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ARTISTS OF THE YEAR

All our winners revealed

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Why artists love this popular
Cornish seaside town

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Image: Philippa Paterson - The day that Bowie died

www.nationalopenart.org

WELCOME

ANNA PERLIN

IT'S THE SEASON FOR NEW BEGINNINGS



The spring is a great time to make a fresh start. And that's particularly true for artists – it's the season when we can finally head outdoors again and unearth new inspiration in the natural world as the first shoots of green start to push through.

So, full of the spirit of renewal, we've packed this issue not only with a botanical special (page 48) featuring advice from three talented artists on how to capture the intricate wonder of plants, but also Tom Greenwood's guide to painting wildlife (page 68) and Fraser Scarfe's study in capturing the essence of trees in springtime (page 74). We've even added the jubilant flowers by artist Kirsty Wither to our cover to give you more incentive to fling open the doors to creativity.

And there's yet another delightful dose of the natural world in the form of Anna Perlin's *Brambles and Bluebells* (above), the triumphant artwork in our Artists of the Year 2017 competition. Inspired by her love of the British countryside, we think it's particularly fitting that we can celebrate its success as part of our winners special coverage in this nature-bound issue. Flick to page 30 to find out who won and see a selection of their great artworks.

There are new beginnings at *Artists & Illustrators*, too, where I've taken over the reins from Katie McCabe, who must take the credit for the vision and inspiration found within these pages. Here's looking forward to what's ahead.

Sally Hales, Editor

Write to us!

Are you trying something new this spring? Share your work with us using one of the contacts below...

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COVER IMAGE KIRSTY WITHER, COBALT CAPERS, OIL ON CANVAS, 41X51CM
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Artists & Illustrators 3

APRIL 2017

7 THE DIARY

The best art events this April

10 EXHIBITIONS

Plan your gallery visits for the month ahead

12 FRESH PAINT

Three inspiring new artworks

22 THE WORKING ARTIST

Laura Boswell on managing commissions

38 YOUR FREE PRINT

Discover the story behind the artwork

40 10 MINUTES WITH...

Groundbreaking artist Linda Kitson

43 SKETCHBOOK

Your monthly selection of quick tips and advice

47 COMPETITION

Your chance to win two luxe pastel sets

52 A TASTE OF THE EXOTIC

A project in watercolour and colour pencil

56 EXPRESSIVE BOTANICALS

Master a detailed study of a velvet rose

68 PAINTING WILDLIFE

How to tackle a moving subject in oil

72 MASTERS OF THEIR MEDIUM

We look at acrylic artist Neil Murison RWA Hon

74 NATURAL BEAUTY

Overcome your fear of painting trees

82 ARTY FACTS

Painter and etcher George Chapman



© HELEN OXENBURY REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF PUFFIN BOOKS

18 IT'S CHILD'S PLAY

We speak to illustrator Helen Oxenbury



24 IN THE STUDIO

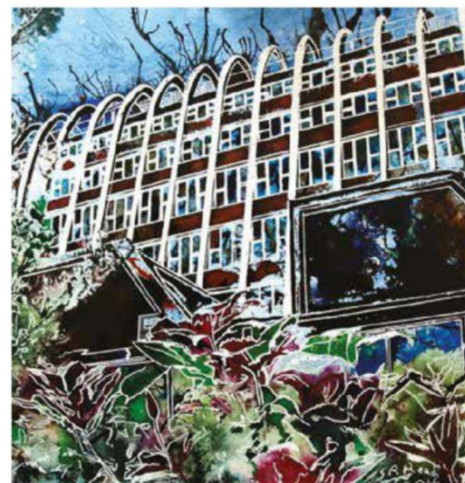
Meet Royal Academician Diana Armfield



TATE PHOTOGRAPHY

26 TO THE SEA

Tate St Ives reopens its doors...



30 ARTISTS OF THE YEAR 2017

Hear from this year's competition winners



48 TULIP FEVER

Step-by-step guide by Sandrine Maugy



58 STREET LIFE

Hashim Akib expresses the energy of a crowd



CHRIS LOBINA, SWI ARTS

62 UNDER PRESSURE

Learn from Landscape Artist of the Year winner

YOUR LETTERS

LETTER OF THE MONTH

THE WONDER OF WORK

For decades I have been a hobbyist, so each month I skipped over Laura Boswell's 'The Working Artist'. In the last year, however, I have taken strides in my development as an artist and begun to exhibit my work. I have even sold my first piece, so I am officially a working artist.

Suddenly, I can't get enough of Laura's column and I am going through all my back issues to read her practical advice.

Artists & Illustrators continues to be a great resource too, and the added bonus of having all the back issues is that I don't have to wait four weeks for the next great issue. Here is my first exhibited artwork.

Catherine L Stacy, via email
Find Laura's column online at www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk



ON PICASSO'S PATH

I have always been a big fan of Picasso and had a period in my life when I was trying to make everything in geometric forms. I practised for years and finally found my style, which is more illustrative and full of colour – I like to use drawing markers and paints. I would like to thank Pablo for being such a great inspiration for me. After seeing his artworks in Barcelona in 2015, I realised I should always keep going and practising. Last year was full of progress. I changed my life completely and became more patient and focused, and a better artist and person. This year has started amazingly: I have many commissions and I started selling my prints. I know that one day I will be a master.

Monika Muffin, via email

HANDY ADVICE

Re: Your Letters, Issue 374

Reading the February issue, I saw the letter from Christine Marshall



entitled 'Everyday Drawing' about painting and drawing with arthritic fingers. I have a few suggestions.

Use plastic practice golf balls – the ones with the holes. Push a pencil through suitably sized holes. It's much easier to hold the ball as you don't have to grip the pencil at all. It may take a bit of practice but, after a while, it should feel quite natural and you'll be able to control even fine lines.

If you are working flat on a table and need to support your hand, you can create a bridge over your work. See my blog entitled 'Hand(y) tip' in my portfolio on the *Artists & Illustrators* website if you would like more information about how to do

write to us

Send your letter or email to the addresses below:

POST:

Your Letters
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Jubilee House
2 Jubilee Place
London SW3 3TQ

EMAIL: info@artistsandillustrators.co.uk

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www.greatart.co.uk

GreatArt 



this. www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/russell-simpkins
Russell Simpkins, via email

HAPPY WITH HOCKNEY

It's always a treat to receive the latest *Artists & Illustrators*, and this month was no exception (March, Issue 375). It is filled with lots of interesting topics, which you do really well. I was especially pleased to see the article on David Hockney, after I had just finished a pastel drawing of the very man. His work is inspiring and I shall be visiting Tate Britain to view the exhibition.

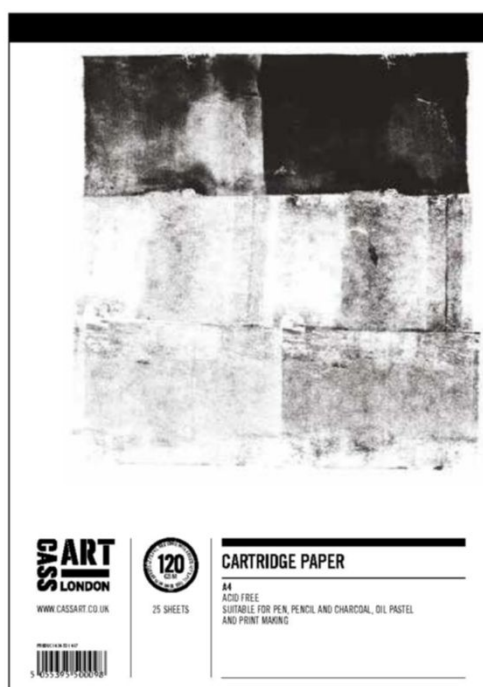
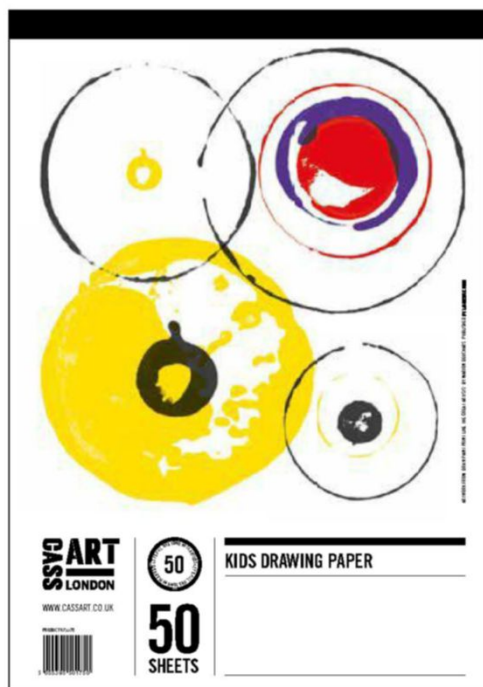
Maureen Gillespie, via email



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9 ARTISTIC THINGS TO DO IN

APRIL

1

PAINT, CUT, MAKE

Join John Crossley's workshop at The Heatherley School of Fine Art in London on 22 April 2017 to create work in collage and three dimensions. You will learn to work with colour, lay down washes to create mood and atmosphere, and explore new possibilities for looking and making.
www.royalwatercolourociety.co.uk

JOHN CROSSLEY





2

VISIT Open Studios Ayrshire 2017

A raft of artists will fling open their studio doors from 21 to 24 April to welcome visitors to their creative spaces. Artists will also run workshops coinciding with the event – keep an eye on the website.
www.openstudiosayrshire.com

3 TRY

The Drawing Lab

Head to the Royal West of England Academy in Bristol to explore the *Drawn* exhibition, which features work from its biennial open submission. While you're there, visit the accompanying Drawing Lab, from 1 April to 4 June, an interactive space, where artists in residence investigate the practice of drawing, along with workshops and activities.
www.rwa.org.uk

4

COMPETE Pintar Rapido London 2017

Tickets for this year's Pintar Rapido London – Europe's biggest outdoor painting competition and exhibition – on 29 and 30 July at Chelsea Town Hall in London are now on sale. With judges Hashim Akib and Adebunji Alade, and a top prize of £1,000 sponsored by Daler-Rowney, it's sure to be as exhilarating as ever.
www.pintarrapido.com



5

EXPLORE Reading Contemporary Art Fair

This friendly and relaxed art fair at Rivermead Leisure Centre in Reading takes place on 22 and 23 April. And with more than 130 award-winning and emerging artists and galleries exhibiting, art lovers – and anyone who wants to learn more about art – can enjoy seeing and buying new work.

www.readingcontemporaryartfair.co.uk



DELIA GAWERS

6 ENTER

Buxton Spa Prize

Artists of all ages and abilities can register for the 2017 competition to capture the historic spa town en plein air from 1 April to 14 May. Once entered, painters will then visit Buxton between 5 May and 14 May to draw their location by ballot. The Open Category has a first prize of £5,000, and there are several other cash prizes.

www.buxtonspapriz.co.uk

DON'T
MISS!

