► *Fence Line*, watercolour on Saunders Rough, 13×9in (33×23cm).

I built up the painting using sizes 5, 4, 3 and 2 squirrel mop brushes, concentrating on shapes, colours and values. The patches of hard-edged snow against all the soft, wet-into-wet technique areas help to tighten the painting and a few quick, finer marks with a long size 4 rigger in the trees and on the fence, add just enough finesse to complete the scene







*Helena in Costume*, oil and acrylic on card, 19×15in (50×40cm).



# A fresh approach to figures

**Aine Divine** takes you through the stages of painting a figure, using oil over acrylic, with advice on how to keep your mind engaged and painting spontaneous

**I**t was a treat to paint my model Helena in this beautiful costume. I like the side view best, as the hair emphasises the elegant length of the body and creates interesting shapes against the background. I am also inspired by faces in profile; it's satisfying to work out each change of direction at the edge of the face.

I began by positioning the easel so I could see Helena, and the board by only moving my eyes. Although I remain fully active during the painting process, I have a position I come back to and this is the location where stillness can arise, where I can quietly pause to observe fully.

## My working process

I started the painting by kneeling on the ground, with rags and large brushes, working on 19½×15½in (50×40cm) primed card, using green for the background. I wanted to get rid of the white surface and prepare a ground to work over. Acrylic is a great medium to use for this fearless approach – the layers dry quickly and can be easily worked over. Interesting patterns emerge where wet paint is dragged or splashed over the drying paint. It's exciting to see unexpected results. This was good fun; it took me back to being a child, and was a good grounding exercise. Something magic happens when we work spontaneously and fearlessly that lays the ground for the more focused work to follow.

Once the under layer was complete, I put the board on the easel and began the exercise of seeing. I first visualise the space the model will occupy on my board, the viewfinder helps with this, then I like to trace the shapes in the air before committing the marks to the painting. Something in this exercise helps us feel confident, we are already making general sweeping statements with our hands, describing in the air the arc of the body, the changes in direction along the head and shoulders.

Like a conductor in full flow, we begin engaging with the curves and shapes that make up the model being painted, before even touching the page.

Once you begin painting, work to keep the energy alive everywhere in the painting, stand back often; it's almost a fencing action with the easel, retreating and advancing, being still, observing, and then going for it, completely committing to the mark. This is a steady rhythm that develops. It feels good and feels in tune with the creative ebb and flow.

Every so often I interrupted the painting process to do something general and loose. I found it necessary sometimes to 'lose it' in order to find it again. Turning the painting on its side takes the heat off, and allows our brains the novelty of seeing the painting from a different perspective. When we do this, it engages a fresh creative flow.

You can see where I switched over to the oil paint; there's a difference where it's laid over the acrylic, it has a rich buttery texture on the skin, and gives a sheen to the dark hair. I love to use acrylic as an underlayer for oil paint, it has a matt finish that allows the oil paint to 'sing' out.

At the end of the sitting my photographer took some photos and I

continued to work from these. It was good to have some time and space away from the painting after the sitting. This allowed me to see things clearly and to decide more easily what the painting needed. In the end I didn't return to work on it until a few weeks after. When I work from photos I stand at the easel and put the photo where the model would have been when working from life. So I attached it to the left of the drawing board.

## Some advice before you start

When you get ready to paint, I recommend that you tune into your physical body. Roll your shoulders back, remember to breathe, keep a softness in the knees and have a drink of water nearby. Above all, when you get to work, avoid relentlessly pursuing one thing in your painting, like a dog chasing a scent. Instead, half-close your eyes to see, and then paint down the general darks and lights that make up the person being painted. We are all inclined to be drawn-in by what we are doing, so keep a radar up for that tendency. Often it'll be our physical bodies that alert us to this – when there is tension in your arm or effort in your movements, stand back and 'shake it off'.

## DEMONSTRATION *Helena in Costume*



◀ I positioned Helena so that I could see both her and the board by only moving my eyes ▶



## OIL OVER ACRYLICS

### MATERIALS

- **Acrylic colours:** Hooker's green, crimson, yellow ochre, sap green, cerulean blue, ultramarine blue, burnt umber, cadmium red, titanium white.
- **Oil colours:** viridian green, alizarin crimson, Vandyke brown, ultramarine blue, cerulean blue, titanium white, yellow ochre, cadmium red, sap green.
- **Brushes for oil paint:** burgundy long-handled set of 12 firm brushes by Royal and Langnickel



### ◀ STAGE ONE

Working on the floor, I applied a background of Hooker's green, sap green and cerulean blue. I felt this would work well with the rich costume and, as the backdrop contained mostly green, it would be a good starting point if I were to apply the coloured stripes later



### ◀ STAGE TWO

A shadow of Helena began to emerge as I observed each dark shape. I used burnt umber and ultramarine blue to make the hair colour, and crimson and cadmium red for the red of the dress. I used a rag to wipe away the excess skin colour to make the edge of the face. The skin was made with white, crimson and yellow ochre

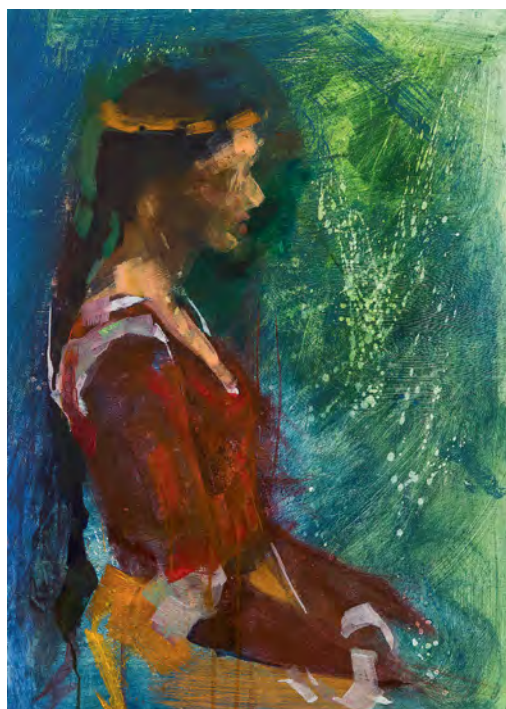
### ▶ STAGE THREE

Still working in acrylic, I picked up more contrast in the face; using sap green, cadmium red and ultramarine blue I made a warm, dark colour to describe the sockets of the eyes, and the shadows surrounding the ear. I also heightened the contrast in tones in the body by including the white trim on the dress. None of it is pure white, it was adjusted with blue and red to fit with the tones I was seeing. I made these marks by printing with the edge of the 1in flat brush. I roughed in the skirt and headband as well, with yellow ochre and burnt umber, so the full colour scheme would be coming up together



### ▶ STAGE FOUR

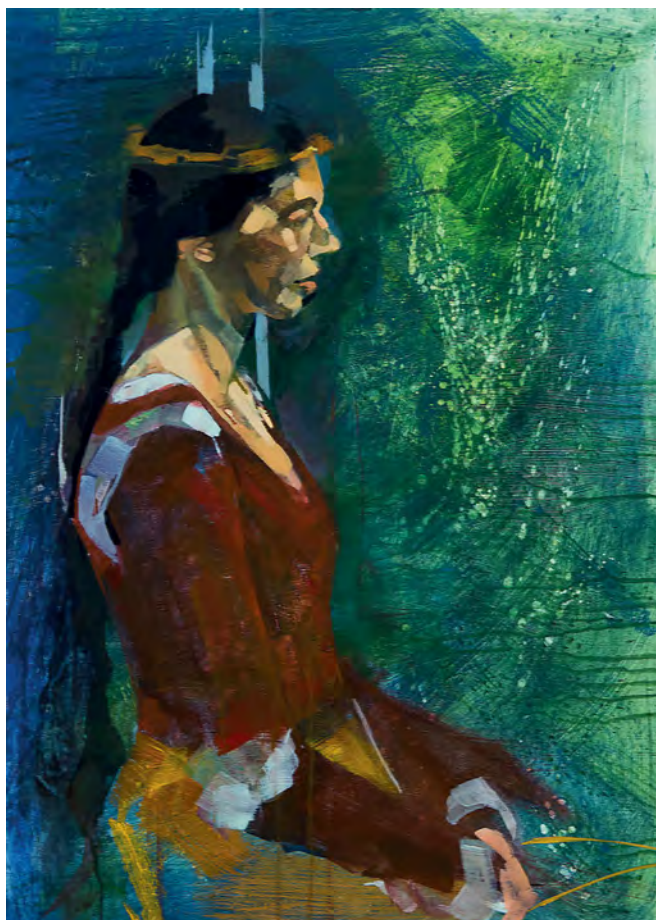
I continued to enhance the lights and darks, and used both runny and dry paint, to bring variety to the surface. The end of the plait was added with a mix of burnt umber, ultramarine and enough water to give it an inky consistency – a drip ran down that anchors the plait and the back of the body to the end of the board. Elsewhere the opaque marks of the green background colour were painted over the hair colour to explain where the plait meets the head. I continued to discover what was happening at the front edge of the face, noting the angle of the nose and forehead with light skin colour with crimson, yellow ochre and white. The lower lip was described with a circle of the same colour with more crimson added, to identify it clearly as being different from the tones of the skin



### ▲ STAGE FIVE

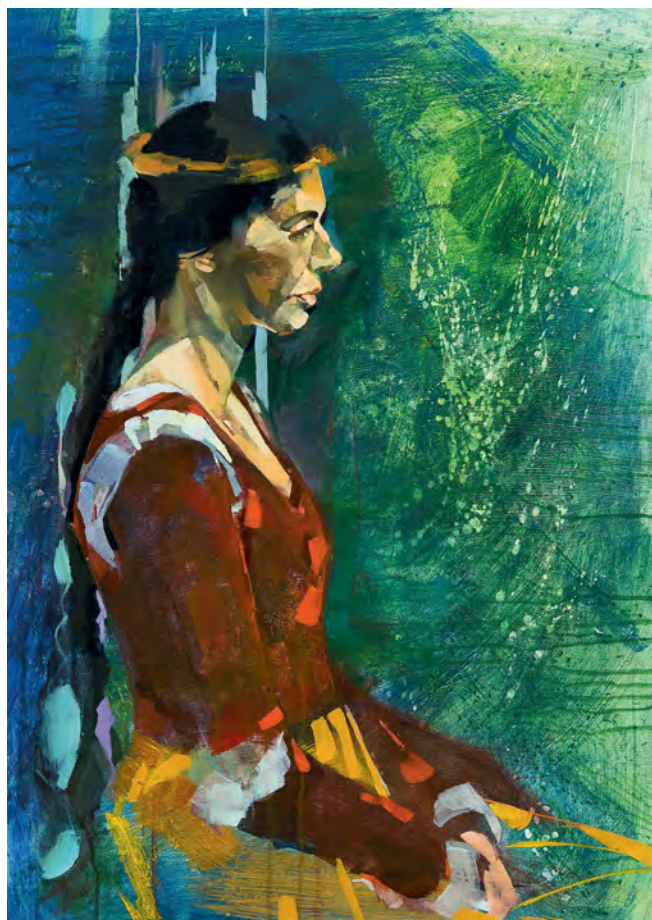
At this point I turned the painting on its side in order to see it from a different perspective and re-energise my creative flow. I used the tear-off palette to protect parts of the face and body from splashed, then starting flinging green on to the background. I did the same with the painting turned on its other side – you can see the ultramarine drips and runs that obliterate the head a little and run to the other edge of the painting





#### ▲ STAGE SIX

I evaluated the different colours of the skin, relating them to geometric shapes. For example, the three patches of light on the forehead, the tip of the nose and the upper lip are all triangle-shaped. I wanted to explain more fully the changes of tone in the skin, finding a mid-tone by mixing alizarin crimson, yellow ochre and sap green. Here the lightest tone is alizarin, cadmium red, yellow ochre and white. The darks in the skin were still conveyed by the acrylic underpainting. I experimented with the stripes, placing a patch of cerulean blue in the background



#### ▲ STAGE SEVEN

The patches of lighter, brighter colours on the costume were found with the oil paint. My intention was that each shape would be clear and descriptive, so I took care to select what was important. I applied the paint by loading the square brush with colour, then holding it so the handle was almost parallel to the board, I could easily lay the paint on. Once applied, I avoided tinkering with the mark



#### ◀ FINISHED PAINTING

*Helena in Costume*, oil and acrylic on card, 19×15½in (50×40cm). I decided the patterned underpainting was a distraction, and that the stripes on the cloth were unnecessary, so I applied a solid green background in front of Helena, made from Vandyke brown, viridian green and ultramarine blue. I kept lively and active and regularly stood back. I enjoyed working into the beautiful dress a bit more, and picking out a pattern in the headband. Most of the satisfaction was derived from clarifying the darkest parts of the features and in modelling the tones of the face with the oil paint. The very dark paint used in the eye, nostril and in the line dividing the lips was made from alizarin crimson and viridian green. See also page 24

#### Aine Divine

has an Honours Degree in Fine Art from Crawford College of Art, Cork and a Higher Diploma in the principles of teaching art from University College Cork. She has exhibited widely including with the Royal Society of Miniature Painters, Sculptors and Gravers; the Royal Watercolour Society and the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, and has won the Irish National Portrait Award. Aine has undertaken many commissions. She was chosen to paint Dr Mo Mowlam on BBC TV's Star Portraits, was shortlisted for Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year in 2013 and was a finalist in 2014. Her DVD *Watercolour Portraits with Aine Divine* is available from Town House Films, price £27.95; telephone 01603 259441; [www.townhousefilms.co.uk](http://www.townhousefilms.co.uk) [www.ainedivinepaintings.co.uk](http://www.ainedivinepaintings.co.uk)





# Risk failure to gain success in watercolour

**John Owen** recommends some techniques to try that will help you to find your own style

In the early days people were always asking me whether I'd found my own style. 'My style' was often stuck in a rut. What was I looking for? Ken Howard sums it up best: 'The most precious thing we have as painters is our own language. It needn't be revolutionary, but it must be personal to you and then it will be unique.'

Looking for inspiration? Listen to Picasso: 'Inspiration exists, but it has to find us working'. Once we learn the rudiments of the craft we have a choice:

to continue painting 'safe' watercolours or to set sail on a sea of experiment and risk, hone our observation and visionary skills, and treat every painting opportunity as a new adventure.

Traditional watercolour painting is an additive process: superimposing layers of transparent washes, and, ideally, knowing from the outset how the finished picture should look. Once I started painting *en plein air* this was a daunting task. I found that what we see is just one facet of the enormous

energy that drives everything in nature. I needed much more than a brush to express this experience.

The dialogue induced by painting constantly changing light effects, atmospheric moods, textures and edge values demands techniques offering the flexibility to make radical changes as I go along. I want to add but also be able to remove pigment at will, to exploit the paper not just as a surface on which to paint but as a compositional element for controlled or spontaneous modification.



▲ *Storm Approaching at Cape Drapano*, watercolour on Canaletto 300gsm, 9½×19½in (24×50cm).

Holbein watercolours have a wonderful purity and I used a squirrel mop to gently drift on cobalt blue, cobalt turquoise light and peacock blue down to the horizon on a sloping sheet of paper. I worked hastily with minimum brushwork, applying permanent magenta and a trace of burnt sienna for the rapidly approaching storm clouds. The land mass and cliffs came next, with earth pigments, neutral tint, alizarin crimson and

peacock blue. Hot bright orange on the island really sings against the cool blues and, being at a natural focal point on the paper (the point on a diagonal met by a perpendicular to one of the other corners), balances the mass of the cliff and anchors the eye. As the wind increased and carried spray into my face it stimulated me to flick colours off my brush onto the cliffs. Their darkened base ensured that the white foam would read realistically. I also flicked in these mixtures and water droplets to represent the fragmenting foreground sand being whipped up by the

tide before immediately starting at the horizon again with royal blue and continuing downwards with the more concentrated sky pigments, adding alizarin crimson and magenta for the wave shadows as the sea got rougher. Cobalt turquoise applied wet-into-wet and allowed to flow down undisturbed created the sea colour and illusion of motion. Finally, I flicked out the lines of foam and spray with the point of a craft knife. The white shows up well because the sea was painted dark enough. Timidity here would have led to a weak, unconvincing effect



## Lifting, blotting, sponging

A fundamental difference between blotting paper and watercolour paper is 'size'. 'Size' is a generic term for substances such as gelatin that are added to the pulp or applied to the surface of the moulded sheet to slow down the rate of water and colour absorption. Size allows pigment to 'float' on the paper surface from which it can be selectively removed, even after drying. Size also makes the paper surface more resistant to abrasion.