SELF-PORTRAIT, ANTHONY VAN DYCK © NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



7

DISCOVER A curator-led Van Dyck tour

Join curator Madeleine Kennedy on 20 April for an informal tour of the *Modern Visionaries: Van Dyck and the Artists' Eye* exhibition at Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne. She'll be sharing insights into work on display and broader themes.
www.laingartgallery.org.uk

8 LEARN

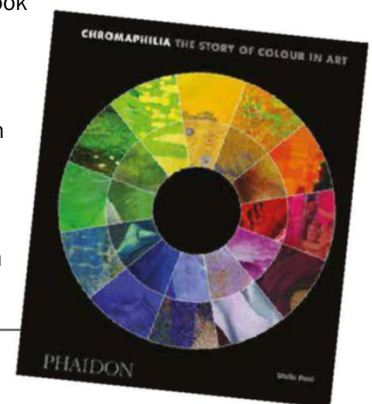
Painting the Head

Join tutor Robert Dukes on 5 and 6 April at the New School of Art's well-equipped studio at Trinity Buoy Wharf, London, and spend two days painting a model's head. You'll consider how the head relates to its surroundings, and enjoy individual tuition with an emphasis on colour mixing and tonal relationships.
www.thenewschoolart.org

9

READ Chromaphilia

Colour is art's great resource, says Stella Paul in her introduction to *Chromaphilia: The Story of Colour in Art* (Phaidon, £29.95), which takes the reader on a colour-coded journey through the history of art. From exploring our fascination with colour to how it is able to act as a language in its own right, the book explores the use, meaning, and passion for colour in art.
www.phaidon.com



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We also offer carefully crafted tailor-made holidays to over 140 destinations in 40 countries – including short breaks to Europe's greatest art cities, the Kirker Concierge can arrange tickets for museums, galleries and the the latest exhibitions.

THE ART & HISTORY OF MADRID AND OLD CASTILLE

A FIVE NIGHT HOLIDAY | 22 MARCH 2017

Our new tour to Madrid combines the city's great museums and galleries with excursions to Toledo – the historic capital of Castille – and the monastery complex at El Escorial. Staying at the 4* Hotel Emperador, highlights include the Prado, Reina Sofia and Thyssen, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and the Sorolla Museum where the artist Joaquin Sorolla lived and worked. In Toledo we will see the magnificent gothic cathedral and El Greco's famous altarpiece at the Church of Santo Tomé.

Price from £1,496 per person for five nights including flights, transfers, accommodation with breakfast, three dinners, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Lecturer.

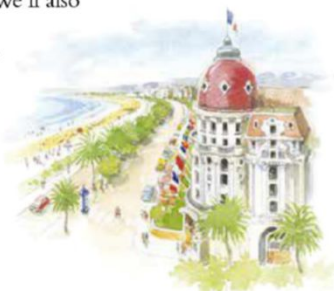


ART OF THE CÔTE D'AZUR

FIVE NIGHT HOLIDAYS | 4 APRIL & 26 SEPTEMBER 2017

French artists began to discover the attractions of the Côte d'Azur and the iridescent quality of the region's dazzling light towards the end of the 19th century. Monet was the first artist to be lured to the Riviera, arriving there in 1885. Matisse, Chagall, Picasso and many more soon followed him. The tour is based at the 4* Hôtel Le Grimaldi, close to the old town in Nice. We will visit the Chagall Museum, Matisse's Chapel of the Rosary in Vence and the Maeght Foundation at St-Paul-de-Vence which has a stunning collection of works by Picasso, Miró and Hepworth. We'll also visit the Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain and the Musée Matisse, the Château Grimaldi, and Picasso's collection at the Musée Bonnard in Le Cannet.

Price from £1,597 per person for five nights including flights, transfers, accommodation with breakfast, one lunch, three dinners, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Lecturer.



JOHN RUSKIN IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

A FOUR NIGHT HOLIDAY | 8 MAY 2017

In the company of Dr Nicholas Shrimpton, one of the world's leading authorities on John Ruskin, our tour follows in the footsteps of the writer and art critic who came to live in Brantwood in 1871. Our tour will include visits to Brantwood, the Ruskin Museum, Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Museum in Grasmere, Rydal Mount, where Wordsworth lived from 1813 until his death in 1850. Also included is a boat ride on the historic SY Gondola, a visit to Abbot Hall Art Gallery and a visit to the Ruskin Library and Research Centre in Lancaster. We stay in the much-loved and historic Miller Howe Hotel, with views over Lake Windermere.



Price from £1,048 for four nights including accommodation with breakfast, four dinners, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Lecturer, Dr Nicholas Shrimpton.

THE KIRKER LONDON MUSIC & ART FESTIVAL

A FIVE NIGHT HOLIDAY | 13 APRIL 2017

Kirker's first exclusive Music Festival to be held in the capital, will be based at the Royal Over-seas League's London club in St James', with a series of concerts held in the Princess Alexandra Concert Hall. Performers will include Sarah-Jane Lewis, soprano; Simon Lepper, piano; Simon Rowland-Jones, viola; The Castalian String Quartet and The Marmen Quartet. In addition to the evening concerts, we shall visit some of London's major spring exhibitions – *Portrait of the Artist* at the Queen's Gallery, *Revolution: Russian Art 1917* at the Royal Academy of Arts and *David Hockney at 80* at Tate Britain. There will also be an excursion to Dulwich Village to see the country's oldest public gallery, the Dulwich Picture Gallery.



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EXHIBITIONS

APRIL'S BEST ART SHOWS

LONDON

Queer British Art, 1861-1967

5 April to 1 October 2017

The show focuses on a time of seismic shifts, including works from Francis Bacon, Glyn Philpot and Keith Vaughan.

Tate Britain.

www.tate.org.uk

Anthony Green RA: The Life and Death of Miss Dupont

Until 30 April 2017

Marking the 40th anniversary of the artist's election as a Royal Academician, this exhibition features his three-metre tall *The Fur Coat, "Hazana"*.

Royal Academy of Arts.

www.royalacademy.org.uk

Sheer Pleasure: Frank Brangwyn and the Art of Japan

Until 14 May 2017

Japanese paintings, prints, furniture and ceramics belonging to the gallery's founder Frank Brangwyn RA, on the 150th anniversary of his birth.

William Morris Gallery.

www.wmgallery.org.uk

Maria Lassnig: A Painting Survey, 1950-2007

1 March to 29 April 2017

Track the artist's evolution from early experiments with abstraction to inventive figuration and the refinement of her 'body awareness' portraits.

Hauser & Wirth.

www.hauserwirth.com

Sussex Modernism: Retreat and Rebellion

Until 23 April 2017

A look at why radical artists and writers were drawn to the hills and villages of Sussex.

Two Temple Place.

www.twotempleplace.org

ENGLAND - NORTH

Re-Discovering Yorkshire: Printmaking by Sarah Harris

5 April to 10 September 2017

Limited edition screenprints that evoke nostalgia.

Cartright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford.

www.bradfordmuseums.org

Julian Cooper

7 April to 2 July 2017

To mark the artist's 70th birthday, this retrospective offers more than 30 paintings.

Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal.

www.abbothall.org.uk

Association of Animal Artists Annual Exhibition

8 April to 13 May 2017

A collection of works depicting the animal kingdom.

Castle Park Arts Centre, Frodsham.

www.associationofanimalartists.com

Marine Art: Nick O'Neill

1 March to 30 April 2017

Underwater subjects from the Wildlife Artist of the Year 'Into the Blue' category winner 2016.

The Deep, Hull.

www.hull2017.co.uk

Winifred Nicholson: Liberation of Colour

4 March to 4 June 2017

Curated by the artist's grandson, this fascinating exhibition examines the major periods of Winifred's painting career, including her landscapes, portraits and still lifes.

Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham.

www.lakesidearts.org.uk

ENGLAND - SOUTH

Liber Studiorum: JMW Turner

Until 7 May 2017

Etchings and mezzotints from JMW Turner's 'Book of Studies', a series of 70 landscape engravings which was published in 14 parts from 1807 and 1819.

Turner Contemporary, Margate.

www.turnercontemporary.org

The Art of Sidney Sime, Artist and Philosopher

15 April to 28 May 2017

Explore the work of one of the greatest imaginative artists since William Blake, including recently restored paintings and illustrations.

The Lightbox, Woking.

www.thelightbox.org.uk

Monumental Murals

28 February to 5 November 2017

A showcase of GF Watts' ambitious mural projects, alongside paintings, sketches and objects, which forms part of year-long bicentenary celebrations.