Always be aware that your painting is a living thing; it is an extension of your inner being. Trust your intuition; be guided by what is happening on the paper. Don't stifle this process by being too cautious. Water is energy and, given sufficient freedom will produce effects that no brush can. Try the following experiments on a variety of papers – the amount of size on the paper and the properties of its fibres will influence the results:

- Paint a random-shaped area of any pigment. While it is wet, feed in patches of more concentrated pigment. As it dries, lift off colour using a squeezed-out brush and stroke a wet rigger or swordliner brush through to push back pigment and create pale, ghost lines. As this dries overlay dark lines to create greater depth and mystery.
- Apply clean water to drying and dried paint with brushes of various shapes, hair and hardness, sponges, sticks, pen-nibs, cotton wool, buds, etc. Remove the liquefied pigment with absorbent materials such as damp sponges, blotting paper, cloth, paper tissues or even your fingers, fingernails and hand.
- Flick, dribble or spray droplets of water onto drying and dried washes and control the amount of pigment removed by varying the contact time before blotting.

## Flush off drying pigment

Try flushing away areas of paint randomly or selectively at various stages during the drying process. Areas to be retained can be hardened off with a hair dryer while simultaneously dribbling water into other areas to keep them wet or damp. At a moment of your choice simply immerse the entire painting in water or hose off the damp paint under a tap.

These washing-out techniques work best on Not and smooth Hot Pressed

papers and create exciting unpredictable edge qualities that are impossible to achieve by conventional addition. You'll find yourself reading things into these new images so take a good look before working them up.

## Paint on wet paper

One of the simplest and most relaxing ways of 'playing' with watercolour is by starting off with a sheet of wet paper such as Two Rivers, Arches Not, Bockingford, etc. Watch how brushstrokes of pigment disperse and create hazy effects. To control 'flaring', mix pigment with a thickening agent such as Aquapasto and push this around with a palette knife to create dark lines, smears and varying textures. Build up the picture gradually by alternate addition and subtraction, using sponges and absorbent materials

as in your first experiments.

## Scraping and scratching

As a youngster I once spent weeks copying every hair of Durer's watercolour painting of a hare onto scraperboard. I now apply the same technique using a craft knife or flexible razor blade to remove the peaks of the paper, revealing pure white randomly shaped dots and patches. I dig the blade into the paper and with rapid movements rip out small chunks or snag ragged lines or thin streaks. No other technique transfers so much spontaneous light energy so effectively to the image. If your painting becomes too dark or static, use this technique to breathe life back into it. Don't hesitate, be confident; but stop at intervals to assess what the illusion emerging under the knife is saying to you. ▶



► *Sunrise on Hallstatt Lake, watercolour, 13½×9¼in (35×25cm)*



## WATERCOLOUR

### DEMONSTRATION *Crown Mines Botallack*

My subject here is the timeless mystery of the tin mine ruins against the violent, unpredictable forces of nature. I tried different papers to find out which best suited my way of thinking and working. No one can tell me. Trial and error is the only way to find out



#### STAGE ONE *Above left*

I loosely pencilled in a composition guided by my 40-odd rapid sketches and *plein-air* reference watercolour studies. I worked forward from the sky and distant horizon with a mix of cobalt turquoise light, alizarin crimson, cobalt blue and yellow ochre to create variations of warm and cool greys. I angled the paper and applied the bead of colour with just the cool colours using an Escoda squirrel mop to create the sea, flicking on clean water and blotting as the wash firmed up to impart an illusion of sea spray

#### STAGE TWO *Above*

The dark silhouettes of the mine buildings and cliffs pushed the sea and sky farther back, reinforcing depth. As a foil to the earthy warmth in these quiet areas the sea and black rocks will be cold and aggressive. I built up the hard rocks using warm and cool blues mixed with various reds and ivory black to stress their brutal hardness. By adding Aquapasto I could push pigment around with a palette knife and scrape back to almost white paper, controlling this process by finely spraying on clean water and dragging a damp swordliner through to add lines. A tissue was pressed on gently with my hand and fingers to remove some negative drops and lines

#### STAGE THREE *Left*

Rough waves constantly trap millions of air bubbles that are expelled as milky effervescence. I let semi-liquid permanent white gouache spread into wet turquoise to simulate this effect, feeding in more pigment straight from the tube to maintain density. Body colour is anathema to purists but any aid that helps me understand and express my subject better is legitimate





### ▲ FINISHED PAINTING

*Crown Mines Botallack*, watercolour on Saunders Waterford 425gsm, 21×18½in (53×47cm).

Lastly, when the paper had dried, a few flicks with a craft knife sharpened up the glitter on the distant sea. When you feel you can achieve more, go for it. The tin miners of Cornwall were terrified day and night by the deafening crash of waves of the Atlantic swell, knowing that at any moment, as indeed happened, the roof could cave in, extinguish their candles and drown all. Alternating between watercolour, gouache and pastel, which I find to be an excellent combination for trying out ideas, I pushed my imagination to the limit to instil the drama I sensed



### John Owen

qualified with the Royal Institute of Chemistry and moved to Austria in 1974. Primarily a self-taught painter he says he learnt much from his father Harold Owen, John Blockley, Ken Howard, John Singer Sargent, Joseph Zbukvic and *The Artist* magazine. He has exhibited with the Royal Watercolour Society and in 2010 was a national watercolour prize winner at the Leopold Museum in Vienna, who also bought his work for their permanent collection. In 2013 John opened his own gallery in Freistadt. [www.owen.at](http://www.owen.at)





# Fresh from the studio

Achieve a sense of place in pure watercolour in the studio from sketches of on-site photographs – **David Parfitt** shows you how it's done

These days all my paintings are completed in the studio although I still firmly believe that there is nothing quite the same as working outdoors to connect with and experience the landscape. I am not necessarily looking for a true representation of the view or a photographic image, I am much more concerned with making a pure watercolour painting and achieving a sense of place, without resorting to gouache or acrylic paint/ink. This can be quite restrictive, particularly as I am always looking to push the watercolour medium as far as I can. Having said all that, I still seem to make fairly representational paintings, perhaps down to my natural tendency to become involved with detail – something I have a constant battle with.

My demonstration painting (right) is typical of how my working methods have developed recently. Initially I made several small loose watercolour sketches using some photographs as a reference. These sketches are similar to

the type of small painting I would normally complete outdoors and use later in the studio for larger pieces. I worked on all three simultaneously, taking no more than three-quarters of an hour to complete them. I find that by working quickly, almost without thinking, I can obtain some interesting and spontaneous results. The difficulty then comes in trying to replicate the feeling of the sketch in the larger works. In this case, Sketch 3 (right) was my favourite, so I used this as my reference, together with the photograph.

## Materials

In the studio I use two easels, both lightweight. One is a Mabef, which I have customised for working outdoors and the other is a Frank Herring sketching easel, which I have at a slight angle to allow me to use large wet washes and let colours granulate and settle. I use a Liz Deakin watercolour palette and artist-quality watercolour tube paints.

The colours I used in this

▲ *Wetland Blues*, watercolour, 22×30in (56×76cm).

This painting was selected for the 2016 *Sunday Times* Watercolour Competition. This painting is from the same hillside as the demonstration painting but a slightly different viewpoint. It shows the drama that can be gained with a low horizon, compared to the high horizon in the main image

demonstration are: cobalt blue, ultramarine blue, Prussian blue, raw sienna, burnt sienna, quinacridone gold, lemon yellow and permanent alizarin crimson.

I have a huge collection of brushes but those I used for this painting were: size 14 Pro Arte Connoisseur Round; small Chinese brush; several Pro Arte Renaissance riggers, sizes 1 and 2; Pro Arte Connoisseur ½ in flat (for wiping out). I usually work on Arches 300lb Not but in this case I used my very last sheet of Whatman watercolour paper which, sadly, is no longer manufactured.

TA





### ▲ The brushes used in the painting

Pro Arte Renaissance rigger size 2

Pro Arte Renaissance rigger size 1 (x3)

Chinese brush

Pro Arte Connoisseur 1/2 inch flat

Pro Arte Connoisseur round size 14



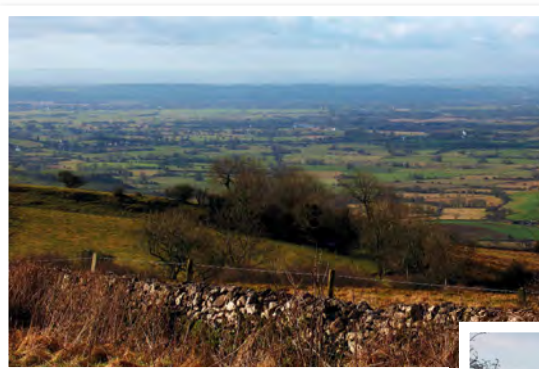
### ▲ My studio set up for all my paintings, showing easel and palette

## DEMONSTRATION

### *The Rain's Coming*

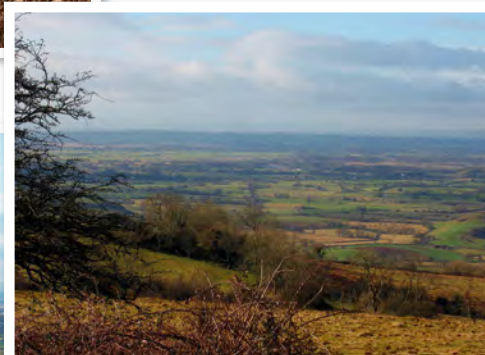
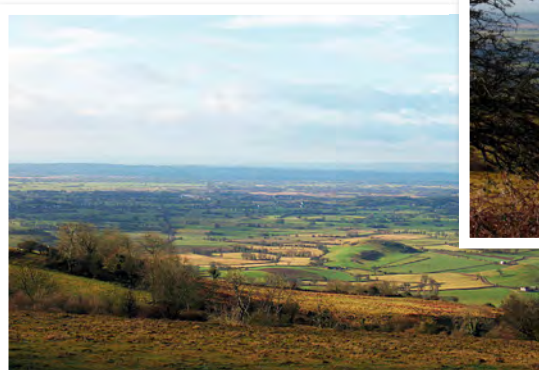
This demonstration painting is from one of my favourite views on the Mendip Hills in Somerset. It is a place I return to again and again and features heavily in my work. In this instance it is based on the last moments of sun just before the incoming rain completely obliterates the scene for the day. I have used a high horizon to show how I approach painting a detailed distant landscape. Although I have photographic references, it is the look and feel of Sketch 3, below right, that I want to replicate in this painting

▼ These three small sketches (5x6in) are based on the photographs plus my memories of many days spent drawing and painting on the hillside. I used a size 1 rigger and the Chinese brush for all three. They were painted simultaneously and within three quarters of an hour or so. I am drawn to 'the feel' of Sketch 1 but Sketch 3 is my favourite



### Photographs

These are old photographs but I still use them to draw information from. I made some changes in Photoshop at the time to increase the contrast and saturation



### ▲ Sketch 1



### ▲ Sketch 2



### ▲ Sketch 3





## DEMONSTRATION continued

### ► STAGE ONE

I don't make any pencil marks before painting as they make me feel as though I am colouring in a drawing and I get bogged down in detail. Rather, I use the rigger, size 1 and 2, to make some very rapid marks. Here the marks represent distant hills, fields, trees and indicate a general feeling of a distant-middle-distant landscape. I then used the Chinese brush and a very weak wash of cobalt blue to soften the distant hills, which will eventually disappear into the horizon and merge with the sky. As I came forward in the landscape I made the wash darker and warmer by introducing some ultramarine, quinacridone gold and touches of Prussian blue



### ► STAGE THREE

A huge amount was achieved at this stage. I darkened the background hills a little but added an enormous amount of detail to the middle ground with the rigger, making a variety of marks with mixes of ultramarine, quinacridone gold and burnt sienna to indicate clumps of trees, hedges and fields. I then used the Chinese brush to unify this area with weaker washes while trying to leave areas of underpainting to show through. I also added a darker wash of raw sienna and quinacridone gold to the right-hand field and darkened the foreground area so that it more closely resembled the feel of the reference sketch



### ▲ STAGE FOUR

I added the sky, again using the sketch as my guide. I wanted a rainy feel to things so, using the size 14 round and a fairly weak mix of cobalt blue and permanent alizarin, I covered the whole sky area but also allowed it to cover the distant hills. While this wash was still wet I used a darker mix of cobalt and alizarin and a little of the greenish colour already in the palette to put in the darker clouds



### ▲ STAGE TWO

After allowing it all to dry, I used the size 14 round to put in the field colours with various mixes of cobalt blue and lemon yellow, raw sienna, ultramarine and quinacridone gold. I then put in the mass of foreground trees using the Chinese brush with heavy mixes of ultramarine, quinacridone gold and burnt sienna



### ▲ STAGE FIVE

Using the size 14 brush I added more work to the foreground trees and added another wash to the foreground field. I also introduced some colour variety to the right-hand sienna field





### ▲ FINISHED PAINTING

*The Rain's Coming*, watercolour, 19×22in (49.5×56cm).

This final stage was very much a case of seeing what the painting needed. It is so very easy to overwork things, so I recommend stopping as soon as you begin to look hard for things to do or change. Having looked for a while I could see it needed quite a lot of work. I made the following changes:

- Darkened the distant hills with a fairly weak wash of cobalt and ultramarine, being mindful not to overdo it and bring the hills too far forward.
- Added some more cloud/rain to the right-hand area of sky, taking it down into the hills (repeating the process from Stage 4)
- Reworked the foreground trees to create a more pleasing shape and,

subsequently, the fields by lifting colour with the ½in flat and using the 14 round to add a pale wash over the field.

- Added some unifying marks/washes to the middle distance with the Chinese brush and put in a few dark tree marks with the rigger
- Scratched out a few highlights with a razor blade, especially in the distance

At this point I put the painting away in the plan chest for a couple of weeks and will reassess it before taking it to the framer. You will see that there are three distinctive round marks on the painting (in the sky and foreground fields), which I think happened when I handled the paper at various times over the previous years. They are certainly marks within the paper rather than the painting, and serve as a stark reminder to handle and store watercolour paper carefully



### David Parfitt

is a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours (RI) and has won the Neil Meacher Sketching Prize (2011) and the Frank Herring Award (2014) in their exhibitions. David has exhibited widely, including with the RI and the Royal West of England Academy and the *Sunday Times* Watercolour Competition.

[www.davidparfitt-art.co.uk](http://www.davidparfitt-art.co.uk)



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# Clean colours for fresh flowers

How do you keep your colours clean, and what are the best mixes to achieve vitality and freshness in your flower paintings?

**Paul Riley's** advice will help you to avoid the muddy look

Whether you paint in watercolour, oil or acrylic, it is very easy to look at a colour and think that all you need to do is mix X and Y. For the right result, a really good understanding of basic chromatics – the business of colour and tone, what happens when we mix colours – is essential, especially when painting flowers.

## Colour

For instance, choose the wrong red and the wrong blue to mix a violet and you produce a brown. How come? It takes a specific red, ie a blue red like permanent rose, to mix with a specific blue, ie a red blue like ultramarine to make violet – in any medium. A 'wrong' red such as cadmium red has yellow in it; if you mix this with a phthalo or Prussian blue, which also has yellow in it, you will mix

a tertiary colour, which will invariably be brown. Three primaries equal tertiary, and too much red means brown, so be very conscious of which mixtures you put together. Suffice to say, if working with primaries and secondaries, don't overmix or you will regret it.

## Tone

Try to keep to a tonal range that suits the subject. I like to establish at the outset what tonal range I am working to. If the range is to be large, ie very black to white, then I establish the dark tone at the outset, direct onto the white paper. If the tonal range is to be more subtle I put down my modified darkest tone, no matter how pale, and stick to it. I find this avoids the habit of starting pale then trying to work up to darker tones by layering, which invariably results in dull dark colours where the

▲ *Helebores by Candlelight*, watercolour on Saunders Waterford Not 300gsm, (22.5×33cm).

In the text I refer to establishing the contrast between dark and light tones. Here they are adjacent – the leaf and the candlelight. The dark is full of colour, including red in the green, and is laid direct onto the white paper, thereby preserving its freshness

layering has produced a tertiary opacity that is drained of all colour. Very dark colours should be mixed and applied fresh to white paper, thereby preserving their transparency, vibrancy and freshness. All the in-between tones benefit from association with the quality of the darkest colour.

## Pigment behaviour

The issue of pigment behaviour applies specifically to watercolour. The



## COLOUR MIXING



### Colour tests

This sheet of colour tests demonstrates the fresh colours necessary for flower painting.

- 1 Lemon yellow, cadmium yellow, cadmium red, permanent rose, ultramarine, phthalo blue
- 2 The result of mixing a yellow red (cadmium) with a yellow blue (phthalo) to make a violet. No go!
- 3 A blue red (permanent rose) plus a red blue (ultramarine) produces a violet. Voila!
- 4 Tertiary greens are all too common in flower painting – a result of a red yellow (cadmium) and a red blue (ultramarine) is okay but can make greens look dull

- 5 A tertiary orange (blue red + blue yellow) is good for flesh but not oranges
- 6 Go for a yellow red (cadmium) and a red yellow (cadmium) for a true orange. Don't fiddle with it as these are semi-opaque
- 7 A true green – yellow blue (phthalo) plus a blue yellow (lemon) – will help relieve the dead tertiaries
- 8 Subtle red additions to a true green to add variety. Choose reds that relate to the specific flower. Add subtle red by introducing cadmium yellow (a red yellow)
- 9 Darkening reds and yellows: for yellow use either a pale true green (lemon and phthalo) or yellow orange (cadmium red

plus cadmium yellow). For the red start pale, cadmium red and progressively deepen the tone (less water), then introduce permanent rose, culminating in a violet (bright violet by Shin Han)

- 10 Some simple flowers using alternate hues, eg cadmium red plus a tiny touch of permanent rose for a poppy, put in whilst wet
- 11 Over washing (layering) thinly with alternate hues
- 12 Basic complementaries. To keep them clean and fresh separate the colours with a white space – if they touch, mud will result

pigments divide into three basic groups: the stains, clean and transparent; the denser semi-opaque; and the precipitating/granulating. The last two groups of pigments can make your painting look mucky in no time if you over layer, mess about when they are wet by trying to change the colour, or use too thickly. My suggestion is to use them only as one layer on white or overlay on stains, and not too thickly. Layering is a lot like mixing and has similar pitfalls.

Firstly, when layering make sure the

undercoat is dry – not nearly but absolutely! Mucky paintings are often a result of impatience. The thing to realise is that whatever colour you place on top it has one of two functions: either to deepen the tone of the colour beneath or to change the colour, although whatever tone you put on top will darken the tone beneath. It may be you need a very pale tone to do the job. Don't necessarily add a darker one or the change will be too abrupt. This is especially so for portraits, flowers or nudes, where ever-subtle changes are

required. If you want to change the colour by layering note the same rules apply as for colour mixing. Use colours that are adjacent in the spectrum or go for true secondaries, for instance phthalo blue over lemon yellow, ultramarine over permanent rose, cadmium red over cadmium yellow.

### Tools

Good-quality watercolour paper is absorbent, which means that whatever is on your hands is easily transferred. Keep your hands off! Only let the brush



## ► Tools

Note the paper is taped at the corner and only to the inside edge. This allows the paper to expand and contract, stops bleeding onto and off the board and gives a clean, neat edge.

Keep brushes clean. Wash in liquid handsoap and lukewarm water.

Have tissue to hand to blot and keep clean brush ferrules.

This simple, cheap but very useful type of palette has deep wells for plenty of colour. Use the edges for the pigments. Wrap in clingfilm to put in bag.

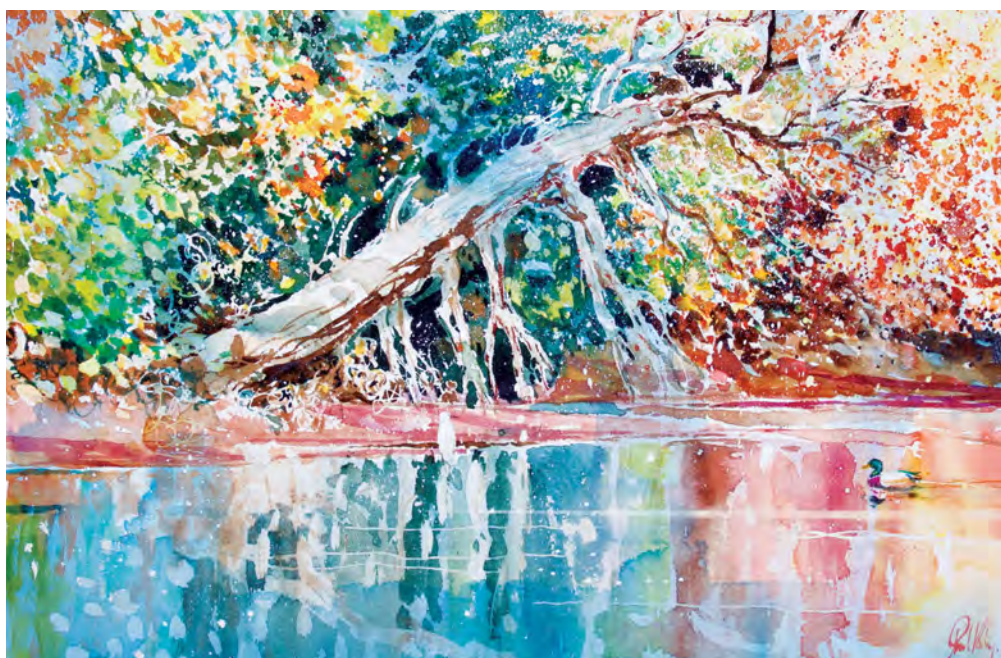
Two jars of water, not essential but helpful. One for mixing, one for cleaning the brush; change the water constantly

touch. Using a graphite pencil on watercolour paper is giving a licence to kill. If you draw in, use a fine sable with a pale colour. Keep a clean sponge to hand for mistakes, together with clean tissue to blot dry.

The palette I use has deep wells for oodles of colour and I put my paint round the edges. I can keep these colours clean and regularly cleaning the palette helps enormously in maintaining fresh colour. Having two water pots also helps: one for brush cleaning, the other for mixing. Don't get lazy – constantly change your water. And keep your brushes clean as any contamination ruins the colour and causes muckiness.

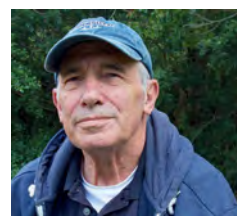
One final note. I tape my paper all round, not only on the corners. This stops any colour coming off the board and contaminating the picture. If you stick to a few of these household tips your colours should improve. Good luck!

TA



◀ *By the Creek*, watercolour on Saunders Waterford Not, 300gsm, 13×20¼in (33×51cm).

Although not a flower painting, a landscape can also benefit from a fresh clean approach. Here I used an abundance of red to really push the greens. Note the large quantity of white, which both encapsulates the primary and secondary colours and also adds sparkle and light to a very shadowy subject



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# Winter light

Landscape painting out of doors in the winter months will inspire you to capture the true nature of the land, says **Robert Dutton**, who shares his tips for using acrylic and mixed media to capture dramatic scenes

For many artists, winter is the time for studio work, a time to batten down the hatches and paint their way through the cold grey days by digging out all those warm-looking summer sketches and photographs and painting from them.

However, during the winter months, the landscape is filled with the most inspirational scenes as the structure of the landscape itself is revealed as the trees lose their leaves, revealing their amazing linear shapes. Buildings and walls and other architectural elements provide interest and form among the earth colours of the landscape.

I adore the winter months. For me the landscape comes alive. When it snows, it is transformed into simple, subtle contrasts and when the warm light hits the landscape, the tones and colours are quite magical. In these shorter days the low angle of the sun creates dramatic lighting effects across the land.

Many great artists celebrated the winter light and, for me, these works represent some of their very best painting. Two paintings I find inspirational are Monet's *The Magpie*, a winter scene with a magpie on a fence, which was painted in the countryside near Etretat, France, between 1868 and

▲ *Moorland Heights*, acrylic and mixed media on boxed canvas, 18×18in (45.5×45.5cm).

It was bitterly cold and the peat pools had frozen. The cold lasted for several days so on my second visit to this location I used pastels to record the scene, as water-based paints would have frozen

1869, and *White Frost* by Camille Pissarro, painted in 1873. Both are hanging in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Of course, it's not always as comfortable to work out of doors in winter months but thermal layers help. Not being able to work outside for long



periods of time really helps to focus your attention. Working from a car is a great idea for those who wish to stay a little bit warmer – take a dust sheet with you, though, especially if you are working with pastels.

### Locations and subject matter

I live close to the Pennines and the Yorkshire moors and dales, landscapes

▼ *Sharp Moorland Light*, acrylic and mixed media on boxed Amsterdam linen, 20×20in (51×51cm).

Working on a gesso and pumice ground I painted in layers using big, gestural brushstrokes to create a scene with plenty of foreground interest and aerial perspective to create real energy in this composition

that offer me a great diversity of painting and drawing subjects. The gritty, hard-weathered landscape of the Pennine moors, with their abandoned upland farms, offer sharp contrasts to the softer landscape of the valley floor. The upland farms with their sharp, jagged and angular weather-beaten forms offer great anchoring points of focus in an otherwise white and empty expansive landscape. These buildings also put into context the scale of the land – the vastness of it in comparison to the small isolated farmhouses.

### Landscape colours

Winter also emphasises the texture of landscape, particularly at the end of autumn, just before the winter snows arrive, when tantalising subtle earth colours inspire landscape paintings

‘During the winter months, the landscape is filled with the most inspirational scenes as the structure of the landscape is revealed’

with beautiful warm glowing tints. Texture now plays more of an important role too, as your eye is drawn over the undulating mass and shapes of the land, which adds further interest. ▷





## MIXED MEDIA

Rather than trying to add more colours as you go along, working with a limited range will achieve a better unity of inter relating colours within your paintings. For example *Approaching Sleet* (below) was created in the studio using a very limited range of colours but it has all the vigour of the pastel study executed in front of the scene.

### Adding white

Over use of white pigment in any painting can lead to a very chalky appearance and dull-looking passages of paint – especially if you use white straight from the tube. Even the most extreme highlights have a tiny bit of colour present. Reaching for the white in the hope that it will restore dirty colour mixes will not work – it is far better to mix accurate colours in the first place. Practice makes perfect here, so set aside some time to experiment on a blank sheet of paper or board, as

some colour-mixing exercises will pay dividends later. This process will enable you to see what works and what does not – thus avoiding catastrophic disappointments later.

However, white is useful for mixing semi-transparent and opaque tints. For instance, applied over a white base layer of gesso and pumice, initial transparent glazes can be allowed to show through areas of more opaque paint. The final painting will radiate colour and have plenty of surface interest.

### Working quickly

I have learned to paint quickly with any chosen media to get the visual information recorded rapidly or lose the captivating moment of a fleeting light effect, whatever the season. This is exciting and forces me to work more intuitively, with many of these first-hand experiences becoming an integral

part of any larger finished studio painting. Experiencing the drama of the changing weather in a winter landscape is really exhilarating.

Field study sketches, painted with pastel and charcoal for speed of execution, form the basis for more

▼ *Approaching Sleet*, acrylic and mixed media on MDF board fixed to a 2×1in boxed frame, 20×20in (51×51cm).

Dramatic winter light and changing weather creates real energy in a painting. I used big, gestural brushstrokes on a gesso and pumice ground, working in multiple layers to create a scene with plenty of contrast in tones. I worked with a limited range of colours: cobalt and ultramarine blue, crimson, burnt sienna, raw umber, a little cadmium yellow, Payne's grey and white. Interference blue was added to give an extra tantalising shimmer, which worked really well in this energetic painting







major studio works. I rarely use any other media on location, apart from a camera to record a fleeting moment of light, for example. In the past I have taken watercolours out on location in winter but the water has a tendency to freeze, which makes it difficult to mix with.

### Experiment and innovate

Whatever media I choose to work with in the studio – watercolour, gouache, acrylic, pastel and so on – an infinite variety of drawing and painting tools are used to create my expressive marks. A sponge or cloth dipped in paint and dabbed onto the surface can create some beautiful marks, especially with glazed colours.

Stencilling is another great way to create marks. You place the stencil on the painting surface and spray, spatter or paint over the mask to create a sharp

▲ *Pennine Snow Flurries*, acrylic and mixed media on board, 25×25in (63.5×63.5cm). As I turned to face the direction of the approaching snow storm the light was fantastic. The warm autumn colours in this moorland painting are a great contrast to the bright highlights. To capture the direction of the wind-blown snow I angled my brushmarks in different directions, used rags and cloths to apply opaque paint, and flicked paint with old stiff hog brushes at different heights from the canvas

edge. Torn paper used in this way creates a more natural looking edge for mountain ridges, for example.

Adopting an innovative experimental approach to your work and painting methods will ensure you continue to develop your painting skills, which leads you into new and exciting methods of expression.

TA



### Robert Dutton

regularly teaches workshops in mixed-media painting and drawing at a number of venues throughout Yorkshire. For further details visit <http://rdcreative.co.uk/art-workshops> or contact him on 0113 2252481. [www.rdcreative.co.uk](http://www.rdcreative.co.uk)





Ann Witheridge

# Value patterns

As a starting point we might establish the figure through line, anatomy, proportion and gesture but as **Ann Witheridge** explains, you can work from the start in mass and value – that is, finding the figure through shapes of light and dark

An artist may start a drawing or painting with line, but these lines do not actually exist. There are no contour lines that divide the figure from the background. In reality when we look at nature or the human figure we see shapes of light and dark or shapes of colour. As artists we are

reducing what we see into simple shapes and patterns of light and dark that comprise the figure. These patterns of distinct shades are known as the value patterns. Value is a term used to describe the tone – the light, dark or half tone. Mass or volume describes the shape of an object or a shadow, as a whole.

Values are an easy enough concept to understand, although we tend to over-analyse them, seeking far too many value shifts. In their simplest forms the values are the light and dark of the figure, the chiaroscuro. Along the transition where light meets dark is the shadow edge (also known as the terminator or demi-tint). This is a transition, not a line. If you ignore reflected light or ambient light, the transition is as clear as the value shift.

## The studio space and light set-up

Artists who work from life ideally work in studios that face north so that no direct sunlight enters the room. This keeps the light source continuous and prevents sunlight bouncing around the room causing ambient light, thus allowing for clear value patterns. It is another reason why many artists paint the walls of their studios a darker tone, so that the light is absorbed.

Ironically it is harder to reduce value pattern than over analyse it, as Leonardo said: 'Simplicity is the

ultimate sophistication.' A drawing with a simplified value pattern can be more powerful than one with an overstretched value range.

Try to look for two values at the start, in their simplest form. The lights or the darks. Don't get distracted by reflected light, as it is still in the shadow side. Equally don't become distracted by modelling if it is in the light. Try to find the clear distinction between the light and the dark, the shadow edge. This distinction is even clearer along a cast shadow than a form shadow.