Watts Gallery, Compton.

www.wattsgallery.org.uk

REFIGURING AMERICAN ABSTRACTION

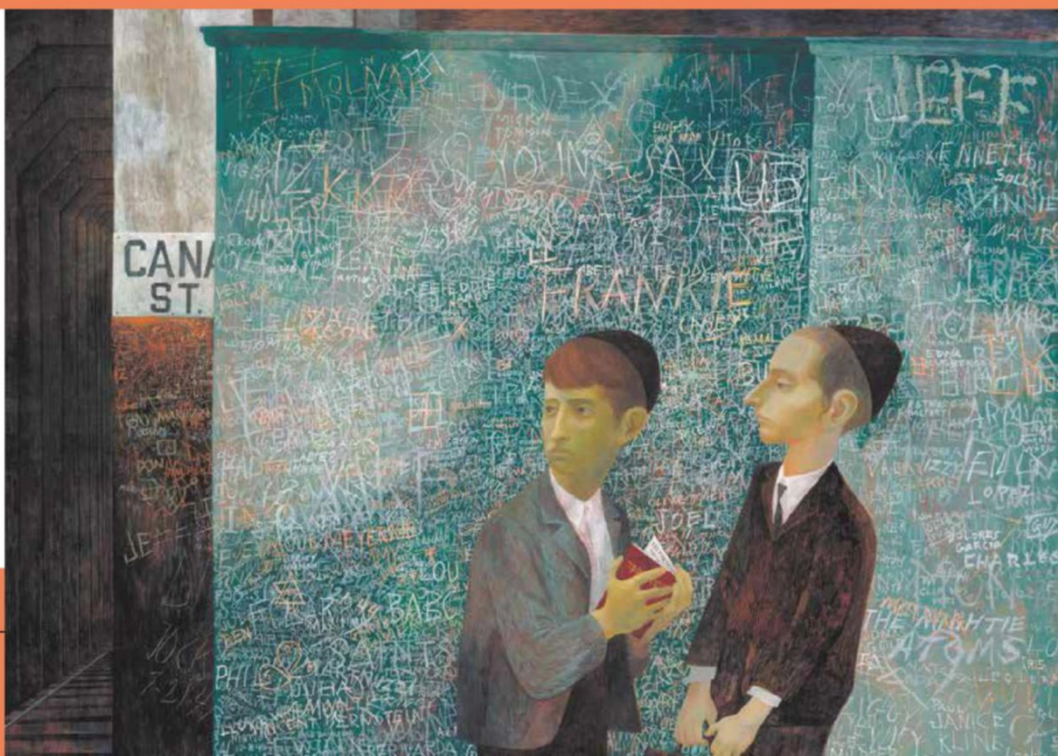
3 April 2017 to 2 September 2018

Forming part of the major research project called 'Refiguring American Art', this new, free display joins Tate Liverpool within the gallery's *Constellations: Highlights from the Nation's Collection of Modern Art*.

The 15 artworks featured present a new account of post-war American painting, revealing striking links between dissimilar artistic approaches – abstract expressionism, characterised by a spontaneous approach, and more traditional, realist styles. The best example of this is Bernard Perlin's *Orthodox Boys* (right). You can also discover less familiar work by Andy Warhol and Mark Rothko.

Tate Liverpool.

www.tate.org.uk



ANGIE LEWIN: A PRINTMAKER'S JOURNEY

11 March to 30 April 2017

Printmaker Angie Lewin has curated an exhibition for Hampshire Cultural Trust that showcases works that have both inspired and influenced her. These sit alongside her own bold and easily recognisable prints which reflect her time spent among the native flora of the clifftops and salt marshes of the Norfolk coast and Scottish Highlands.

The collection of distinctive linocuts, wood engravings and screenprints from various stages of Angie's career can be seen, as well as a selection of work from a wide range of disciplines and periods including paintings, textiles, prints, posters and ceramics by artists and designers such as Eric Ravilious, Edward Bawden, Alan Reynolds and Paul Morrison. Loans have come from far and wide including Tate, the Victoria & Albert Museum and Towner Art Gallery, as well as from a number of private collections.

The Gallery, Winchester Discovery Centre.

www.hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk



ANGIE LEWIN, SHORELINE, SCREEN PRINT, 72.5x56.0CM © ANGIE LEWIN

British Art: Ancient Landscapes

8 April to 3 September 2017

Covering more than 250 years of responses to the form, featuring John Constable and Henry Moore. Salisbury Museum.

www.salisburymuseum.org.uk

The Romantic Thread in British Art

11 March to 26 April 2017

Paintings, drawings and prints from successive Romantic movements.

Willis Museum and Sainsbury Gallery, Basingstoke.

www.hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/willis-museum

Transferences: Sidney Nolan in Britain

Until 4 June 2017

Discover works focusing on themes of Australian history and literature, and mythology.

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester.

www.pallant.org.uk

Paul Nash

8 April to 20 August 2017

Spanning a lifetime's work from the artist's early drawings to iconic wartime paintings.

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich.

www.scva.ac.uk

Picasso and the Masters of Print

Until 16 April 2017

Seven of the artist's prints accompanied by five centuries of printmaking by major artists.

The Higgins, Bedford.

www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk

Meeting Modernism

Until 24 April 2017

A focus on the gallery's 20th-century paintings, including works from the Bournemouth Arts Club.

Russell-Cotes Art Gallery, Bournemouth.

www.russellcotes.com

SCOTLAND

Bridget Riley, Paintings, 1963-2015

Until 16 April 2017

Spanning more than 50 years of the artist's career, this is your last chance to catch this dialogue between monochrome and colour.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.

www.nationalgalleries.org

Turner's Rhine Journey

Until 30 July 2017

A recently discovered watercolour by JMW Turner of Bacharach and Stahleck on the Rhine is on show alongside a small selection works by the likes of John Constable, as well as prints.

The Hunterian, Glasgow.

www.gla.ac.uk

Paper Trail: Drawings, Watercolours, Prints

Until 21 May 2017

An inspection of how artists from the late 18th century up to present day have created works on paper, including sketchbooks, etching and printmaking.

City Art Centre, Edinburgh.

www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk

WALES

Bacon to Doig: Modern Masterpieces from a Private Collection

Until 31 January 2018

A selection of many of the best British artists of the 20th century, including Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud and David Hockney.

National Museum Cardiff.

www.museum.wales/cardiff

Ian Mitchell: Linescapes

Until 28 May 2017

The series of solo exhibitions showcasing contemporary printmaking continues with this Yorkshire-based artist.

Mostyn, Llandudno.

www.mostyn.org

IRELAND

Beyond Caravaggio

Until 14 May 2017

The National Gallery collection is on show in Ireland, exploring the legendary influence of the Italian master.

National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

www.nationalgallery.ie

Bare Life

Until 1 May 2017

An examination of the links between abstraction and figuration, and responses to the human figure, in 20th-century British art.

Ulster Museum, Belfast.

www.nmni.com

FRESH PAINT

INSPIRING NEW ARTWORKS, STRAIGHT OFF THE EASEL

VERONICA SMIRNOFF

The memory of growing up in the USSR around the time of its demise is at the heart of Veronica Smirnov's work.

Although she came to Edinburgh in her teens, later studying at the Slade School and the Royal Academy of Arts, her visual language still references a Russian sentiment, albeit filtered through cultural references from across the world. She now lives and works in London, and has exhibited around the globe.

With its elements of folk art, Veronica's work explores the memories of places and people she left behind – as seen in her recent egg tempera painting *What Rocks Think Of*. It was inspired by the nature of the pigments, which came from minerals and stones ground into powder, and originated from loose sketching and the marking down of ideas. This resulted in the different registers and object positions in the composition. A sense of menace and foreboding looms in the blood-red landscape as people huddle together in the foreground. Veronica says it represents a "kind of uneasy calm after some cataclysmic event," and that, "as one of the figures looks up, there's a sign of life, hope and the universality of human struggle".

Creating work with egg tempera is a laborious business. "I start with mixing the paints," Veronica says. "Each colour is reviewed individually by adding the egg yolk emulsion. I use the studio's floor to apply paint horizontally in blobs and splatters onto a board." The process is dictated by the fluidity. With this painting, Veronica says, "the yolk in the emulsion was starting to indicate its finite decomposing quality, which impelled a looser way of applying the paint."

Inspired by the Aristotle quote, "Nothing is what rocks dream about", this is a painting which reflects how giving something form is a work of belief and imagination as much as a physical process, and reminds us that behind even simple iconography lies a complex web of ideas.

Veronica Smirnov's solo show *The Greater and Lesser Ways* is at Jessica Carlisle gallery, London W1U, until 4 March 2017.
www.jessicacarlisle.com; www.veronicasmirnov.com

RIGHT *What Rocks Think Of*, egg tempera on wood, 70x90cm



© VERONICA SMIRNOFF, COURTESY OF JESSICA CARLISLE



TOP TIP

Veronica encrusts the surface layer by layer, sanding it down, leaving areas bare and using the pigment particles to build texture

Your art, printed.

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KIRSTY WITHER

Many artists seek the technical challenge and aesthetic pleasure of painting a vase of flowers, but it doesn't always result in images that are packed with energy and movement. Yet, in the hands of Scottish artist Kirsty Wither, still lifes pulsate off the canvas.

Her recent work *Cobalt Capers* is a riot of colour and texture with shocking swathes of blue locked in a swirling embrace with the brightly coloured petals. "As it came along," says Kirsty, "I realised that it was all about movement – as though the flowers were dancing."

She first fell in love with painting in the art room of her Helensburgh secondary school, leading to a degree at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen, where she was drilled in traditional techniques. "My tutors were real sticklers about learning to draw properly," she says. "We learned about lines, spaces between things, perspective and structure."

And while the messy charms of oil meant that it was always her preferred medium, painting flowers wasn't her first passion; she grappled with both nudes and

landscapes before finding her subject after art school. But, when she did find her motif, she knew she wanted a simpler approach to composition, "paring it down to a background and a foreground, each with its own importance."

In *Cobalt Capers*, the empty spaces are full of complex colour, texture and movement – as are the flowers – yet Kirsty never paints from life, instead relishing the liberation of creating her work from an idea and her own recollection. Look carefully and you'll spot that the flowers in the painting aren't botanically correct.

Kirsty's handling of paint has evolved over the past 27 years, using variations of palette knife, brushes and fingers to create energetic work that she, above all, wants to be uplifting. "I don't dwell on depressive subjects," she says. "But I don't think that means the paintings are easy or facile. People often have a simple, visceral response to art, and if that can be a joyful one, then that is what I'm aiming for."