Secondly, look for an extra value in both the lights and the dark. The lighter dark and the darker light. These two values should be very distinct from each other. The darker light should never be the same value as the lighter dark. The most common mistake is to make the lighter dark become lighter than the darker light. This is called over-modelling and can make the image appear flat and muddy. Finding the distinction between the light and dark is key to giving your figure a sense of mass and volume.

Recall a drawing or pen and ink study, either contemporary or from the history of art, that has impressed you, in any style. It is obviously the value that carries the image. Colour, though an intoxicating subject, is not a necessary part of the image-making process. Although the colour and opacity is different, the value shifts remain the same.

## Materials to use

Establish your value patterns first. Colour is a wonderful seductive subject but it is dependent on value. For mass drawing or painting, any medium can be used. Oils, charcoal and pastels are the most obvious choice as you can immediately put down mass or shapes ▷ p46



▲ *Value sketch*, charcoal and chalk on toned paper, 13½×10in (35×25cm).

For this drawing I worked on toned paper and simplified the drawing to three values. Dark (charcoal), mid-tone (paper), light (chalk). I tried to keep the image two-dimensional by not turning edges or modelling the form. It is in its most simplistic stage. As an exercise it is oddly more difficult to restrict the use of value patterns than to jump into the modelling



## DEMONSTRATION *Grisaille Figure*

In this demonstration I limited the use of colour and relied solely on the values to create form. I would traditionally start a painting using burnt umber and a little ultramarine blue. The colour is still naturalistic, but not entirely accurate. The colour and temperature is not falsified but as close to nature as I can achieve with two pigments



### ▲ STAGE ONE

Initially I covered the linen with a mid-tone



### ▲ STAGE TWO

I then placed down my darks and pulled out my lights with kitchen roll. I established the clear simplified value pattern without adding any of the details



### ▲ STAGE THREE

I added some further accents of dark to re-affirm the proportion and emphasise the gesture. I kept the value patterns very simple, painting the figure in two tones, light or dark. As artists we tend to over model form, giving the image too many values. The power of so much art is the simplification of subject, values, colours not the over-analysis. At this stage of a painting, I would usually start adding some opaque colours such as ochre and white to create the form in the lights. However, I was equally able to continue using the grisaille method (making a painting entirely in shades of light and dark)



### ◀ Value-shift umber

The transition in values (burnt umber) for *Grisaille Figure*, oil on linen, 4¼×2in (12×5cm)

### ◀ FINISHED PAINTING

*Grisaille Figure*, oil on linen, 11¼×9¾in (30×25cm).

Finally I cleaned up my transitions between light and dark. I added two more values, a higher light and darker dark. I also added some even darker accents to emphasise form, gesture and anatomy





## IMPROVE YOUR FIGURE PAINTING: 4 OF 6

► *Blue Figure*, oil on linen, 6×2½in (15×7cm).

Here I used ultramarine blue, ochre and white. At the start of the painting I mixed three distinct values: light, mid-tone and dark. I started in much the same way as before. I would not usually paint in blue but it was fun to see how the figure can appear just as naturalistic, despite the complete falsification of colour. I also used white from the start. I would usually hold off using white so that my paints can remain transparent for as long as possible. I tend to like to glaze in certain areas and build up opaque paint in others



▲ India Amos *Carla*, charcoal on paper, 19¼×8in (50×20cm)

'In both these drawings, above and right, the value patterns on the figure were distinct, but the transitions between the values were subtle and soft, making for a beautiful set up. To exaggerate the strength of the value patterns I used the value of the background as a contrast. In *Carla* I left the background clean and white to allow the dark value pattern that zig-zagged down her torso and on her arm to really take effect. Conversely, in *Violet* I included the dark background so as to heighten the drama of the light value pattern pouring down the right-hand side of the figure and onto the foot. Through both unifying the value shifts to as few as possible and simplifying the backgrounds, the value patterns become the primary focus in these two drawings. If you struggle to see the value patterns, try squinting. The darks should knit together and the lights remain clear'

India Amos



▲ The transition in values (ultramarine blue and titanium white) for *Blue Figure*, oil on linen, 4¼×2in (12×5cm)



▲ India Amos *Violet*, charcoal on paper, 23½×11½in (60×30cm)

working with the side of a charcoal or pastel or by using a larger size filbert or flat brush. Pencil can also be used but the effect is not as immediate.

Once the values are established, it is so simple to add colour. Prud'hon's figure drawings are a wonderful example of strongly defined value patterns. Generally he worked on a toned paper (the mid-tone) with charcoal for the well-defined shadows and chalk for the lights. His technique required layering of chalks to get a velvety surface on which he would then hatch higher chalks, and likewise with the charcoal.

TA

**Next month:** colour and flesh tones

**Ann Witheridge** founded London Fine Art Studios. She has taught figure drawing and painting for over 15 years and written for art periodicals. **India Amos** is head of figure drawing and coordinates all the models at London Fine Art Studios. For more information see [www.londonfineartstudios.com](http://www.londonfineartstudios.com)



# Try lino!

**Brian Britton** demonstrates a simple print using basic lino cutting techniques, with plenty of tips that will help to get you started

Printmaking is, for me, the perfect combination of art and craft; these two disciplines come together perfectly in the planning and creation of a lino print. Since retiring I have focused on my own work, painting and drawing, creating bas-relief sculptures and, especially, relief printmaking. I have been fortunate in acquiring two Victorian printing presses, which have enabled me to develop my work. My inspiration comes from the landscapes of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. Artists I admire include Samuel Palmer, Robin Tanner, Peter Lanyon and Bryan Wynter and it is from these, as well as others,

that I have developed my techniques and processes.

I enjoy working in a variety of printing techniques, all of which demand different approaches and present specific problems and outcomes that need to be resolved using a synthesis of fine art and design.

## Basic process

My starting point is the recording of an image. Working in the field with sketchbook and camera allows me to refine my drawing style with a print in mind. I am concerned with composition, the balance between

areas of black and white, and scale and proportion. My initial drawings are synthesised into my final design, which is then transferred onto my lino, ready for cutting. I draw in pencil and then fix my design onto the lino with waterproof pen. I use a simple cutting board to avoid slipping when cutting the design and work with a variety of specialist lino cutting tools.

Once the design has been cut it is ready for inking. I use a black proofing ink, a medium soft roller, and cartridge paper for all my trials, and these are hand-burnished with a wooden spoon. The initial print is then ready for review as there is nearly always a need for more cutting to establish the required balance between black and white, and detail.

I find writing directly on the proofs helpful as they create a record of progress and refinement. Working into the most recent print with paint and correction fluid, with the addition of notes, helps me to establish the required balance within the design and then I am able to further refine the design, ready for the next proof print.

Further refinement continues until I am happy with the final composition. The final prints are often printed onto a good-quality coloured, slightly textured hand-made paper which is then mounted onto card, ready for sale. ▷



### ▲ STAGE ONE

Having transferred my design onto the lino, I refine the image



### ▲ STAGE TWO

The design is inked to stop smudging and cutting begins. Note the simple cutting board made from chipboard and battening



### ◀ STAGE THREE

Preparing to ink the cut design

### ▶ STAGE FOUR

The design inked and ready for the printing paper





## LINO PRINTING



### ▲ STAGE FIVE

The first print and the lino cut. Note that the image is in reverse and notes on further refinements are written directly on the print proof

### ► STAGE SIX

Continued development with the use of correction fluid



### ▲ STAGE SEVEN

Continued refinement, moving towards the final design



### ▲ STAGE EIGHT

The final design on hand-made paper and lino block

Occasionally I further develop the print by first printing a coloured background and then printing the black design on top.

For me the printing process is firstly a synthesis of creating a suitable image from a number of photographic resources and direct drawing. Whether I intend to make a multi-coloured lino print or a single-colour image, the starting point is always the same. Development and refinement may take some time but the printing process does allow me to create a number of almost identical images, so the investment in time is worthwhile.

### Materials and equipment for printmaking

Much of the basic equipment you need is easily purchased online or from art shops. You can expand on the essentials if you want to explore further the various printmaking processes.

### You will need

- **A sheet of Perspex** or glass approximately A4 or larger. If glass make sure it is toughened and has ground edges (an old wall mirror will do to start with).
- **Printing roller** (sometimes called a brayer) – 4in (10cm) is ideal.
- **Wooden spoon** for burnishing the back of the print when it is on the lino.
- **A lino cutting tool** and blades. Interchangeable blades fit into a handle and allow you to make different cuts
- **Printing inks** – either water-based or oil-based. If you buy oil-based inks you will need a solvent such as white spirit to clean your tools and inking board. I use white, yellow, red, blue and black. Oil or water-based inks are fully mixable (not together!) and will give you the secondary colours.
- **Spatulas** to mix the inks, or old kitchen knives.

- **Rags and kitchen paper** to help you clean up – if you use oil-based inks make sure your solvent-soaked rags are carefully disposed of, as these can be a fire hazard.

- **Lino** – there are different types on the market. 'Supersoft' or regular lino comes in different sizes.

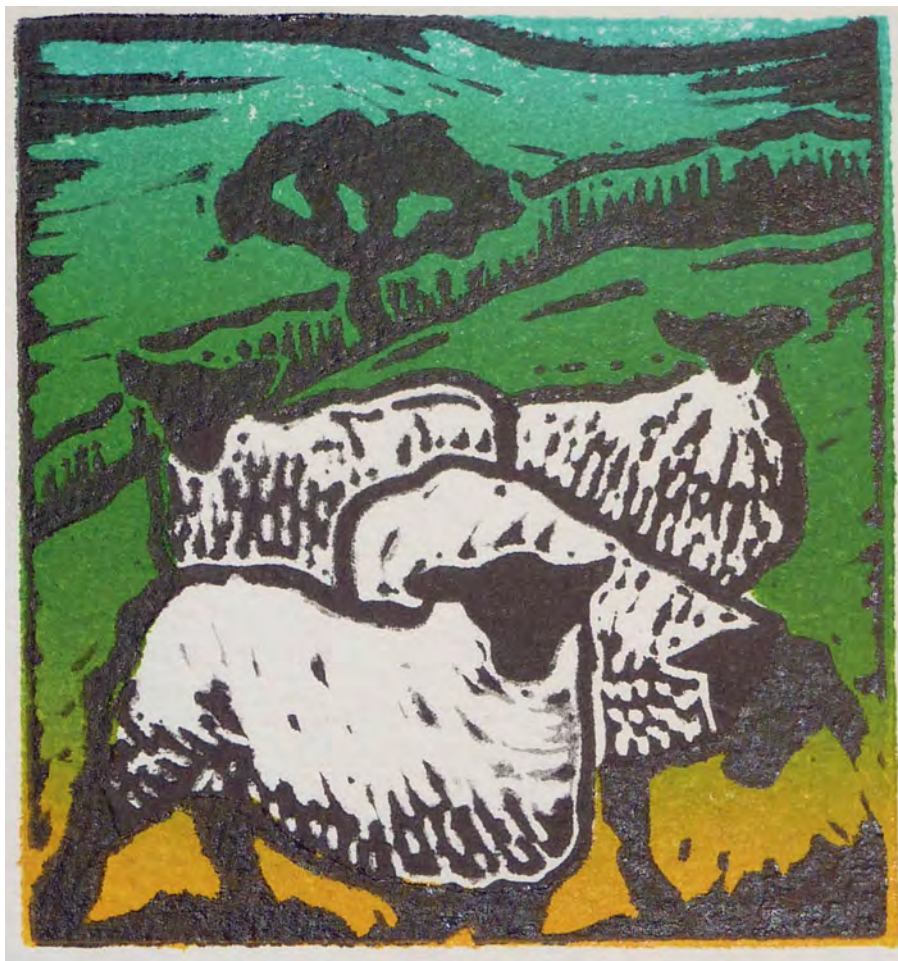
- **Cutting board.** This can be purchased or easily made from a flat piece of chipboard and two pieces of softwood, as shown on page 47. It needs to be A4 or slightly bigger.

- **Cold-pressed** or HP cartridge paper (not Rough or textured watercolour paper) and other papers for experiments.

### A word about inks

Many printmakers have made the move to water-based inks rather than have the health and safety problems associated with oil-based inks. Results from the fairly modern water-based inks





### ▲ FINISHED PRINT

*Sheep on the Hill*, lino print, 2¼×2¼in (7×7cm). A background has been printed, the lino block is carefully printed on top, making sure the background and lino line up. This print will be framed

are good, and are a lot cheaper than oil inks, so start with these and then try oil inks once you have experienced the process of printing.

Some artists use artists' oil paint but in my experience this rarely works as the ink does not stick to the lino cut and the print takes a long time to dry, often leaving an oil stain around the print.

### Suppliers

Many of the larger high street art suppliers such as WHSmith, Cass Art and Hobbycraft have a section dedicated to printmaking. Specialist suppliers include:

TN Lawrence, ([www.lawrence.co.uk](http://www.lawrence.co.uk));  
Cornelissen & Son

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

Hawthorn Printmaker Presses  
([www.hawthornprintmaker.com](http://www.hawthornprintmaker.com))

Intaglio Printmaker  
(<http://intaglioprintmaker.com>).

All have a comprehensive range of printmaking equipment and

consumables and are well worth a look online. Also try online art supplier GreatArt ([www.greatart.co.uk](http://www.greatart.co.uk)).

### Printing without a press

Many printmakers aspire to owning a printing press, particularly the Victorian Columbian or Albion presses that are showpieces in museums and modern print factories. However, many printmakers use a wooden spoon, a specialist burnishing baren, or even an old tobacco tin! Excellent results can be achieved by rubbing hard in a circular motion on the reverse of the printing paper while it is still on the wet printing block.

TA

### Recommended reading

*I can recommend any of the following books. Some might be out of print, but may be available via Amazon. There are many other books on the market that will give enjoyment and inspiration.*

**The Instant Printmaker** by M Petterson and C Gale, published by Collins & Brown  
**The Complete Manual of Relief Printmaking** by R Simmons and K Clemson, published by Dorking Kindersley  
**Relief Printmaking** by A Wesley.  
*I can also recommend You Tube for video clips that show artists making prints using both hand techniques and printing presses.*



*Hare in Snow*, lino print, 12×8in (30×20cm)



*White Path West*, lino print, 12×8in (30×20cm)



### Brian Britton

studied at the University of Bristol and taught art and design for 36 years before becoming a full-time artist. He continues to give lessons to adult artists who want to explore this versatile artform and is secretary of Lechlade Art Society. Contact Brian via Lechlade Art Society: [www.lechladeartsociety.co.uk](http://www.lechladeartsociety.co.uk)



# Striking skies in watercolour

In his final article about painting skies, **Winston Oh** reveals his techniques and tips for striking skies with visual impact, movement, colour and atmosphere

Of the five different skies shown here two were painted from life as weather conditions were favourable. The other three were painted with the aid of digital images recorded on site and referred to as the painting progressed. Digital cameras are invaluable. They have enabled me to capture wonderful skies and landscapes that I would never have been able to sketch in time.

These skies make an impact because they all have contrasting tones, light, colour, movement and atmosphere. Brightness and light are created when significant areas of white, unpainted surfaces are placed adjacent to dark-toned clouds – best seen in *Chichester Cathedral, Sussex* (below) and *Seminyak*

*Beach, Bali* (right). There is a wide range of colours across the five skies.

Movement is implied by the shapes and the angle of the clouds. In *St Ives Bridge, Cambridgeshire* (below right) the parallel and diagonal posture of the clouds implies a strong wind. In *Chichester Cathedral, Sussex*, the wispy tails of the clouds on the right and the angled posture suggest wind. There is a lot of atmosphere created by the skies in *Lifeboat Jetty, Broughty Ferry, Dundee* (page 52). I believe it is due to the softer, warmer light and the quiet calm.