Kirsty Wither's new show can be seen on [Portland Gallery's website](http://PortlandGallery.com) from 3 April to 28 April, with work viewed by appointment. www.portlandgallery.com; www.kirstywithier.com >

ABOVE *Cobalt Capers*, oil on canvas, 41x51cm

GARY NEWBOULT

When settling down to a painting, Portfolio Plus artist and classically trained musician Gary Newbould takes a lyrical approach. The self-taught artist allows his musical discipline to weave into his practice, seeing his preliminary drawings as the all-important scales, his chosen media as the instrument, and his observation and interpretation of a piece as his final performance. Not to mention the multiple rehearsals as he perfects strokes off the page.

Alongside his musical achievements, Gary was a civil servant for 30 years, and painted pet portraits for friends and colleagues. Recently, he has concentrated on art full time, namely watercolours, taking commissions and working from his home studio in a converted caravan.

Based in Aubourn, near Lincoln, Gary is exposed to nature and, as an animal-lover, he relishes the birds of prey, snakes and amphibians that venture into his garden. However, the horse in Gary's watercolour *Grey Star* isn't painted from life but composed from dissected reference photographs, his memory and imagination. When painting an animal, he sometimes makes use of video, capturing stills to analyse movement and how the muscle groups work. For this work, he visited horses in a nearby field.

Careful planning, the right tools and a lot of patience allowed Gary to create the texture of the coat and mane. He applied masking fluid using old brushes, cocktail sticks and a mapping pen – useful for fine hairs and sharp edges – and layered washes, smoothing the edges as he went with a damp brush or kitchen roll.

Gary maximises paper whiteness by using transparent colours and restricts his palette to maintain continuity and balance. In *Grey Star* he used French Ultramarine, Burnt Sienna, Raw Umber, Rose Madder Genuine and a small amount of Permanent White Gouache for eye highlights. He achieved subtle greys and blacks by mixing French Ultramarine with Burnt Sienna or Raw Umber, making use of an eye dropper to delicately add water to the mixes.

Just as some of the best melodies are crafted with a few carefully chosen notes, Gary shows that minimising your palette and giving space to the white paper can produce a harmonious and sympathetic painting.

ABOVE *Grey Star*,
watercolour on
paper, 26x40cm



TOP TIP

Apply masking fluid
with a mapping pen
or cocktail stick
to create fine hairs
or whiskers

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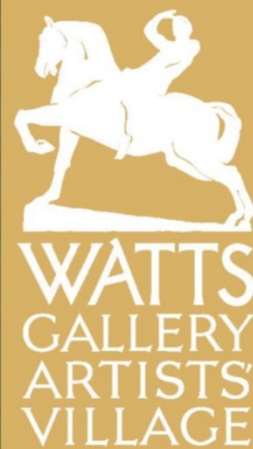
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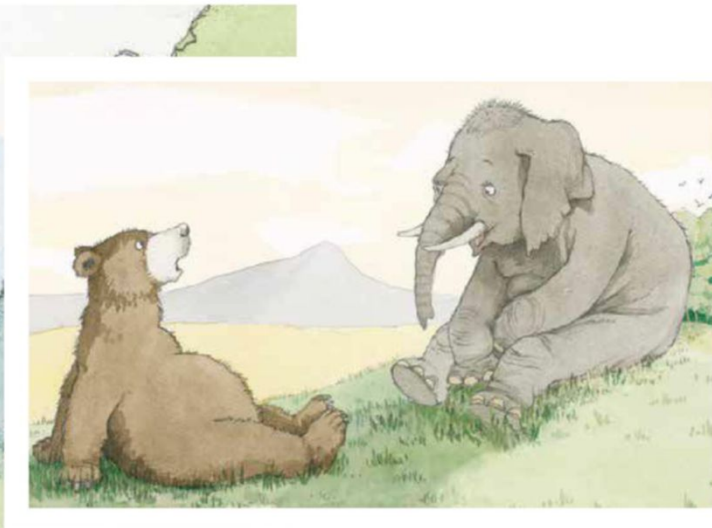
It's child's play

HELEN OXENBURY HAS BROUGHT SOME OF THE WORLD'S BEST-LOVED CHARACTERS TO LIFE.

NATALIE MILNER TALKS TO THE CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATOR ABOUT HER CAREER, CREATIVE PRACTICES AND LATEST COLLABORATION



THIS PAGE Helen's illustrations of Rabbit, Cat, Bear, Elephant and Frog from *The Giant Jumperee*, in collaboration with Julia Donaldson, published in April by Puffin Books



WHEN SHE FEELS AN AFFINITY WITH A TEXT, HELEN CAN VISUALISE DRAWINGS

ALL ILLUSTRATIONS ON THIS PAGE © HELEN OXENBURY REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF PUFFIN BOOKS

Best known for her collaboration with Michael Rosen on the ever-popular *We're Going On A Bear Hunt* (1989), award-winning children's book illustrator Helen Oxenbury is now teaming up with former Children's Laureate and author of the beloved *The Gruffalo*, Julia Donaldson, for a new read-aloud picture book, *The Giant Jumperee*.

Their collaboration on the Puffin Books' publication saw Julia – like many authors before her – give Helen creative freedom to illustrate the characters of Rabbit, Cat, Bear, Elephant and Frog. And, Helen says, when she feels an affinity with a text, she can instantly visualise the drawings, as well as the medium she'll use. She'll then produce a mass of preliminary sketches in her studio in Primrose Hill, North London. "I find that if I get the character right – the expression and whatever it is they are feeling – everything else sort of falls into place," she says.

But it isn't always easy. When tackling a remake of Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* (1999) with Walker Books, Alice grappled with the book's illustrious history. "That was a very scary book to do, with all those wonderful illustrators having done it before. I had [John] Tenniel's Alice in my head," explains Helen. To overcome this fear, she decided – as is her style – to create a modern, everyday child, leaving the stiff Victorian girl of Tenniel's drawings behind. "I was at a wedding party in a beautiful English country garden outside London, and there was this little girl poking in the stream with a stick, and I thought, 'There is my Alice,'" she recalls. Helen produced the drawings based on photographs of the girl but, since then, has not felt the need to work from life.

Nevertheless, influences seep into her illustrations. The *Bear Hunt*'s dog bears a striking resemblance to Stanley, her old black-and-white Labrador-sheep dog cross and >

HELEN OXENBURY

CLOCKWISE FROM

RIGHT Helen's illustration from *We're Going On A Bear Hunt*, 1989; *So Much!*, 1994; *We're Going On A Bear Hunt*, 1989; *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*, 1999

there are glimpses of her children's mannerisms in her drawings. But her family's biggest influence was in providing the spark for her move into publishing in the first place. Until she married, Helen had enjoyed a career in theatre and television set design, after studying at London's Central School of Art and Design. With a family, the unsocial hours of theatre became unrealistic. A combination of insider knowledge – watching her husband, author and illustrator John Burningham, at work – and a passion for drawing led to her first children's book, published by Heinemann. It marked the beginning of a new career which coincided with a flourishing of the children's book industry. She went on to establish relationships with the likes of Walker Books and Puffin Books.

Helen attended Ipswich Art School at the age of 18, relishing the rigorous training, which included life drawing, painting, drawing, architecture and clay modelling. In some of her first books, much like her contemporaries Raymond Briggs, Quentin Blake and Shirley Hughes, her illustrations included pen and ink, as well as cross-hatching techniques, with colour added later. Today she has scaled back, and now works with a modest selection of materials: a little box of watercolours and a few good brushes, as well as pencils to pick out detail before or after paint is applied.

Although watercolour is her favourite medium, she's unafraid to use gouache if a book needs a more vibrant finish, as in *So Much!* (1994). Here she also used monochrome to mimic the mood – painting in muted black and grey tones while the family is waiting for people to arrive, swiftly changing to colour when they do. It's a technique she used to great effect in *Bear Hunt*, marking a move from contemplation to action. When switching between colour and monochromatic illustrations, consistency is maintained through the rhythm of the text, as well as carefully placed drawings.

Helen slips her roughs into a dummy book laid out with the words. This indicates if the story is a page-turner, but also allows her to maintain the visuals of a character. "I find



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TEXT © 1994 TRISH COOKE, ILLUSTRATION © HELEN OXENBURY
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“YOU CAN ADD TO THE TEXT, BUT YOU MUST NOT DROWN OUT THE STORY”



TEXT © 1989 MICHAEL ROSEN, ILLUSTRATION © HELEN OXENBURY
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it quite hard to keep people the same age. In some drawings they look older and you have to refer back and start again,” she says. “It is all about the proportion of head to body to legs. Babies have got big heads.”

Perhaps the greatest test of continuity was *We’re Going On A Bear Hunt*’s transition to television in 2016, when Lupus Films adapted the story for Channel 4. Helen shared her original watercolours with the art team and admired their sensitivity to the tale, as well as the loose, painterly quality of the landscapes. Allowing the background to support, but not detract from, the main action is an important aspect of Helen’s own work. “One is not exactly the servant of a story, but you have to complement the story. With a set, if the curtain goes up and you think ‘good God what’s all that going on?’ it has failed. It’s the same with a book – you can add to, but must not drown, the text.”

It’s a balancing act at which Helen excels. By selecting the right moment to pare back her use of line, colour or background detail, and creating relatable characters in everyday surroundings, she creates beautiful spaces where young imaginations can roam free.

***The Giant Jumperee* by Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury, is out on 6 April 2017, published by Puffin Books, hardback, £12.99. www.penguin.co.uk**



ILLUSTRATION © HELEN OXENBURY REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF WALKER BOOKS LTD, LONDON



LOTTUS MEDIA MICHAEL LECHIE

ABOVE Julia Donaldson and Helen Oxenbury

60 SECONDS WITH... JULIA DONALDSON

From international sensation *The Gruffalo* to the enduring charm of *Room On The Broom* and *The Smartest Giant In Town*, the children’s author has captured the hearts of a generation of children. Here, she tells us about her process – and the importance of finding a great illustrator.

How did you know Helen was the right person to illustrate *The Giant Jumperee*?

I’ve always admired Helen’s work, she is so sensitive to the texts she accepts. For this book I wanted a style that was reasonably realistic and not too wacky – when illustrations are very stylised they can sometimes mask the emotions and humour in a story.