## Wet-in-wet painting

The wet-in-wet technique was used in all the skies. The paper was wetted liberally with clean water with a size 10

brush; tilting the paper allows excess water to run off. In *Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire* (page 52) the entire sky was wetted, likewise in *St Ives Bridge* and *Lifeboat Jetty, Broughty Ferry*, except for a small area deliberately kept dry for the highlight. Where there were many clouds with sharp dry edges, as in the case of *Chichester Cathedral, Sussex*, I found it easier to paint the upper third of the sky on dry paper, outline the dry upper cloud edges, and then to wet the lower two thirds of the paper before continuing.

Wetting of the paper makes it easier to paint clouds with soft edges, allows two different coloured areas to join



▲ *Chichester Cathedral, Sussex, watercolour, 12×18in (30.5×45.5cm).*

This fine winter's day was painted from life. The sky was French ultramarine above, cobalt blue in the middle, cerulean blue below, and pink above the horizon. This is due to refraction of light as it travels through progressively denser moisture in the air. The tops of the white clouds were kept dry during the wetting process, whereas the secondary clouds were fluffy from the wet-into-wet effect. Note the low thin clouds on the right that were painted after the initial wash was dry. They represent distant grey clouds receding into the distance. Grey shadows under the main clouds give them depth and rounded form. French ultramarine was mixed with Indian red for the dark blue sky at the top

## WINSTON'S TIPS

- The wet-on-wet technique is swift, perfectly suited for painting outdoors and changing skies. It inherently forces the painter to simplify, capturing only the gist of an interesting sky. Yet there is so much opportunity to inject character to the painting – colour, textural and tonal variations, visual centre of focus, movement, and recession.
- Sometimes it pays to be imaginative and bold. When encountering a stunning or unusual sky, enjoy it over several minutes, taking mental note of colours, tones, composition, imprinting it in your visual memory. If possible, sketch it with colour notes, and then take a digital image to freeze it for reference.
- Be bold. Resolve to paint it, knowing that it could be technically challenging but most rewarding. The only way to be confident in this technique is to practise. Start with simple skies and experiment with variations in colour mixes, mopping or dabbing off paint, and try using different colours.





seamlessly, and allows the artist to mix different colours on the paper before it dries, as in *Seminyak Beach, Bali* (above), for example.

## Modifications

Additional colour and tone should be added to an area while the paper is still wet. Make sure that the paint is more concentrated and drier than the initial wash, in order to avoid the dreaded cauliflower effect, which is impossible to rectify. Other colours can similarly be brushed in for texture and highlights. A more controlled way to add paint or new colours on top of the first wash is to let the first wash dry completely. Then wet the area that you wish to modify with a clean brush and clean water. This has to be done lightly with a large brush, because too much pressure may lift off underlying paint. Then you may add more of the same colour to increase the tone. New washes of different colours can also be laid on, but remember to use a sufficiently strong mix. Because the underlying paint is dry, the overlaid wash should be more even, and a stronger tone achieved. There will be some dilution when painting on a wet underwash.

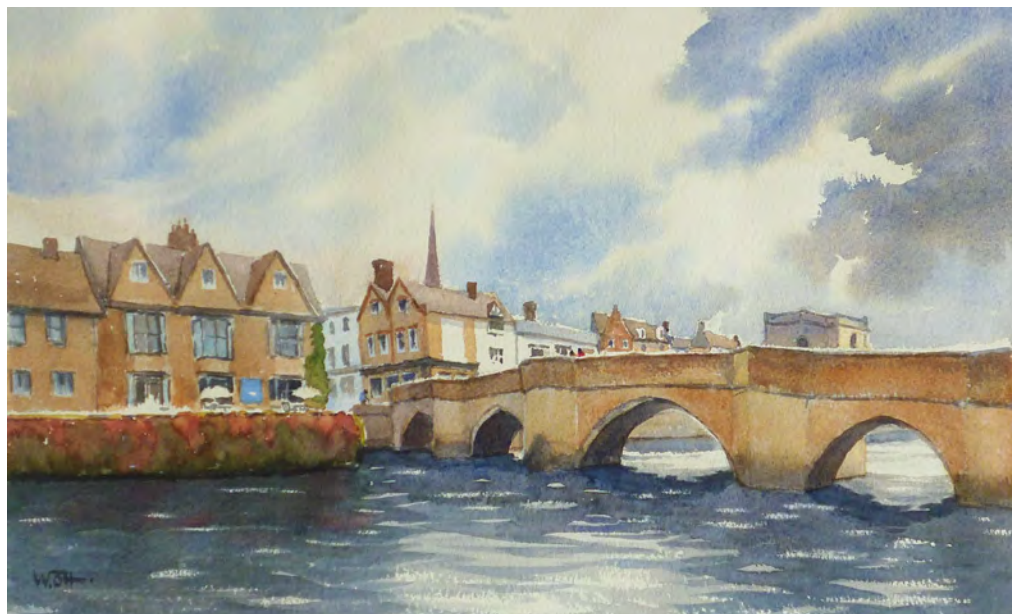
Paint on wet paper can be removed completely if mopped off immediately with soft tissue paper. If the paint is half dried, you may need to mop several times, with rewetting between. Winsor blue and alizarin are two

▲ *Seminyak Beach, Bali*, watercolour, 12×18in (30×46cm).

This complicated sky could not be painted on the spot because the sun was in my eyes, and the composition would have changed rapidly because of the stiff sea breeze. It was captured on a digital camera, and painted while sitting in the shade. The left half of the painting was done on dry paper, and the other half wet-into-wet. I was pleased with the soft cloud edges on that side. The circular area of bright light in the blue sky was created by dabbing with soft tissue. The sharp cloud edges on the left were made possible by painting on dry paper. To attain the strong tone in the large dark cloud, a second strong wash of the cobalt and burnt umber was laid on top of the first wash after it was dry. Cobalt blue and cerulean blue also feature in this cloud

▼ *St Ives Bridge, Cambridgeshire*, watercolour, 12×18in (30×46cm).

There was a brisk wind blowing and the clouds were scudding diagonally across the sky. This sky was painted from life, quite briskly on pre-wetted paper with mixes of French ultramarine and burnt umber only. Note the dry edge in the grey cloud where the paper was deliberately left dry. This sky was painted with only one application of paint, and there is a lot of movement

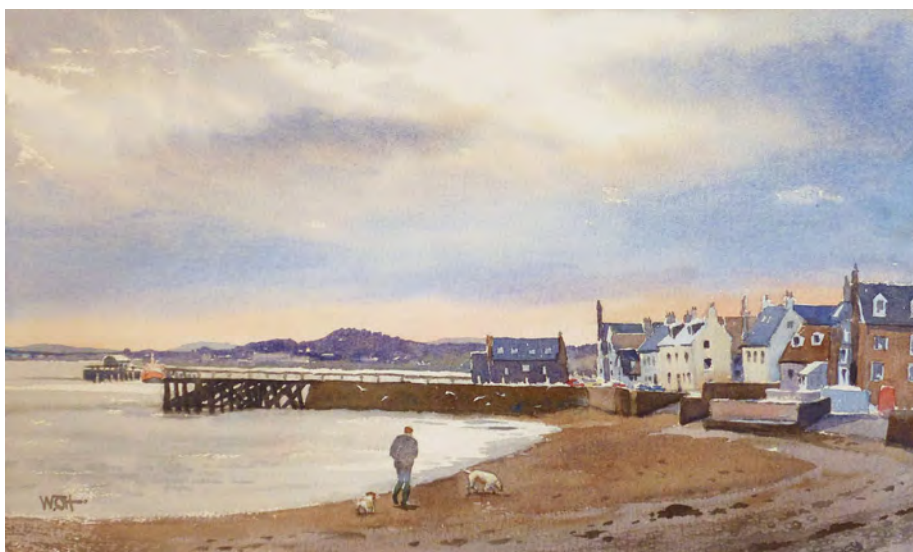






▲ *Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire*, watercolour, 12×18in (30×46cm).

I saw this sky two days before and photographed it. The colours used here were French ultramarine mixed with Indian red in the upper left corner, French ultramarine and light red in the diagonal sweep on the right, and a smaller cloud on the left. The orange colour above the horizon is a mixture of light red and raw sienna. There was pure raw sienna above the left horizon. The strong tones in the upper corners and dark sweep of clouds could only be attained by adding a second layer of paint after making sure the first wash had dried. The dramatic silhouette of the cathedral under a lively sky creates atmosphere



▲ *Lifeboat Jetty, Broughty Ferry, Dundee*, watercolour, 12×18in (30×45.5cm). The upper half of this atmospheric sky was painted with mixtures of French ultramarine and burnt umber; cobalt blue was used in the lower half, and the orange above the horizon was cadmium yellow mixed with light red. The light grey area in the upper-left corner was interesting. The thin wispy clouds floating up were purely coincidental, as were the thin horizontal white lines

pigments that are notoriously colourfast, and may be impossible to remove completely. If lifting off is less than satisfactory, it is best to leave everything to dry completely, then rework with a fresh coat of stronger toned paint to hide the unwanted bits.

Soft fluffy white clouds can be created by dabbing off wet paint on a sky wash. I would confine this to only part of the sky, because it could be too repetitive and boring. There are times when you might wish to soften the tone of a part of the painting. This is easily done by gently wetting the area without scrubbing the underlying paint, dab it dry very gently with tissue, and repeat the process until satisfied. If the underlying paint is disturbed too much, the wash will become uneven and blotchy.

If you wish to soften a sharp edge, running a damp small brush along the edge works best if the underlying paint is not entirely dry. Otherwise, it will require repeated wetting and dabbing to achieve it.



### Winston Oh

teaches watercolour at Dedham Hall, Dedham, Essex. A past student of James Fletcher-Watson and John Yardley, Winston is an elected member of the

Pure Watercolour Society and is represented in the Singapore National Art Gallery collection. He has held solo exhibitions in the UK, Switzerland and Singapore, and taken part in mixed exhibitions in Sydney and London.  
[www.winstonoh.com](http://www.winstonoh.com)



# THE A-Z OF COLOUR

**Julie Collins** recommends ways to consider light in your watercolour painting



**Julie Collins**

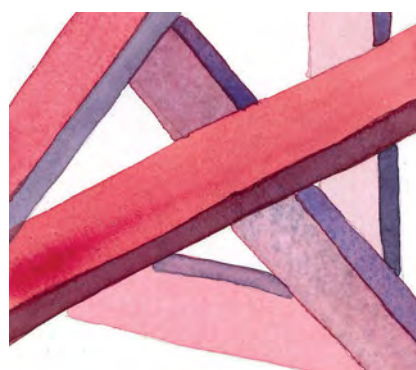
studied at the University of Reading. She has exhibited with the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, Royal West of England Academy, Royal Watercolour

Society and the ING Discerning Eye, and has received numerous awards. Julie has written art books, teaches painting and drawing, and is a tutor at West Dean College, Chichester. [www.juliecollins.co.uk](http://www.juliecollins.co.uk)

## L is for light

Light and shade will create patterns in a painting. Pierre Bonnard's colourful work is full of patterns of light and shade that somehow bring the paintings to life. My first painting project at art school was a still life, an arrangement of long cardboard boxes that had previously housed strip lights. They had been painted and arranged in the centre of the room, which created patterns and shapes and various tones of light and shade. The still life was a perfect, simplified way to learn about lights and shadows. Figure 1 (right) illustrates this perfectly.

Figure 1



Colours and mixes used in Figure 1

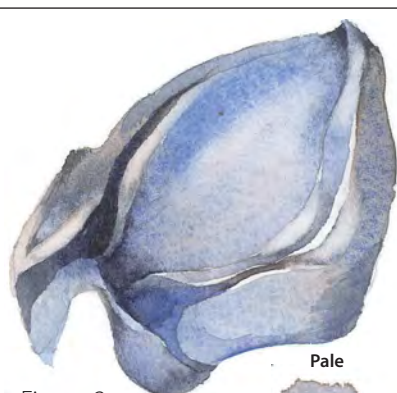


Figure 2

Colours and mixes used in Figure 2



## Perceptions of light

The perceptions of the effect of light on one colour are unconscious. For example, if I am wearing a blue dress you are conscious that the dress is blue, but not conscious of how the light creates highlights on the folds and darks in the shadows of the folds. Figure 2 (above) illustrates this. Making art makes you more aware of light and shade, which is so important in a successful painting. It is clear from Rembrandt's wonderful paintings that he understood light and shade in the most amazing way and was able to translate this into a painting.

## How light changes colour

If we were going to do a study of a plum under a bright light we might expect the plum to be bright purple/red all over. But in Figure 3 (right) the highlight is almost yellow and the shadow side a dark violet red. Try painting a plum or red apple to practise getting your highlights light enough and your shadows dark enough.

If your fruit is sitting on a white surface, the shadow on the fruit will have a red tinge; if the surface is blue, the shadow on the fruit will have a violet tinge.

Figure 3

Colours and mixes used in Figure 3





# A high grade of pencil

**Ian Sidaway** subjects Derwent Graphic pencils to a thorough workout



Since the discovery, in the 16th century, of a vein of graphite – then known as black lead or plumbago – running through Seathwaite in Borrowdale, Cumbria, the nearby town of Keswick has been synonymous with the pencil industry. The first recorded factory was in 1832 and by 1851 a further three factories had opened, such was the demand. The world-famous Cumberland Pencil Company established itself from the Hogarth and Hayes company, which the Greenwood family had taken over in 1912 due to a bad debt. The company went on to develop the Derwent brand during the early and middle parts of the 20th century and launched the Derwent Graphic range, reviewed here, in 1980.

The graphite pencil is perhaps the most immediate of all mark-making implements. It is both simple yet sophisticated, and more importantly it is familiar. Unlike most mark-making

materials used by artists there is no huge learning curve, you pick it up and draw. It is arguably the most important tool at the artist's disposal, and so should be chosen with care. Derwent Graphic pencils would be an excellent choice.

## The Graphic grades

Derwent Graphic pencils are available in 20 grades, two more than most other manufacturers offer: the soft grades are 9B to B, the medium grades F and HB, and the harder grades are H to 9H. They are hexagonal in shape, which makes them easy to hold, with well-centred leads or strips, which is important if you use a pencil sharpener rather than a knife to point up your pencils. A pencil needs to do three things well. Ideally it needs to deliver a consistent tone at consistent pressure; it should not feel 'gritty' in use but smooth and free flowing; and the lead or graphite strip should be resistant to

breaking, a problem that is often encountered with the softer grade of pencil.

The Derwent Graphic pencils I tested did well on all counts. They certainly sharpen well with both sharpener and knife, with only the 8 and 9B needing a little extra care to avoid the strips breaking under pressure – something that can happen with all very soft grade pencils. All pencils felt smooth to use on a variety of substrates and the tone delivery was always consistent.

When used under maximum pressure each grade of pencil should deliver a maximum tone density that matches the grade of the pencil. For example, the marks made by a 6B applied at maximum pressure should be much darker than the marks made by a 6H applied with maximum pressure. This will vary from brand to brand, as each manufacturer will use different filler to graphite ratios to make each grade of pencil. I found the harder grades were much softer than the harder grades made by two other brands that I regularly use, and so delivered a darker tone. It required a very light touch to achieve really light tones with the Graphic pencils. This can, of course, easily be achieved by holding the pencil higher up the shaft and letting the pencil's own weight make the mark.

When you are producing complex drawings where a full tonal range is required, harder H grade pencils are really needed in order to achieve those lighter tones easily. However, I really liked the harder grade H pencils and would use them in situations where others might use the softer B grades. The HB grade pencil proved to be the perfect all-rounder, easily producing a full tonal range of marks and is the perfect sketchbook partner – all that is needed for a day's sketching.