Which characters do you most identify with?

Rabbit, who hears the scary voice coming from his burrow; I have acted this rabbit on stage (*The Giant Jumperee* was originally a play), which is perhaps why. Helen is so good at capturing the fear of the animals in the story.

You published your first book aged 45, what spurred you on to pursue a career in storytelling?

I was primarily a songwriter, and it was when one of my songs, *A Squash and A Squeeze*, was made into a book that I felt inspired to write more ‘songs without tunes’.

Should emerging illustrators approach authors with examples of their work?

I would advise they get hold of a copy of *The Children’s Writers’ And Artists’ Yearbook*, which has lots of helpful articles and addresses. It’s much better to approach a publisher or an agent.

Have you ever tried to communicate something about a character to an illustrator?

No, because I have to let go and allow the illustrator to do their job, based on the text.

How do you know you’ve found a great story?

Occasionally I have a brainwave, but, more often, I have the germ of an idea, which goes into a mental seed tray. I wait to see if it germinates. www.juliadonaldson.co.uk

THE WORKING ARTIST

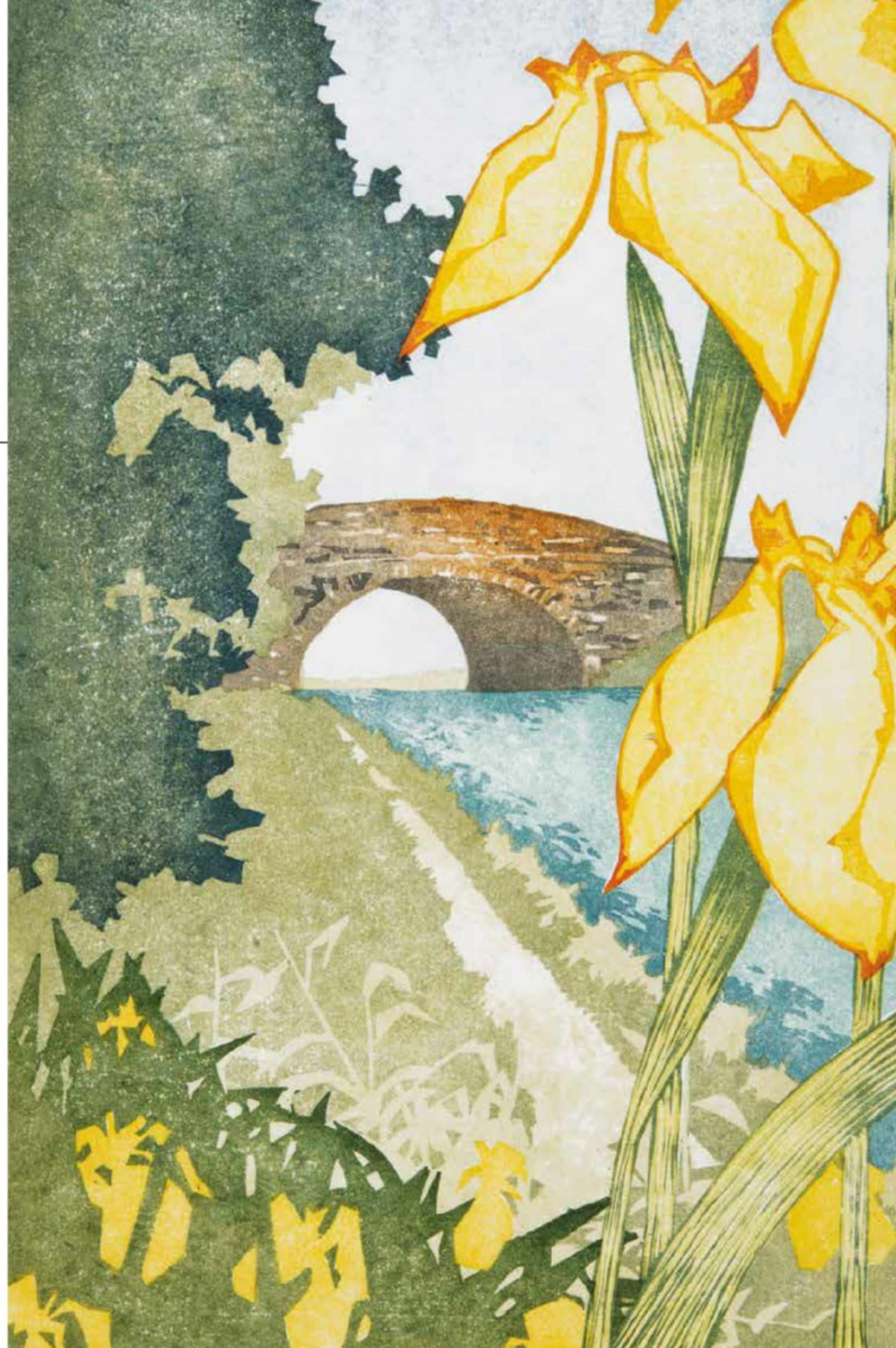
WORKING TO COMMISSION – WHETHER FOR A FRIEND OR A CLIENT – CAN BE REWARDING IF YOU’RE CLEAR ABOUT THE GROUND RULES FROM THE START, SAYS OUR COLUMNIST **LAURA BOSWELL**

Commissions come from people who like your work and vision. A good selection of sample pieces is essential, both to attract commissions and to use as examples when discussing the client’s requirements. Be confident about your skills and remember that, while the client can tell you what they want, you are ultimately delivering your vision of their instructions. If you feel you cannot deliver to the brief, be honest and walk away: nobody will be happy with a compromise.

Work out your fee and the time you need to complete the work. Even favours for friends cost time as well as money for materials, so unless you intend to give your work as a gift, be clear up front that you’ll be charging some form of ‘mates rates’. That said, a commission that raises your profile, especially early in your career, may make a cut in fees worthwhile.

Be absolutely direct about your charges and your timescale, and ask for a deposit. This can be up to 50 per cent of the fee and is payable before you start work. It is standard practice and intended as recompense for the time and materials used in undertaking the work. A deposit encourages the client to feel invested and, therefore, far less likely to walk away from the project without paying. Put this in writing and remember it works both ways: you need to keep to schedule and deliver.

Good communication is everything in establishing and maintaining your relationship with the client, as well as ensuring a happy outcome. Keep clients informed at every stage of the work and follow through on their feedback as



the work progresses. It is important that the client sees their ideas take shape and can intervene where necessary. This is one time where a surprise reveal of the finished work is a very bad move. It also pays to keep a good record of all your communications.

Lastly, allow for a small amount of revision to the finished work at the time of delivery only. No client should expect their children to be turned into teenagers at a later date, but an artist friend tells me some have tried.

Laura's solo show is at Obsidian Art in Stoke Mandeville from 31 March to 1 May 2017 www.obsidianart.co.uk; www.lauraboswell.co.uk

ABOVE

Twelve Views: Yellow Iris, Grand Union Canal, Japanese waterbased woodblock, 25x40cm

66

WORK OUT YOUR FEE AND THE TIME YOU NEED TO COMPLETE THE WORK. EVEN FAVOURS FOR FRIENDS COST TIME AND MONEY

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IN THE STUDIO

DIANA ARMFIELD RA

THE ROYAL ACADEMICIAN OPENS UP ABOUT HER CREATIVE LIFE AND HER STUDIO, WHICH IS OPPOSITE HER HUSBAND BERNARD DUNSTAN'S, IN THEIR KEW HOME. WORDS AND PHOTOS: **ANNE-KATRIN PURKISS**

Both you and your husband are painters – do you share one studio?

No. One day, in 1958, when I returned from taking our youngest son Bob to nursery school, I found a table arranged for me in Bernard's studio room. Alas, there appeared only luck for one of us at a time. So Bernard erected a hut in the garden, just outside his room, but in touch through the window for signalling coffee breaks. Later, when all three boys had grown up, I took over their playroom, south facing, which suits me, even if the sunlight sometimes strikes the easel.

Your husband was elected to the RA in 1959 and you became a Royal Academician in 1989. Was there any competition?

No, I think it has worked because we made some separations early on, so our work would not overlap. Bernard rather handed over the landscapes and still lifes to me. I perhaps would

HOME STYLE

The couple has lived and worked in their Kew home since the 1950s

Do you sometimes criticise each others' work?

It is useful to have a painter close by who can feel free to offer suggestions because we are fundamentally in sympathy. You try never to leave anybody depressed after criticism. We talked non-stop about what we were doing. As we get older and, with Bernard painting less, there is less discussion and I miss this.

You came to painting from a different background, you were initially a designer.

Bernard and I met at the Slade. But, after the war, I trained in the textile department at the Central School and didn't move 'over' for some years. Bernard was there as an influence in the handling of paint, and perhaps I made him more aware of colour.



CRITICAL SUPPORT

Diana and husband Bernard Dunstan in his studio, which is opposite her own



When I came to your studio almost ten years ago, I remember that the first thing I noticed was the large printing press.

That's an old Victorian printing press. We got it here by dismantling it before transporting it. We had to reinforce the ceiling in the cellar because of its weight. I loved doing etchings and we used to do the printing together.

When you are painting landscapes, does your design background still influence your work?

It has a huge influence. The training in design opened my eyes to the abstract qualities of painting. I think all my paintings are abstractions. The dull thing about abstract painting is that, to me, it has very limited meaning. It is akin to pattern making, just creating an ambience.

How would you describe the difference between your work as a designer and your work as a painter?

The design is a background to life and in designing you need to create rhythms and surfaces that lead outwards and remain flat. When I'm painting, I want to make a satisfying world, so the onlooker's eye is kept there, not wandering off. I want to create a beguiling depth.

You describe your paintings as abstract, but you paint also with a great deal of sensitivity towards your subjects?

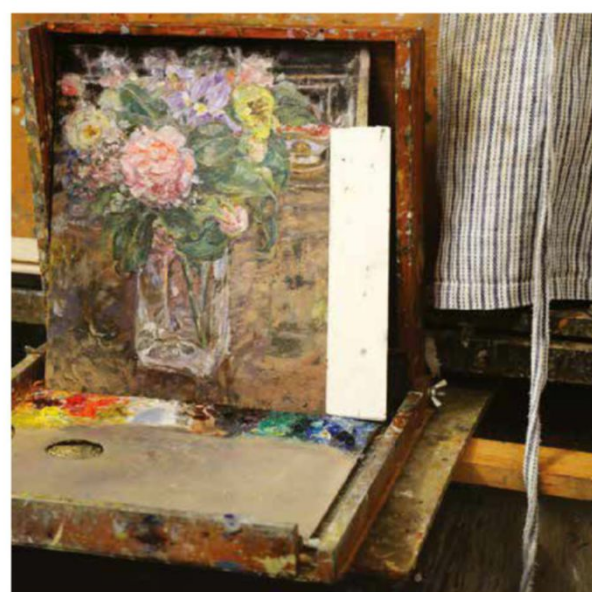
I feel landscapes are vulnerable, they can change so quickly and we can do so much damage to them. People say you express yourself in a painting. I think that it is the subject that I want to express, not myself.

You will be celebrating your 97th birthday in June this year. What still gives you inspiration for your work?

I can't work outdoors now as much as I used to, and I am very glad I filled so many sketchbooks. I'm going back to them now. They are my lifeline. I can draw on them and on my memories from years back.

WORK IN PROGRESS

A still life of a bunch of winter flowers from Diana's garden



“
AS I GET OLDER I GET MORE POSSESSIVE. THERE ARE PICTURES I DON'T WANT TO PART WITH. IT IS GOOD TO GIVE THEM A NOD
”

Looking around the studio, your pictures are everywhere, do you still look at finished work?

Yes, and as I get older, I get more possessive. There are many pictures that I won't part with. They remind me of things I have enjoyed in the past and it is good to come into the studio and give them a nod.

What are you looking forward to?

We have invitations here from our grandson Mark Morgan Dunstan and from our daughter-in-law, Kaidi Dunstan, for their exhibition openings. It is interesting to see how their work is developing. And, for myself, I have six works ready for this year's Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, and Bernard has earmarked drawings and paintings.



TO THE SEA

AS TATE ST IVES REOPENS ITS DOORS TO REVEAL THE RESULTS OF A HUGE OVERHAUL, **ROSALIND ORMISTON** TAKES A PEEK AT WHAT'S IN STORE AND EXPLORES THIS UNIQUE GALLERY'S PLACE IN ART HISTORY AND ITS CREATIVE LANDSCAPE



NINA AND GRAHAM WILLIAMS, TATE, LONDON 2017



JESSE WINE, COURTESY MARY MARY, GLASGOW

TOP Naum Gabo, *Spiral Theme*, 1941, cellulose acetate and perspex, 14x24.4x24.4cm
ABOVE Jess Wine, *I think you ought to know, I'm going through a creative stage some people find easy to connect to, glazed ceramic, in two parts, 82x123x55cm*
BOTTOM Bernard

Leach, *Slipware Charger*, 1929, earthenware with galena glaze, 46x10cm



THE ESTATE OF BERNARD LEACH COURTESY OF THE WINGFIELD DIGBY COLLECTION

It's been 24 years since Tate St Ives first opened to the public. The impetus to create this innovative purpose-built permanent gallery came from the thriving art communities in Newlyn and St Ives, themselves born out of Cornish 'schools of art' dating back to the 1880s. Since 1993, the Tate's Modernist rotunda building, designed by architects Eldred Evans and David Shalev, has looked out to the sea across Porthmeor Beach and, inside, proudly displayed regional art, ceramics and sculpture created by its distinguished community, as well as exhibitions from Tate's national collection of British and modern art. This year, it is set to expand its horizons still further, as it reopens following a significant redevelopment.

Curator Sara Matson has been involved with the expansion project, which has been in development for the last 12 years. "When Tate St Ives opened, there was always the desire it would expand," she says. "But its success in achieving more than its anticipated 70-80,000 visitors per year has meant it was a project that needed to be done." The gallery's strong links with the community and year-on-year exhibitions of local and national art has seen the annual visitor numbers rocket to more than 200,000.

A NEW DAWN

With the gallery refurbished, Sara and co-curator Laura Smith are looking to engage with more visitors and meet the expectations of a diverse and ever-growing audience. Sara says, "It's been absolutely imperative we have a more consistent representation of our collections associated with the Modernist history of art in St Ives, as well as being able to reflect new research in Modernism and contemporary practice."

An outstanding new visitor experience has been created with not only the refurbishment of the existing space, but also an extension which will improve, transform and expand facilities. While the refurbished building opens on 31 March 2017, the new space – designed by Jamie Foberts Architects to accommodate collection care, staff and visitor facilities – will be unveiled in autumn 2017. Lying adjacent to the original building, it has been sympathetically designed to accompany it and is layered into the hillside.

Artists have always been attracted to Newlyn and St Ives, not only for the quality of light in its wide seascapes and landscapes but the ambience of the communities which have welcomed artists, and their studios and workshops.

Nearly 100 years ago in the 1920s, the British studio potter and art teacher Bernard Leach, along with his Japanese partner Shōji Hamada, set up The Leach Pottery in St Ives. Leach, having lived in Japan from a young age and learned from Japanese potters, was one of many artists who made St Ives part of their lives.

In the late 1920s, the St Ives Society of Artists was founded and, in following decades, a flow of remarkable artists, including Winifred and Ben Nicholson, Christopher Wood and Patrick Heron, made their way to the Cornish >

ARTISTS ARE ATTRACTED TO ST IVES NOT ONLY FOR THE QUALITY OF LIGHT, SEASCAPES AND LANDSCAPES BUT THE COMMUNITY'S AMBIENCE



JESSICA WARBOYS AND GAUDEL DE STAMPA, PARIS

enclave. Some, such as Russian-born Naum Gabo, stayed during the Second World War. Barbara Hepworth established a permanent studio in 1949, which was bequeathed to the nation in 1976 with Tate as patron, resulting in its first regional location at St Ives. Today, the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden forms part of Tate St Ives.

THE STUDIO AND THE SEA

Sara Matson and Laura Smith have jointly mentored the refurbished buildings' two opening exhibitions, both with the theme of 'The Studio and the Sea'. The distinctive work of Leach, known as the father of British studio pottery, will be part of the *That Continuous Thing: Artists and the Ceramic Studio, 1920-Today* (31 March to 3 September 2017) exhibition. Curated by Sara Matson and the outgoing director Sam Thorne, it explores the links between pottery from Japan and Britain from 1910 and the rise of studio pottery in Britain.

The curators' aim is to explore 100 years of the artform's history in 100 exceptional objects by 50 artists, including work by revered British potters such as Dora Billington and artist-potter William Staite Murray. The radical sculptural ceramics of American abstract expressionist Peter Voulkos will also be on display, along with contemporary ceramics from rising stars such as Jessie Wine and Aaron Angell.

The other opening exhibition in this new season is *Jessica Warboys* (31 March to 3 September 2017) in her first solo show at a national gallery. The British artist's body of work is intrinsically linked to landscape, mythology and art history using film, painting, sculpture and performance art, and based on collective and personal memories. The results are spectacular, as Laura explains, "Tate has been working with Jessica on a touring exhibition which culminates at Tate St Ives. This show involves two new commissions, one of which is her largest painting to date, *Sea Painting, Zennor, 2015*, plus three new films, alongside a selection of her sculptures that appear in the films."

One of the films is the Tate-commissioned *Hill of Dreams, 2016*, which is based in part on Welsh author Arthur Machen's semi-biographical 1907 book *Hill of Dreams*.

HER PRACTICE FOR SEA PAINTINGS INCLUDES CANVAS DIRECTLY OVERLAID WITH COLOUR PIGMENT BEFORE BEING SUBMERGED IN THE SEA

Warboys uses his setting of hills around Caerleon-on-Usk, Newport, to create a fantasy-fact journey of a man through the landscape. The commissioned paintings are part of Warboys' *Sea Paintings* series, started in 2009. Her working practice for the series includes raw canvas directly overlaid with colour pigments, before being submerged in and wetted by the sea. The natural elements of the waves, the wind, and sun create the colour and form of the finished work. *Sea Painting, 2014*, and *Sea Painting, Zennor, 2015*, created on the Zennor coast near St Ives, will be displayed at Tate, adding further symbolism to the physical elements of Warboys' collaboration with the sea.

A PIECE OF HISTORY

Many of the works on display at Tate are by artists from the 1940s and early 1950s, and illustrate a time of post-war austerity in the Cornish town, encapsulating the era as well as the invaluable contribution St Ives made to the art world, which Sara believes is key. "I think, for example, of *Spiral Theme*, which Naum Gabo made out of the nascent plastics of the time, and the ideas and ambition that work holds together."

She points out the coincidence that Gabo, the man who co-wrote the 1920 realist manifesto in Russia, was living in a bungalow in Carbis Bay, St Ives, when he made this work, which links St Ives to European and international art of the period. "It resonates the history of Russian art," says Sara. "That one small twisted piece of plastic, which he heated in his Baby Belling oven, offers us so much in terms of an art historical object and the history of the 20th century."

Tate St Ives' curators have created exhibitions that reveal early histories and current ambitions of artists living and working in the community. From Gabo's historic *Spiral Theme* to Warboys's *Sea Paintings*, the gallery is must-see. www.tate.org.uk

ABOVE Jessica Warboys, *Sea Painting, Dunwich, 2014*, mineral pigment on canvas in three parts, 320x500cm



THE ST IVES SCHOOL

ABOVE

Wilhelmina Barnes-Graham, *View of St Ives Harbour*, 1940, pen, ink and gouache, 22.5x29cm

TOP RIGHT Alfred Wallis, *Houses in St Ives*, oil on canvas

BOTTOM RIGHT Christopher Wood, *Loading the Boats*, *St Ives*, 1926, oil on canvas, 51.2x61.3cm

The seaside town of St Ives' status in the annals of art stretches back to the 1920s when a group of experimental young painters were first drawn to the area. The attraction is clear – West Cornwall possesses a special quality of light, and the combination of natural beauty and human industry provides an endless source of inspiration. But the story of the St Ives School isn't one of romantic seascapes: it was, for a time, of international artistic importance as a breeding ground for modern and abstract art.