## Erasing

Drawing can also be about what is taken out or removed and many artists use erasers as part of the drawing process as well as to remedy mistakes. I used putty, vinyl and art gum erasers



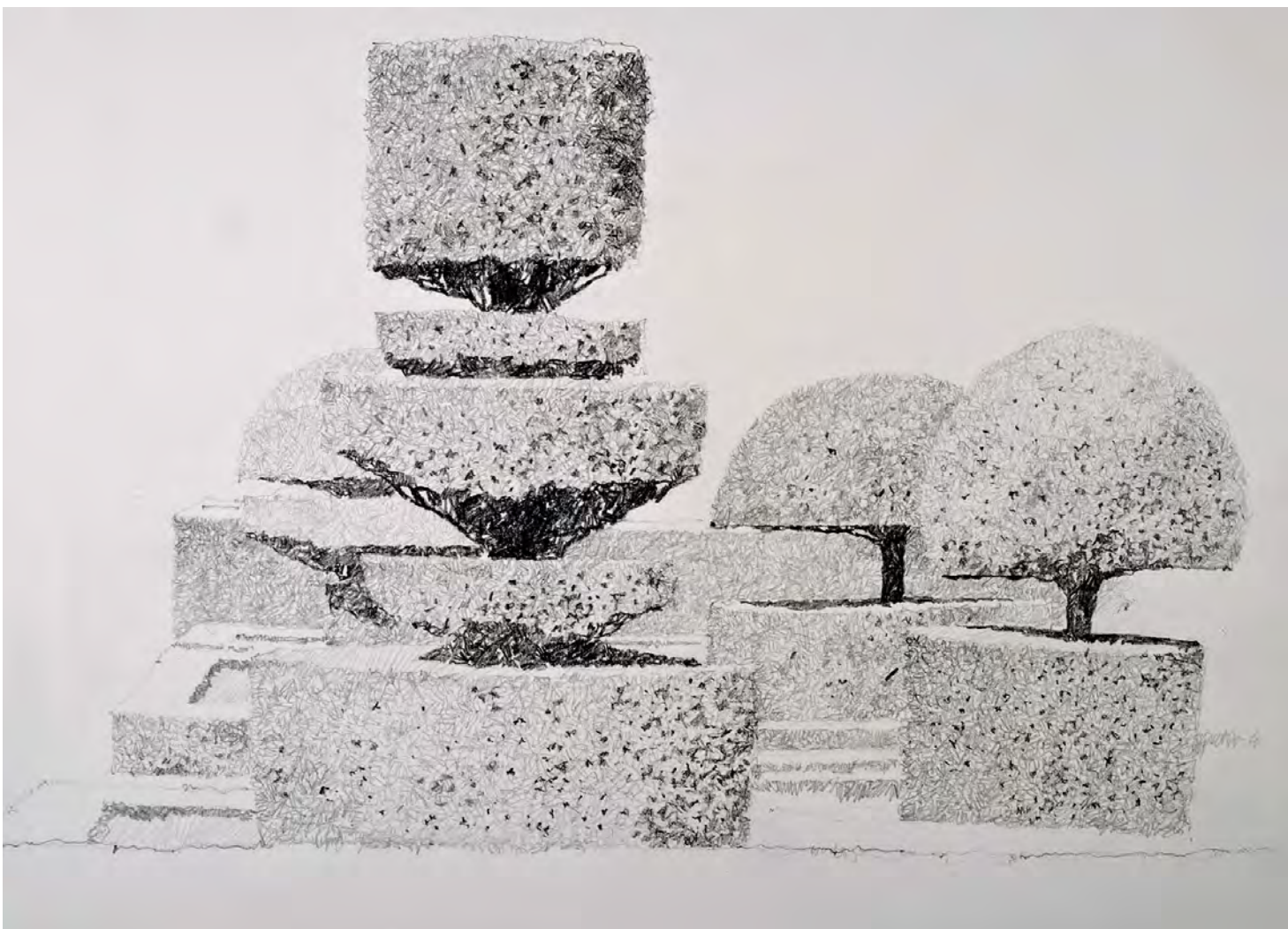
▲ The top swatch shows the range of tones possible using the Derwent Graphic 6B. The marks are soft and slightly textured as the soft graphite can pick up the texture of the paper. The bottom swatch shows the range of tones possible using the 6H. The marks are crisper and the texture of the paper is less noticeable



▲ The top swatch shows the range of tones possible with the Derwent Graphic 4H. The swatch below shows the range of tones possible when using a Faber-Castell 4H, which is much harder. Both were applied using full or hard pressure at the darkest end of the swatch







▲ For this drawing I used the 8B, 2B and H Derwent Graphic pencils. Using a range of grades makes it much easier to achieve a full spread of tonal values

on cartridge paper; all performed as expected, with the harder type erasers producing a better result. Soft erasers, although useful, can smear rather than remove graphite. Due to the softer nature of the H range I found that even marks by the 9H erased very cleanly – try doing that with a hard grade Faber-Castell pencil and you will see a marked difference. I also experimented with blending stumps, which resulted in smooth blending and tonal transitions on all of the softer grades and, rather surprisingly, on the harder grades too, albeit to a lesser extent. TA

Derwent Graphic pencils are available as: a full set of 24 with duplicate B and H grades, £27.10 RRP; a set of 12 of hard, medium or soft grades, £13.60 RRP; Graphic 6 tin (2H, HB, 2B, 4B, 6B, 8B), £7.99 RRP. They can also be purchased individually, £1.27 RRP. For more information please visit [www.pencils.co.uk](http://www.pencils.co.uk)



The Graphic range is the first product to be relaunched under Derwent's rebranding programme. All products will carry the 'Made in Britain' marque on the new packaging and will feature work by international artists that reflect both the product and Derwent's continuing commitment to the artistic community. For the Graphic Pencil Collection Derwent commissioned Alexis Marcou



### Ian Sidaway

studied graphic design. Throughout the 1980s and '90s he painted portraits to commission but now concentrates on the landscape. He has illustrated and written 32 books and taught at summer painting workshops near Arezzo in Italy. He was elected a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours in 2010. [www.iansidaway.co.uk](http://www.iansidaway.co.uk)



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# Sky Arts Landscape Artist of the Year

This summer **Sally Bulgin** got a sneak-peek behind the scenes at one of the heats for the Sky Landscape Artist of the Year television series, where she chatted with the contestants, judges and presenters.

This is a show you won't want to miss!



Earlier this year I visited the National Trust's Scotney Castle, in Kent, to observe the filming of one of the heats of this year's Sky Arts Landscape Artist series. Eight of the selected 48 amateur and professional artists from the 900 original entrants were hoping to be selected to go forward to compete for the prizewinning £10,000 commission to paint a National Trust property. Each artist had been chosen to participate on the basis of their original submitted paintings. None of the judges knew the names or status of the artists whose works they were asked to select from; they were chosen purely for the qualities revealed in the work submitted. The artists were then organised into groups to ensure that a mixture of media, styles and working methods were included in each heat.

The eight artists at Scotney Castle were set up in purpose-built painting pods in case of inclement weather, and positioned to afford good views of the folly across the moat. They were allowed just four hours, within a six-hour period with breaks and an hour for lunch, to complete their paintings, whilst an additional 50 'wild card' artists were set up in another area of the grounds to paint the same subject matter from a different viewpoint.

Wild card entrant Jacqueline Browning, from Whitstable, was thrilled to be selected to participate. She loved the challenge of being compelled to work outdoors, which she wouldn't normally do. She spoke for many artists, who acknowledged the inspiration gained from working amongst other painters and seeing so many different styles and approaches to the same subject matter. The sense of camaraderie, friendliness, humour and support amongst the artists on the day was palpable.

▲ Paul Robinson used a spray paint layering technique to build his interpretation of the subject matter





▲ Jacqueline Browning enjoyed the camaraderie amongst the 50 'wild card' entrants, set up to paint the folly from a different perspective to the eight main competitors on the day

One of the judges, professional landscape and portrait artist Tai Shan Schierenberg, seemed acutely aware of the huge pressures on the artists and how much they might feel affected by the deep-rooted artistic tradition behind English landscape painting. How to frame a landscape view, the variations of scale, distance, weather, the changing light and the manifestation of the artist's personal interpretation added to the complexities of the judging. Although the aim was to find and reward the best artist, many additional factors affected their performance during the day, not least whether or not their own style and approach was really suited to working outdoors in front of the subject.

All the judges, Tai, Kathleen Soriano and Kate Bryan, were concerned about how the challenge of the limited painting time might affect the contestants. Listening to the judges' discussions at the halfway stage, they were empathetic and insightful about the work in progress, and gauged the contestants' developing works against the qualities displayed in their submission paintings. It was noted that Gordon Hunt, who had relied on his iPad to produce his submission painting, had adapted well to painting in front of the subject, whilst there was concern that Renata Fernandez, whose submission painting was compact and evocative, might not have time to pack the same punch on a larger scale.

Presenters Joan Bakewell and Frank Skinner were also fully engaged in the progress of the contestants throughout the day. Frank regarded Paul Robinson as a man on a mission with his spray paint layering techniques creating a mystic sense of the trees and sky which Frank found exciting, although the judges worried that his techniques

might not translate easily to the outdoor painting environment. They were concerned that William Holbrow, a relatively traditional painter, might need more time than available to develop his work to a conclusion, whilst Ann Mackowski was noticed for the quiet quality of her work and use of experimental coffee and ink



▲ Gordon Hunt's final painting awaits the judges' comments



▲ The judges, from left to right, Tai Shan Schierenberg, Kathleen Soriano, Kate Bryan, and presenter Frank Skinner, discuss their thoughts about the eight contestants' progress at the halfway stage



▲ Ann Mackowski explains her decision to turn her back on the subject matter and paint flat on the pod floor to Frank Skinner

techniques, as well as her unusual decision to turn her back on the subject matter and paint flat on the floor of the pod. Nigerian artist Titus Agbara was seen as a strong contender at the halfway stage. His immersion in the subject matter, and great concentration powers, were noted and admired.

Whilst the film crew and judges concluded the judging at the end of the four hours' painting time, I chatted to another wild card entrant, Carol Bowes-Alcock, who was thrilled to be on standby as a reserve artist in case a contestant dropped out. She explained that participation in the programme had helped to move her out of her comfort zone, and how helpful it had been to practise producing work in just four hours. Carol heard about her selection for the programme whilst also approaching galleries to sell her work, which she found hugely encouraging and confidence building, sentiments echoed by all the artists I met during the filming day at Scotney Castle. From my experiences on the day, I guarantee that this will be an inspiring series for artists and the general viewing public alike.

TA

*Sky Landscape Artist of the Year can be seen on Sky Arts from Tuesday October 11 and each Tuesday until the final from Urquhart Castle on Loch Ness on Tuesday November 29. There will be a further programme on Tuesday December 6 featuring the winner and their commission. Each episode airs at 8pm. This is the second series, produced by London and Glasgow-based independent production company Storyvault Films, following the success of Sky's Portrait Artist of the Year (PAOTY), also from Storyvault Films, that captured the public's imagination with its launch in 2013. Last year's LAOTY was the best-performing, non-scripted series of all time and second biggest series ever for Sky Arts.*



# EXHIBITIONS

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

## LONDON

### Bankside Gallery

48 Hopton Street SE1.

☎ 020 7928 7521

**London: A Sense of Place;**

Royal Watercolour Society,  
until November 5.

### British Museum

Great Russell Street WC1.

☎ 020 7930 0027

**French portrait drawings**

**from Clouet to Courbet;**

until January 29.

### Dulwich Picture Gallery

College Road SE21.

☎ 020 8693 5254

**Adriaen van de Velde: Dutch**

**Master of Landscape;**

October 12 to January 15.

### Flowers

21 Cork Street W1.

☎ 020 7439 7766

**Patrick Hughes:**

**Perspectivision;**

until November 5.

### Flowers

82 Kingsland Road E2.

☎ 020 7920 7777

**John Keane: If you knew me.**

**If you knew yourself. You**

**would not kill me;**

November 4 to December 10.

### Guildhall Art Gallery

Guildhall Yard EC2.

☎ 020 7332 3700

**Victorians Decoded: Art**

**and Telepathy;**

until January 22.

### Jerwood Space

171 Union Street SE1.

☎ 020 7654 0171

**Jerwood Drawing Prize 2016;**

until October 23.

### Llewellyn Alexander

124 The Cut, Waterloo SE1.

☎ 020 7620 1322

**Mary Pym;** 20 new oil

landscapes,

November 1 to 16.

### Mall Galleries

The Mall SW1.

☎ 020 7930 6844

**Tim Benson: Faces of Ebola;**

portraits of Ebola survivors

and those who cared for

them, with audio interviews,

November 7 to 13.

**Society of Wildlife Artists:**

**the Natural Eye 2016;**

annual open exhibition,

October 26 to November 6.

### The National Gallery

Trafalgar Square WC2.

☎ 020 7747 2885

### Beyond Caravaggio;

October 12 to January 15.

### National Portrait Gallery

St Martin's Place WC2.

☎ 020 7306 0055

**Picasso Portraits;**

until February 5.

### Royal Academy of Arts

Piccadilly W1.

☎ 020 7300 8000

**Abstract Expressionism;**

until January 2.

**Intrigue: James Ensor by Luc**

**Trumans;**

October 29 to January 29.

### Royal Opera Arcade Gallery

Royal Opera Arcade, SW1.

☎ 020 7930 8069

**Paul Brown: New Oil**

**Paintings;**

November 21 to 26.

### Saatchi Gallery

Duke of York's HQ,

King's Road SW3.

☎ 020 7811 3070

**Painters' Painters;**

November 30 to February 28.

### Tate Modern

Bankside SE1.

☎ 020 7887 8888

**Georgia O'Keeffe;**

until October 30.

**The EY Exhibition:**

**Wifredo Lam;**

until January 8.

### Tate Britain

Millbank SW1.

☎ 020 7887 8888

**The Turner Prize 2016;**

until January 2.

**Paul Nash;**

October 26 to March 5.

### The Wallace Collection

Manchester Square W1.

☎ 020 7563 9500

**The Middle: Tom Ellis at the**

**Wallace Collection;**

until November 27.

## REGIONS

### BATH

### Victoria Art Gallery

Bridge Street.

☎ 01225 477244

### Kenneth Armitage:

**Centenary Sculpture;**

until November 27.

## BIRMINGHAM

### Royal Birmingham Society of Artists

4 Brook Street, St Paul's Square.

☎ 0121 236 4353

**Print Prize Exhibition;**

October 19 to November 12.

## BRISTOL

### Royal West of England Academy

Queen's Road, Clifton.

☎ 0117 9735129

**Annual Open Exhibition;**

October 9 to November 27.

## CALVERTON

### Patchings Art Centre

Oxton Road.

☎ 0115 965 3479

**The Artist Collection;** ten

artists selected from the 2015

*The Artist Open Painting*

Competition,

until November 20.

## CHELTENHAM

### The Wilson

Clarence Street.

☎ 01242 237431

**The Last Word in Art?;**

includes David Hockney,

Richard Hamilton, Tracey

Emin, Jeremy Deller, Ian

Hamilton Finlay,

until January 8.

## CHICHESTER

### Pallant House Gallery

9 North Pallant.

☎ 01243 774557

**The Mythic Method:**

**Classicism in British Art**

**1920–1950;**

October 22 to February 19.

## COLCHESTER

### Chappel Galleries

15 Colchester Road.

☎ 01206 240326

**Katherine Hamilton:**

**Landscape Journeys Inside**

**and Out 2013–2016;**

November 12 to December 11.

## EXETER

### Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery

Queen Street.

☎ 01392 265858

**Kurt Jackson: Revisiting**

**Turner's Tourism;** 12 locations

in Devon and Cornwall, with

the Turner engravings that

inspired them,

until December 4.

## FALMOUTH

### Falmouth Art Gallery

Municipal Buildings, The Moor.

☎ 01326 313863

**Press Gang;** explores all

aspects of printmaking, from

16thC etchings to

contemporary screen prints,

until November 19.

## FROME

### Black Swan Arts

2 Bridge Street.

☎ 01373 473980

**Open exhibition;**

October 21 to November 19.