Although they never thought of themselves as a school, the artists who gathered here influenced and inspired each other. In 1928, painters Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood travelled to St Ives and happened across local fisherman and self-taught artist Alfred Wallis. Nicholson, in particular, was deeply influenced by Wallis' naïve style which defied perspective, and the meeting sparked an intense period of experimentation. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Nicholson moved to the town with his then-wife, the sculptor Barbara Hepworth.

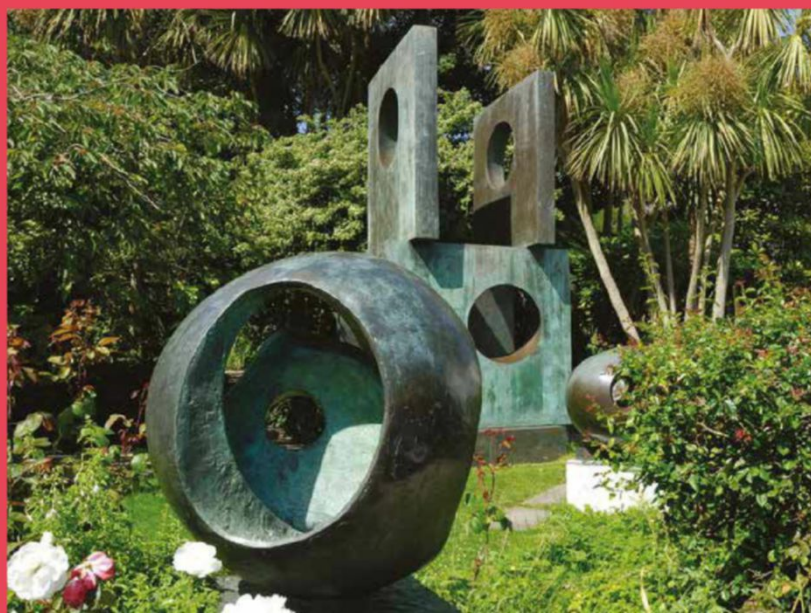
Following the Second World War, a new generation of artists arrived and it is with these painters the St Ives

School is most associated. The presence of Wilhelmina Barnes-Graham, Paul Feiler, Sir Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Roger Hilton, Peter Lanyon, Karl Weschke and Bryan Wynter meant the town was a fertile breeding ground characterised by excitement and unpredictability.

The opening of Tate St Ives in 1993, to showcase these important artists alongside other modern British painters, gave the town yet another lease of artistic life. It has, once again, become a bustling town with art at its heart. Today, it is dotted with wonderful galleries specialising in selling and exhibiting local artists, such as Belgrave St Ives on Westcott's Quay, where its annual *St Ives Exhibition* will show the work of key local artists from the 1940s to the 1970s from 1-24 April 2017. www.belgravestives.co.uk

LEARN AND EXPLORE

- Every Tuesday, from 11am to noon, visitors can join a guided walk through St Ives to discover the story of the artists who called it home. www.tate.org.uk
- Take an indepth look at capturing the human figure in paint with a nude model at the St Ives School of Painting's Porthmeor Studios from 24-27 April 2017. www.schoolofpainting.co.uk
- Learn how to paint inspiring Cornish landscapes on a four-day painting course with Newlyn School of Art, from 6-9 April 2017. www.newlynartschool.co.uk





**WINNERS
SPECIAL**

Artists of the Year 2017

MIXED-MEDIA ARTIST **ANNA PERLIN** IS THE WINNER OF OUR NINTH ANNUAL COMPETITION. SHE TALKS TO **SALLY HALES** ABOUT HER PRIZE-WINNING ARTWORK AND HER HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

Sending your carefully crafted, painstakingly thought-out and often highly personal work out into the world to be judged is a major milestone for any artist. And while the root of great art is usually found in a personal response to the world, validation is something everyone occasionally craves. For our winner, Anna Perlin, the joy in her victory lies in the confirmation that her decision to commit herself to art was correct.

"Winning was absolutely amazing and a huge surprise as there were some fabulous artists shortlisted," says Anna. "Although I paint for myself, to be recognised in this way is

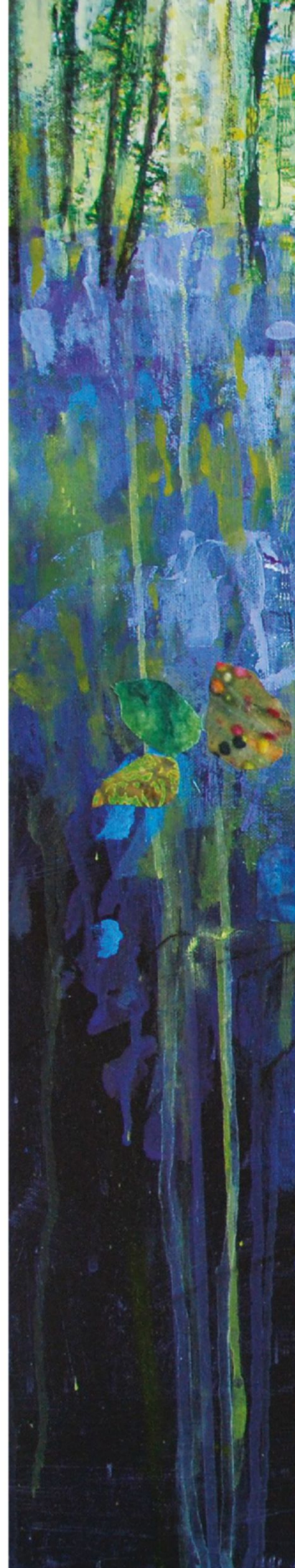
very rewarding. It helps justify the journey I've gone through. I've made so many mistakes, but I know I'm doing a lot right now."

The confidence to enter came from her own satisfaction with her finished artwork. "I had *Brambles and Bluebells* on my wall and loved it," she says. "I felt happy putting it up for someone else to judge because it didn't matter what anyone else thought. I loved it enough anyway."

Although it's the first time Anna has entered Artists of the Year, she is a firm believer in the competition. "It's daunting," she says, "But you have nothing to lose and everything to win." >

ABOVE Anna Perlin with Beaty Thalmann from the Thackeray Gallery

RIGHT *Brambles and Bluebells*, mixed media including collage, 50x50cm







THE ARTIST ON HER WINNING WORK

"I created *Brambles and Bluebells* last spring because I wanted to paint some of the enjoyment of my walks.

"I live near a stunning bluebell wood – Heartwood Forest in Hertfordshire – and I always go walking in the bluebells in May, so there were paintings needing to get out. I liked the way that the brambles contrasted with the bright, upright bluebells in shape, as well as in colour. I wanted them to zing together – and give you

that uplifting feeling that you get when you are out walking in the wood.

"Balancing the colours always takes ages. I can spend hours or days working out the shapes, sizes and colours of small pieces of collage. It's important that the collage or mixed media doesn't take over the painting and it all gels. You have to search the painting for the mixed media, rather than it jumping out at you."



ABOVE *Fields of Green*, mixed media, 61x76cm

ABOVE RIGHT *Making Memories*, mixed media, 102x102cm

ANNA'S TIP FOR ENTERING COMPETITIONS

“If you get selected, making sure you present your work in the best way, with great framing, is crucial. It can make or break a piece of artwork”



The delicate beauty of mixed-media *Brambles and Bluebells* expresses an obvious wonder at the natural world, a subject that's deeply rooted in Anna's art. Her upbringing in the countryside was the spark for her creative life and remains the impetus for her work.

“I grew up in a tiny Oxfordshire hamlet of 29 houses,” she says. “It wasn't until I'd left home and was living in a city I realised how much I love the British countryside. I paint what I would like to put on my walls, which is a window on to the landscape of the countryside where I live and where I grew up.”

Anna used to juggle her passion for painting the countryside alongside a successful career in advertising, while taking evening courses at The Art Academy in London and, later, joining the Hertford Art Society. The support she found there, along with a roster of workshops, demonstrations and critiques, encouraged her to pursue her dream. “The society encouraged

me and I won some best in show awards in their exhibitions.” That, she says, along with “reading about Joan Eardley, who died far too young and with so much more to give,” persuaded her to try doing art full time, rather than thinking, ‘what if.’

Professionally, she started out using oils impasto but morphed into creating texture with collage, falling for the experimental potential of mixed media and developing her bright, joyful and visually arresting style.

Anna is clearly an artist who has found her voice and techniques. “Over time I became more confident about experimenting with how to express what I wanted to without thinking about how my art would be perceived,” she says. “I like some American street artists and collage artists. Plus my mum gave me her quilting fabric cast-offs.”

She loves working with mixed media precisely because it offers variety. “I have some favourites including

charcoal and oil pastels with the collage, used with acrylic paint. I still sometimes use oil bars,” she says. “I deliberately leave some areas as quiet, loose spaces and build the mixed media in different amounts and with different levels of contrast in the parts of the painting I want to focus on.” Anna carefully creates layers that lead the eye around her paintings. Looking at *Brambles and Bluebells*, you can almost experience the sights, smells and textures – and feel the joy – of a wander around woodland.

But success in Artists of the Year won't see Anna resting on her laurels. “My ambition is to have a painting in the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition,” she says. “I go every year with my mum, and enjoy criticising half the work, while being envious of the other half.”

Anna received a £1,000 cash prize, a year's worth of art supplies from Cass Art and representation courtesy of Thackeray Gallery. www.annaperlin.com >



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Readers' Choice Award: Ruth Swain

HER PAINTING CAPTURED THE HEARTS OF OUR READERS. HERE, THE PORTRAIT ARTIST TELLS THE STORY BEHIND THIS STRIKING PICTURE

Despite a career as an art director at top agencies in London and abroad, a love of painting and drawing instilled in childhood drew Ruth Swain back to portraiture. It was while living in Hong Kong with a young family that she began painting children in watercolour – with the medium largely dictated by the presence of “lots of little fingers” and the absence of a proper studio.