## HASTINGS

### Jerwood Gallery

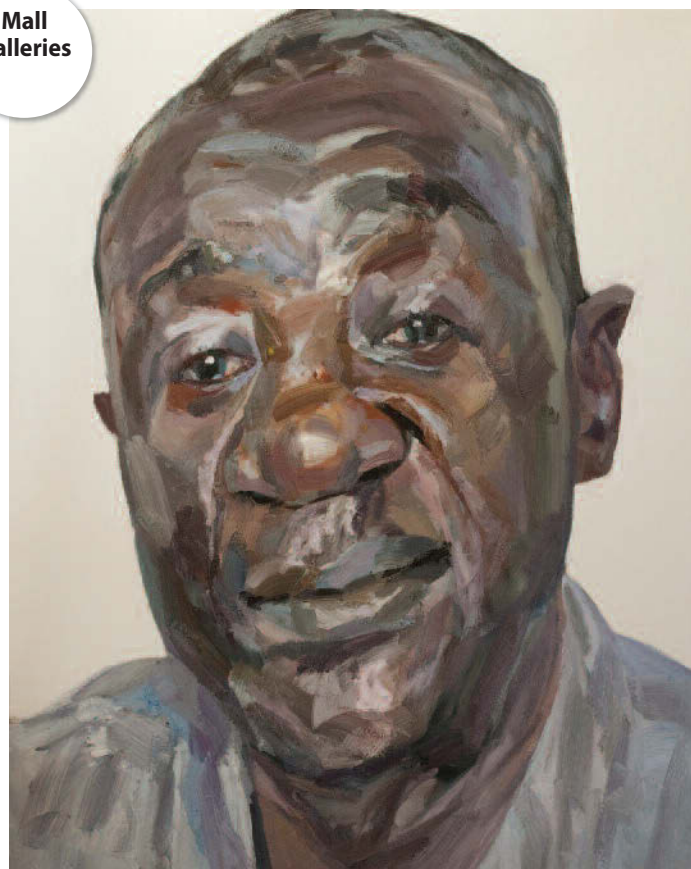
Rock-a-Nore Road.

☎ 01424 728377

**In Focus: Stanley Spencer –**

**A Panorama of Life;**

October 15 to January 8.



Tim Benson Mohammed, *Ebola Survivor*, oil on canvas, 60×48in  
(152.5×122cm)



## KENDAL

### Abbot Hall Art Gallery

☎ 01539 722464

**People on Paper;** some of the finest drawings in the Arts Council collection, includes early drawings by Peter Blake and Howard Hodgkin, October 29 to December 17.

## KINGSBRIDGE

### Harbour House Gallery

The Promenade.

☎ 01548 854708

**Yellow: Open Exhibition;** October 22 to November 12.

## LEICESTER

### New Walk Museum and Art Gallery

53 New Walk.

☎ 0116 225 4900

**Leicester Society of Artists' Annual Exhibition;** November 4 to December 2.

## LIVERPOOL

### Tate Liverpool

Albert Dock.

☎ 0151 702 7400

**Yves Klein;**

**Edward Krasiński;**

**Cécile B Evans;**

October 21 to March 5.

### Walker Art Gallery

William Brown Street.

☎ 0151 478 4199

**John Moore's Painting Prize;** until November 27.

## MANCHESTER

### Manchester Art Gallery

Moseley Street,

☎ 0161 235 8888

**The Edwardians;**

until December 31.

## MARGATE

### Turner Contemporary

Rendezvous.

☎ 01843 233000

**JMW Turner: Adventures in Colour;**

until January 8.

## MIDDLESBROUGH

### mima

Centre Square.

☎ 01642 931232

**Winifred Nicholson:**

**Liberation of Colour;**

October 22 to February 12.

## NOTTINGHAM

### Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery

Lenton Road.

☎ 0115 8761400

**Nottingham Castle Open;**

October 22 to January 8.

## OXFORD

### Ashmolean Museum

Beaumont Street.

☎ 01865 278002

**Lui Dan: New Landscapes**

**and Old Masters;** oils,

October 20 to December 26.

## PENZANCE

### Newlyn Art Gallery

New Road, Newlyn.

☎ 01736 363715

**Gareth Edwards;** oils,

November 12 to December 10.

### Penlee House Gallery and Museum

Morab Road.

☎ 01736 363625

**Wilhelmina Barns-Graham:**

**A Scottish Artist in St Ives**

until November 19.

## PETWORTH

### Kevis House Gallery

Lombard Street

☎ 01798 215 007

**Landscape;** five artists' works

on paper in various media,

until October 29.

## RYE

### Rye Art Gallery

107 High Street.

☎ 01797 222433

**Artists of the Wapping**

**Group;**

until October 30.

## SHEFFIELD

### Graves Gallery

Surrey Street.

☎ 0114 278 2600

**The Age of Abstraction:**

**Women Artists;**

until October 29.

## SHERBORNE

### Jerram Gallery

Half Moon Street.

☎ 01935 815261

**Richard Pikesley;**

October 22 to November 9.

## STOW ON THE WOLD

### Fosse Gallery

The Manor House, The Square.

☎ 01451 831319

**Lucy Pratt: All Around Me;**

November 6 to 26.

## STRATFORD-ON-AVON

### Compton Verney

Wellesbourne.

☎ 01926 645500

**Queen Victoria in Paris:**

**watercolours from the royal collection;**

October 15 to December 11.

## THIRSK

### Zillah Bell Gallery

Kirkgate.

☎ 01845 522479

**David Winfield: The Bell**

**Family Farm Revisited;** oil

paintings and assemblages,

October 29 to November 19.

## YORK

### York Art Gallery

Exhibition Square.

☎ 01904 687687

**Flesh;** includes Circle of

Rembrandt, Peter Paul

Rubens, Edgar Degas, Francis

Bacon and Jenny Saville,

until March 19.

## SCOTLAND

## EDINBURGH

### Scottish National Gallery

The Mound.

☎ 0131 624 6200

**The Goldfinch;** Carel

Fabritius's iconic painting on

show for the first time in

Scotland,

November 4 to December 18.

### Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

75 Belford Road.

☎ 0131 624 6200

**Artist Room: Joseph Beuys**

**A Language of Drawing;**

until October 30.

### Royal Scottish Academy

The Mound.

☎ 0131 225 6671.

**The David Mitchie Gift;** 22

paintings gifted to the Royal

Scottish Academy by David

Mitchie and his family,

until January 13.

## GLASGOW

### The Mitchell

Granville Street

☎ 0141 287 2999

**Royal Glasgow Institute of**

**the Fine Arts 153rd Open**

**Exhibition;**

November 12 to 27.

## ART SOCIETIES

### Ambleside & District Art Society

Annual exhibition at

Ambleside Parish Centre, from

October 19 to 30.

### Bembridge Art Society

Autumn exhibition at the

Village Hall, from October 29

to 31.

### Blaby Society of Artists

Annual exhibition in the

Edward Wright Room,

Whetstone Parish Council,

Blaby, on October 29 and 30.

Tel: 07977679701.

### Birstall & District Art Society

Annual exhibition at the

Village Hall, Birstall, from

November 5 to 7.

www.badas.co.uk.

### Broadlanders Art Club

Autumn exhibition at the Mill

Lane Centre, Bradwell, on

October 29 and 30.

### Chailey & Newick Painting Group

Annual exhibition at Chailey

Village Hall, on November 19

and 20. www.chaileyandnewickpaintinggroup.org.uk

### Dorking Group of Artists

Annual exhibition at Denbies

Wine Estate, Dorking, from

October 28 to 30.

Tel: 01372 375123.

### Glossop Art Society

Annual exhibition at Bradbury

House, from October 29 to

November 26.

### Guiseley Art Club

Exhibition at the Methodist

Church Hall, on November 5

and 6.

www.guiseleyartclub.co.uk

### Hallam Art Group

Christmas exhibition at the

Hallam Community Centre,

Sheffield, on November 19 and

20. www.hallamartgroup.wordpress.com

### Ham Art Group

Autumn exhibition at St

Thomas Aquinas Church Hall,

Ham, Richmond, on November

5 and 6. Tel: 020 8940 5725.

### Harpenden Arts Club

Annual exhibition at

Harpenden Public Halls, from

November 11 to 13.

www.harpendenartsclub.org.uk

### Highgate Watercolour Group

Annual exhibition at

Lauderdale House, London N6

5HG, from November 8 to 27.

Tel: 020 8348 8716.

### Horsham Painting Group

Exhibition at the Quaker

## WALES

## CONWY

### Royal Cambrian Academy

Crown Lane.

☎ 01492 593413

**By Invitation;** notable

contemporary artists, Welsh

or working in Wales,

October 22 to November 19.

## MACHYNLLETH

### MOMA Wales

Heol Penrallt.

☎ 01654 703355

**Soul of Wales;** paintings

selected from the Tabernacle

Collection,

until October 29.

## MONMOUTH

### Denise Yapp Contemporary Art

Whitebrook.

☎ 01600 860950,

**Gareth Thomas;** oils,

until October 29.

Meeting House, on  
November 19.  
www.horshampaintinggroup.co.uk

### Odiham Art Group

Annual exhibition at Robert

Mays School, on October 29

and 30.

www.odihamartgroup.org.uk

### Rosemary Hale's Art Group

Exhibition at Derrington

Village Hall, on October 29.

### Society of Fulham Artists and Potters

Autumn exhibition at Fulham

Library, London SW5 5NX,

from November 15 to 20.

www.sofap.co.uk.

### Tadworth Art Group

Winter exhibition at St John's

Church Hall, on November 18

and 19. Tel: 01737 362404.

### Trysull Art Club

Biennial exhibition at Trysull

Village Hall, on November 19

and 20. www.trynullartclub.

weebly.com

### Walton Group of Artists

Exhibition at Walton Village

Hall, Wetherby, on November

19 and 20. www.waltongroup

ofartists.co.uk

### Welford Watercolourists

Annual exhibition at Welford

Village Hall, on October 29

and 30. Tel: 07714232318.

To submit details of an exhibition for possible listing here, email Deborah Wanstall at [deborah@tapc.co.uk](mailto:deborah@tapc.co.uk) or telephone 01580 763673



# OPPORTUNITIES & COMPETITIONS

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

## Gallery events

### Hands-on print demonstration

**Details:** Drop-in session at the RBSA Gallery, Birmingham, with Professor Caroline Archer-Parré of the Centre of Printing History & Culture at Birmingham City University. There is particular focus on work produced in Birmingham. For full details see [www.rbsa.org.uk](http://www.rbsa.org.uk)

**When:** November 12, 11am to 1pm and 2 to 4pm.

**Cost:** Free, no need to book.

**Contact:** The Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 4 Brook Street, St Paul's, Birmingham B3 1SA.  
☎ 0121 236 4353

### Coffee mornings for art lovers

**Details:** Coffee mornings at the Mall Galleries, The Mall, London SW1. Pop in for an informal chat about art with other visitors and members of the galleries team.

**When:** Between 10am and 12 noon on the last Thursday of each month, excluding December 2016.

**Cost:** £3 for a hot drink and a pastry from the café.

**Contact:** The Mall Galleries  
☎ 020 7930 6844

## Sending-in days

### The Blake Society 2016 Tithe Grant

**Details:** Every year the Blake Society gives ten per cent of its income to an individual in the form of a grant to encourage a work of vision. This year the Tithe Grant, value £524, will be awarded to the best drawing inspired by Blake's 'bounding line': 'The great and golden rule of art, as well as of life, is this: that the more distinct, sharp, and wiry the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art; and the less keen and sharp, the greater is the evidence of weak imitation, plagiarism, and bungling ... Leave out this line, and you leave out life itself. There is no limit to the number of drawings that may be submitted, but they must be postcard-sized (A6, 10.5×14.8cm). Acceptable media include pencil, charcoal, crayon and pen. Finished works only to be posted to: Tithe

Grant 2016, The Blake Society, St James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL. The winning entries will be chosen by Jeremy Deller and announced on December 6. For full details see [www.blakesociety.org](http://www.blakesociety.org)

**When:** Deadline for receipt of completed work, November 1.

**Cost:** Free to enter.

**Contact:** Any questions should be emailed to: [tithegrant2016@blakesociety.org](mailto:tithegrant2016@blakesociety.org)

### Rugby Open Art Exhibition

**Details:** Entries are invited for the annual end-of-year open exhibition at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum, Little Elbow Street, Rugby, from December 10 to January 14. Artists and makers aged 16 or over who also meet one of the following criteria may apply: a member of Rugby and District Art Society, Dunchurch Photographic Society, the Tantalus Project, or Rugby Artists' Group; is currently studying or has studied in the Rugby borough; lives or occupies a studio within a 15-mile radius of Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (see full details of local villages covered). Up to three original works, created in the last year, may be entered. These may be paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, photography, film/video and craft. Performance and installation not accepted. Awards include First Prize, cash and an exhibition in Floor One Gallery; RAGM People's Choice Award of £100. All work must be for sale. Maximum size of all two- and three-dimensional work, 150cm in any dimension and less than 25kg in weight. For full details, go to [www.ragm.co.uk](http://www.ragm.co.uk)

**When:** Submissions deadline, November 1.

**Cost:** £5 per work, £12 for three works.

**Contact:** Rugby Art Gallery and Museum  
☎ 01788 533201

### Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour

**Details:** Entries are invited for an open exhibition at Stirling Smith Art Gallery, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, SK8 2RQ from October 8 to November 20.

**When:** Hanging-in, October 1.

**Cost:** £10 per work; £20 hanging fee.

**Contact:** For schedule and label send C5 sae to RSW, c/o Robb Ferguson, Regent Court, 70 West Regent Street, Glasgow G2 2QZ.

### Pastel Society

**Details:** The Pastel Society seeks the best in contemporary pastel, a combination of traditional skills and creative originality. Acceptable media are pastels, oil pastels, charcoal, pencil, Conté, sanguine, or any dry media. Artists over 18 may submit a maximum of six works, completed during the 12 months prior to the exhibition and not exhibited elsewhere, with a maximum size of 94½in (240cm) in the longest dimension. Up to four works may be selected. All works should be for sale, minimum price £300. All work must be submitted online for preselection at [www.registrationmallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.registrationmallgalleries.org.uk). Full conditions available at [www.mallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk). Awards include the Alfred Teddy Smith and Zsuzsi Roboz Prize, £5,000, for an artist under the age of 35 who demonstrates a particular excellence in draughtsmanship; *The Artist* award of a feature in the magazine, the Pastel Society Artist Award, and many other awards. The exhibition is at the Mall Galleries, The Mall, London SW1 from February 21 to March 4.

**When:** Submissions deadline, November 4, 12 noon; hanging-in, January 7, 10am to 5pm.

**Cost:** £15 per work; £10 per work for artists under 35.

**Contact:** The Federation of British Artists, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5BD  
☎ 020 7930 6844

### Royal Cambrian Academy Open 2017

**Details:** Exhibition open to artists and students aged 18 and over, who live or work in Wales. A maximum of two works may be submitted in any medium, 2D or 3D; recommended size, up to 39½×39½in (100×100cm). All 2D work must be for sale and be submitted ready to hang, with one mirror plate fitted centrally on each side of the frame or canvas. Clip frames will not be accepted. Selected works will be exhibited at the Royal Cambrian Academy between January 7 and February 4. Full details should be available at <http://rcaconwy.org>

**When:** Hanging-in, December 1 and 2, 11am to 5pm.

**Cost:** £15 for one work; £25 for two; students £10, £20 for two works.

**Contact:** The Royal Cambrian Academy, Crown Lane, Conwy LL32 8AN.  
☎ 01492 593413

### Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize

**Details:** Annual prize created by the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers and the Lynn Foundation to encourage the very best creative representational painting and promote the skill of draughtsmanship. Open to artists aged 18 and over and who are resident in the British Isles. Up to four works may be submitted, maximum size 60in (152cm) in the largest dimension, including frame. Only original two-dimensional works, in any painting or drawing media, are eligible; they must have been completed in the last three years and not previously exhibited. With the exception of commissioned portraits, all must be for sale. Online submission in first instance. Selected works will be exhibited at the Mall Galleries, The Mall, London SW1 from March 6 to 19. First prize, £15,000; second prize, £4,000; many other awards. For full details and to enter, go to: [www.lynnpainterstainersprize.org.uk](http://www.lynnpainterstainersprize.org.uk)

**When:** Submission deadline, December 19, 5pm. Hanging-in, January 27 and 28, 10am to 5pm.

**Cost:** £15 per work; students £8. per work.

**Contact:** Parker Harris, P O Box 279, Esher, Surrey KT10 8YZ.  
☎ 01372 462190

### Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour

**Details:** 136th open annual winter exhibition. Submissions are invited from artists working in water-based paint on paper. A maximum of three works may be submitted, one of unlimited size, one up to 24in (61cm) square including frame, and one Artist's Book (watercolour only). Online submission in first instance. Work should be for sale. Awards include the Travel Award for an artist under the age of 30 on December 29. The exhibition is in the Upper Galleries, The Royal Scottish Academy Building, The Mound, Edinburgh, from January 9 to 28.

**When:** Submissions deadline, October 31; hanging-in, December 29, 10am to 4pm.

**Cost:** £10 per work, plus £20 hanging fee per work.

**Contact:** For full details, and to submit online, see [www.rsw.org.uk](http://www.rsw.org.uk) or send C5 sae to Lesley Nicholl, c/o Robb Ferguson, Regent Court, 70 West Regent Street, Glasgow G2 2QZ.

*A much larger selection of opportunities can be viewed on our website, where you will find a list of workshops, tutors, painting holidays and more.*

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



# ART BOOKS & DVDS

Reviewed by Henry Malt

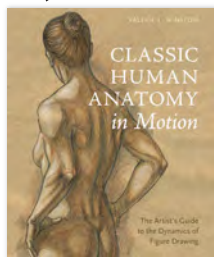
## Classic Human Anatomy in Motion

Valerie L Winslow

This will tell you everything you could possibly want to know about human anatomy from an artistic point of view – and probably more. If that sounds off-putting, it's more of a caveat: don't even think about it unless you're prepared to make this a subject for serious study.

This tremendous book looks at every aspect of bone and muscle structure and human figures of every type and shape. Valerie Winslow illustrates them in line and chalk that delineate both outline and shading clearly. She shows you how everything below the skin is reflected in what we see above it and how to translate that into a realistic representation by means of intermediate block and cylinder shapes.

**Watson Guptill £27.99, 292 pages (H/B)**  
**ISBN 9780770434144**



## Álvaro Castagnet's Watercolour Masterclass

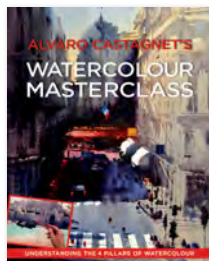
This book is a rather successful distillation of the way Álvaro Castagnet works and demonstrates. Full of enthusiasm and useful hints and no-nonsense, it is also alive with colourful illustrations that both capture the personality of the man and his somewhat flamboyant painting style.

Although there are plenty of examples and demonstrations this book is an immersive course and experience in the philosophy of painting. Other books have attempted to write about the creative process and to explain the mindset behind creating a piece of art, but they almost always finish up being dry and dull. Painting is about seeing, not about reading. Here, by means of short captions, pithy remarks and sections that one would hesitate to call chapters, Álvaro recreates the experience of his working methods. The result is something of an assault on the senses, but definitely one worth persevering with.

**£30 (+ postage), 128 pages (H/B)**

**Available from APV Films**

**(www.apvfirms.com, tel 01608 641798)**



## The Elements of Landscape Oil Painting

Suzanne Brooker

Books on oil painting are thin on the ground these days, especially the more advanced and good ones. This one, therefore, is a triple pleasure and deserves the attention of any painter of oil landscapes. This is a serious study of all the elements that make up a landscape: the subtitle includes sky, terrain, trees and water. Each is examined in considerable depth and detail and there is a final section that deftly pulls everything together. There are also plenty of illustrations that illustrate all the points being made.

Each section has notes on composition, colour, structure and technique as well as consideration of the subject itself. This is a comprehensive guide that will repay serious study and help you get to grips with a rewarding subject.

**Watson Guptill £24.99, 198 pages (H/B)**  
**ISBN 9780804137553**



## London Paintings by Peter Brown

'Pete the Street' is all about observation. Not just of the scene, but of light, reflections, weather and people – how they stand, relax, slouch even, when no-one's looking. Every one of the superbly reproduced paintings brims with life, colour



and movement. Peter's oil painting style is generally loose and he works for the most part on location, therefore quickly, but he varies the amount of detail included to suit the subject and composition. This is sensitive working at its absolute best.

This is not a book about how to paint but if you want to learn about observation, you could do a lot worse than study it. You could also spend your time a lot less pleasurably. Although Peter is a painter of townscapes, his work is about a lot more than those mean streets and is great fun.

**Sansom & Company £35, 200 pages (H/B)**  
**ISBN 9781908326805**

## Survival Guide for Artists: How to Thrive in the Creative Arts

Elena Parashko

From how to overcome the fear of a blank canvas, cope with rejection, accept challenges and enjoy success, Australian artist Elena Parashko offers a roadmap and practical techniques to help unlock your full creative potential and live the artistic dream in this down-to-earth handbook. She addresses the issues common to all creative people, and suggests simple but effective ways to develop your creativity and manage the business side of being a fulltime artist. Her positivity is infectious and will inspire anyone with the desire to give up the day job and focus solely on their art.

**RedDot Press £11.25 (Amazon), 228 pages (S/B). ISBN 9780692520604**

Elena Parashko is a regular contributor to *Leisure Painter* magazine.



## Vibrant Oils Haidee-Jo Summers

This is as much about observation and the use of colour as it is about the practice of *plein-air* oil painting. Haidee-Jo is an engaging companion whose enthusiasm for colours and shapes transmits effectively: 'I do like a challenge.' 'A lot of painting outside,' she says, 'is about remembering that first impression,' adding, 'Look out for what might be changing most quickly.' Her style is to comment and advise rather than to instruct and some of her most eloquent passages are in fact when she's silent. Those who favour more painting and less performance will be delighted.

Three of the demonstrations here are of harbour scenes, so there are plenty of boats and reflections, providing opportunities for lighting effects and improvisation. The final two, both in bright sunlight, include buildings and flowers where Haidee-Jo exploits the contrasts involved to the full.

**APV Films £28.55 (£25 download), 97 minutes (www.apvfirms.com, telephone 01608 641798)**



DVD

Some of the books reviewed here can be purchased from our online bookshop: visit **www.painters-online.co.uk/store** and click on the link for books



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[www.watershedstudio.co.uk](http://www.watershedstudio.co.uk)  
St Clare's Hall Lane, St Osyth,  
Clacton on Sea, Essex, CO16 8RX

**Jill Tisbury**  
**01933 358 125** [www.jilltisbury.co.uk](http://www.jilltisbury.co.uk)  
**07970 665 331** [info@jilltisbury.co.uk](mailto:info@jilltisbury.co.uk)

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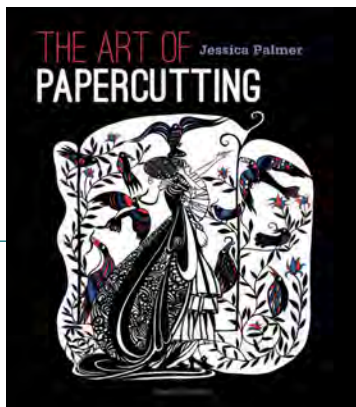
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# Charles Williams' musings: GUILT

**G**uilt is an extraordinarily common emotion among artists. You wouldn't have thought so, from the picture that people have of the artist's life. But in my experience not a day goes past without someone telling me how they wish they did more life drawing, they should have concentrated on their sculpture, or how bad they feel about never applying to the RA Summer Show.

I am not sure why we are such a guilty bunch. There seems to be lots of looking over the shoulder involved, as if there was a perfect version of oneself who did get to enough life classes, whose sculpture was progressing quite nicely thank you, and had got the application forms in on time although, obviously, didn't get past the first stage of selection. No one ever does.

## Constant doubt

It may be because doing art – and I can't think of any other way to put it; 'being an artist' is not what I am talking about, 'being creative' sounds like you work for an advertising firm – is never something that stands still. The process of painting is one of constant revision; there will always be a change, a transformation. The implication of that though, is that if you're not doing anything, not going to life classes, not painting in your studio, the transformation will not happen.

Is this common to other art forms? Musicians practice, for example, but I am not talking about rehearsal here, I am talking about performance. Perhaps it's just me, perhaps other artists are simply bashing out product and quite happy not experiencing these huge transformations. Well, it's a nice idea, and it might make me feel a little less bitter about my comparative lack of success to blame it on my extreme levels of integrity – 'I am too good for the market' – but it's just not true. Just engage any artist in a conversation about painting,

and see how long it is before you reach the self-doubt and guilt. About 30 seconds in my case, but it's not long before you get to it with even the most apparently successful.

An old and valued friend of mine is right up there with the big-hitters nowadays. His work is beautifully realised observational paintings, made on the spot – he is the classic *plein-air* artist, looking keenly, controlling his tones, reassessing the space – all that stuff. You'd think he'd be the most confident, self-assured, complacent, self-satisfied git that you'd ever meet, but not a bit of it. Give him a glass of wine and he becomes a seething mass of self-doubt. Actually, we just meet at private views now, where the wine is free, and perhaps it's the hangovers that make us like this.

I doubt it though. I think it's to do partly with the highs and lows of the process of painting or otherwise making art, and partly with the malleability of the material. The first is simple to explain; you are forever on a roller coaster of emotions because the difference between a fully realised form and a complete mess is so very fine, whatever form you are engaged in. You may, for example, be modelling a figure in clay, and the armature may be holding out, the weight of clay may be just right, but just a little slip of the thumb, and the balance is completely gone. Or painting in front of the motif, standing in the sunshine; it looks like a kind of paradise but the painting is just a mess, look at it, nothing seems to...hang on...no, it's terrible...but then, all of a sudden, almost by instinct, you do the right thing! There it is! It's OK, I can still do it!

The second factor, the malleability of the material, means that the thing never has to be finished. There is not a point when the piece of work turns itself off, or the words Game Over appear, so you are always left with the feeling that you could alter it, and if you could just fix that bit down there it might... and so on.

The risk is, of course, illusory. If you thought about it dispassionately you would realise that you are still the same person who made the work that everyone liked so much last week, and the likelihood that the work will be a total failure is pretty slim, but so what? It's just a painting. Somehow, though, the risk of failure seems to lurk around every corner, and I think that is why we get so guilty about it. If we had only put more time in. If we had only learnt to do it properly. If only...

It's not as if anyone asks you to be an artist either. Things may have changed, but in my day saying you were going to art college was greeted by one's family in much the same way as if you'd said you were joining the Foreign Legion. It is a self-imposed position, and then you spend the time feeling guilty about it.

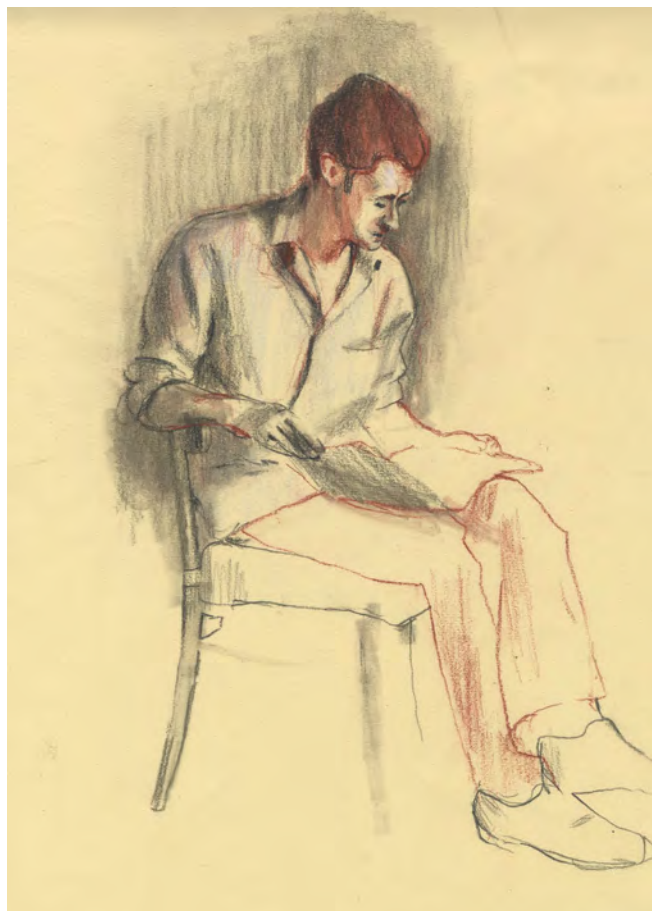
I try to keep my guilt to myself because it just doesn't help going on about it. If you tell someone from the non-art world that you feel guilty that you haven't done as much painting as you should they will look at you as if you were an idiot. Most people regard 'being an artist' in the same way that they regard 'being a footballer' – you are being paid to spend time doing what you love doing. How can that be the source of guilt? Just play!

TA

◀ **Nathan**, chalk on coloured paper, 30×21in (76×53.5cm).

Nathan sat for me while I was writing *Basic Watercolour: How To Draw What You See* (published by Robert Hale in 2014, ISBN 9780719807411). He is an artist who doesn't really seem to suffer much from guilt. I gave him a copy of an art magazine to read, from which he would occasionally look up and tell me how rubbish contemporary art is

**Charles Williams** NEAC RWS Cert.RAS is a painter, writer and lecturer.





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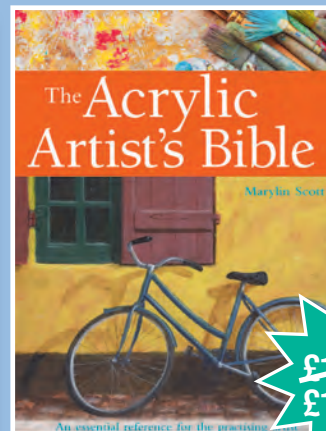
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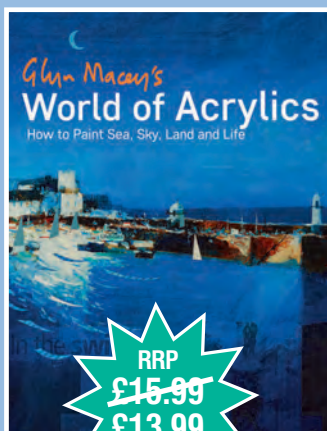
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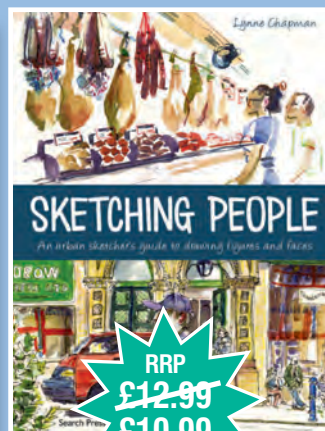
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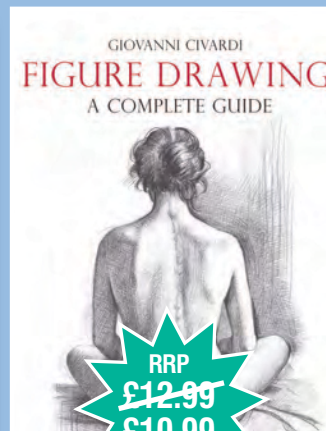
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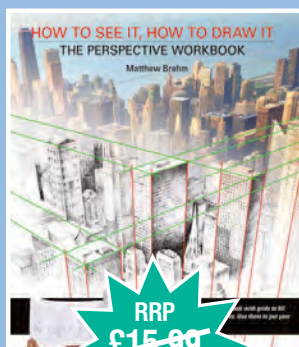
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