On returning to the UK in 2006, oils began to assert themselves on her work as she also discovered a love of painting the character-filled faces of older people. It's the compassion, honesty and strength in Ruth's *They said I used to look like her* that pulls the viewer into the work – and it's no artistic accident. The painting's subject is her mother-in-law, Gillian, who was suffering from Parkinson's disease and breast cancer at the time, and in the final year of her life.

“She stayed with us a lot during her last years and to me,” says the artist, “she was the perfect subject.” Ruth paints from life and Gillian's illness meant that she tired easily, resulting in lots of short sittings. “Through the numerous sittings, we would have lovely long chats about her life. She was a very beautiful lady and exceptionally clever, reading all the

time. She told me about her young life and how people told her that she looked like Elizabeth Taylor.”

The subject's character also demanded the large size of the painting. “She had such a presence – larger than life – so I wanted the painting to capture this,” says Ruth.

Created primarily as a family memento, Ruth entered the painting in Artists of the Year because she wanted to share its impact, along with the message it reveals, with readers.

As an artist, Ruth is on a mission to learn and grow creatively, as well as grab more interesting commissions. And, although she says she would love to have a work hanging in the National Portrait Gallery, it is ultimately about the journey without end.

For Ruth, one of the joys of her career as a portrait painter is its inexhaustive nature. “You improve with age, so there's no reason why I won't be painting when I'm 94.”

Ruth won £500 worth of gift vouchers from GreatArt. www.ruthswain.co.uk >



TOP *They said I used to look like her*, oil on canvas, 120x100cm
ABOVE RIGHT Ruth Swain receives her prize from former editor Katie McCabe

RUTH'S TOP TIPS

- Keep painting and experimenting: the more you practise, the better you become
- Work as much from life as possible
- Choose interesting subjects
- Be brave enough to tell your sitters firmly that they must not talk



CLOCKWISE,
FROM TOP LEFT
Julie Potter, *Le Bain (The Bath)*,
household bleach
and acrylic on
black cotton,
80x80cm;
Catherine
MacDiarmid,
*Behind the Tiger
Paint 2*, oil on
canvas, 30x25cm;
Cathy Read,

The Toast Rack,
watercolour and
acrylic ink on
paper, 69x79cm;
the Artists of the
Year exhibition at
Mall Galleries; Elly
Hadjipateras, *Red
Tree*, oil on canvas,
50x60cm; Tai
Meng Lim, *A New
Day*, oil on canvas,
40x50cm

NEL HALL

Prizewinners

Academy of Realist Art Award:

Tai Meng Lim, *A New Day*

Prize: Two masterclasses (Colour Mixing and In The Studios of The Old Masters) worth £600 from the Academy of Realist Art

Canson Award:

Sarah Hope, *Memory's Scent*

Prize: £500 worth of paper from Canson

Cult Pens Award:

James Heyworth, *Tree*

Prize: £500 voucher from Cult Pens

Derwent Award:

Victoria Braithwaite, *Amaryllis, Happy Memory*

Prize: £500 to be spent on the Derwent website

LARA Award:

Angela Bell, *Doris*
Prize: Portrait painting masterclass worth £475, plus £50 of art materials to use on LARA classes

Pegasus Award:

Catherine MacDiarmid, *Behind the Tiger Paint 2*

Prize: £500 worth of vouchers from Pegasus

Rosemary & Co Award:

Jackie Henderson, *Artists' Haven*
Prize: Brush bouquet worth £500 from Rosemary & Co

Royal Talens Award:

Elly Hadjipateras, *Red Tree*
Prize: Rembrandt Oil Colour Box Master Set from Royal Talens

St Ives School of Painting Award:

Julie Potter, *Le Bain (The Bath)*
Prize: £500 towards an art course at St Ives School of Painting

STAEDTLER Award:

Rod Holt, *Overexposed*
Prize: Materials worth £500 from STAEDTLER

The Art

Academy Award:

John Williams, *Winter*

Prize: Ten-week part-time course at the Art Academy worth £500

The New School of Art Award:

Audrey Imber, *There's No Sun Up In The Sky*
Prize: Three masterclasses with a total value of £660 at The New School of Art

West Dean College Award:

Connor Maguire, *Belfast Life*
Prize: £500 voucher towards a creative short course at West Dean College

Wild & Tame Award:

Cathy Read, *The Toast Rack*
Prize: £500 worth of tuition with Wild & Tame

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LEFT Wassily Kandinsky, *Blue Crest*, 1917, oil on canvas, 133x104cm

STATE RUSSIAN MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG. PHOTO © 2016, STATE RUSSIAN MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG

KANDINSKY: FREE PRINT

DISCOVER THE STORY BEHIND THE ARTWORK
ON YOUR FREE **ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS** PRINT

Russian painter Wassily Wassilyevich Kandinsky is acknowledged as the creator of one of the first truly abstract artworks and remains one of the most popular artists of the 20th century. Born in Moscow on 1866, he only began painting at the age of 30, having first pursued a successful career in law. A deeply spiritual person, he believed abstract art was the best way to express his emotions, using spirals of colours and broken forms in a unique, non-representational way. He studied in Germany and went on to teach at the iconic Bauhaus school, where he helped to influence a new generation of abstract artists.

The painting on your free print, *Blue Crest*, hails from 1917, a time when he returned to Russia, where the Bolsheviks had swept to power. The original *Blue Crest* features in *Revolution: Russian Art 1917–1932*, the Royal Academy of Art's exhibition, which runs until 17 April 2017. www.royalacademy.org.uk

RA **Revolution**
Russian Art 1917–1932



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**THE FALKLANDS
COMMISSION WAS
UNPRECEDENTED.
I FOUND MAKING
UNFORGETTABLE
BLUNDERS WAS
A BIG HELP**



10 MINUTES WITH...

LINDA KITSON

FROM LINE DRAWING IN WAR ZONES TO CITY EXPLORATIONS ON AN IPAD, THIS GROUNDBREAKING ARTIST IS RENOWNED FOR RECORDING SEMINAL MOMENTS OF HISTORY. **KATIE MCCABE** ASKS WHAT DRIVES HER. PHOTO: **TOM DUNKLEY**

You sailed to the Falklands in 1982 to be a war artist and were the first woman to take on the role with the British military in an official capacity. How did you feel when you first ventured out with the troops?

I am ashamed to say my first thoughts were not about morality or consequences, but about crossing the equator on the QE2 and landing in the sub-zero temperatures of the Arctic. I thought: "What shall I take? What materials? Where do I start? Where are we going? What's happening?" Thoughts of injury or death came later.

What's your strongest memory of capturing illustrations from the Falklands during that time?

Frustration. It was all so difficult: helicopters flying, machinery rolling and men on the move; so much stopping and starting; air alerts and standing in a slit trench for 50 minutes. There was the hazard of debilitating frozen hands and feet; wearing five layers of clothing, including gloves; having to waterproof everything. My main memories are cursing at the hardships of drawing.

You were working in very challenging conditions, what materials did you use to sketch war scenes on the move?

Don't get me started on materials. I'm obsessive. Conversely, the more experience I've had the more complicated it's become. Since the task was only ever to be handheld – to be drawn live at high speed, and in black and white – why wasn't one bag, one black and white implement and two sizes of pad enough? But, no. I had a two waterproof pencils for darker soft lines, two 'sharper' pencils, plus a pen for detail, which makes five different things. And there were various sizes of paper. So that's a portfolio and a large, hand-held bag and bin liners to waterproof. Then there's the fold-up stool and, of course, the fisherman's parasol.

Did you have any specialised training to cope with the difficult circumstances?

Not a thing. It was a commission that was unprecedented. There were no guidelines for a 'war artist' to travel with troops in an all-force engagement with a foreign enemy, let alone an amphibious landing on the other side of the globe. I found that making unforgettable blunders was a big help.

How did you decide which elements of war to depict, and which to leave out?

I made a big mistake, especially as I was the only one who could be near. In the case of very shocking wounds, I let my feelings, as well as those of soldiers around me, stop me drawing their horrors. Very bad burns are among the most visually shocking sights to see and the pain is terrible.

Can you imagine standing there and drawing them?

The wretched victims, thinking of their families, didn't want me to draw them. I should have said that my drawings would go nowhere without the sanction of the Ministry of Defence and themselves. But I wasn't experienced enough. Later on, they said that I should have drawn it so that people would see.

What advice would you give to an illustrator interested in pursuing reportage illustration?

Do as I don't do. Try to think what you want to say before ripping in there. Try to recognise when enough is enough. Try to join in with some other things in life. Think hard about whether there isn't an easier way to earn a living.

You have known Quentin Blake since you were his student at the Royal College of Art. What's the best advice he has offered you as an illustrator? How did he inspire you?

Eat your hearts out Blake fans. With his love of drawing, his patience and his considerable brain, he is my mainstay, pathfinder, support and dearest friend. When I have no sense of direction, it's not 'how did he inspire me' in the past tense, it's going on all the time. How lucky am I?

Your more recent works are iPad drawings, what does this new medium bring to your work?

I feel quite psychotic after a lifetime of drawing on paper in mainly black and white line – the iPad is totally the opposite. It's edge to edge in colour. It's painting. It's printmaking. Instead of doing ten drawings to get one – you can add or reduce with layers, keeping the bits that you want. You're not bowed down with materials. Truth is that I lost the ability to draw for about 12 years. To get it back again is definitely not like getting back on a bicycle again. It's so difficult. It takes such courage and resolution; all the decisions that go into the simplification. The iPad lets you subtract and take away without losing the parts that you want to keep.

How would you describe your style now?

I have a bad feeling that it could be about to get complicated again. There is a 12-inch iPad now with a touch-sensitive stylus. For me that means: "Should this line be thick or thin, light or dark, solid or broken?" All this palaver is not technical; it's about 'feeling' for the principal, dominant shapes in a subject and then endorsing them with complementary marks. It could be that the whole linear-mania is about to start up again.

Linda Kitson: Drawings And Projects, A Lifetime Of Line Drawings, curated by Quentin Blake, is at the House of Illustration, London, from 3 March to 30 April 2017. www.houseofillustration.org.uk

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APRIL

TIPS • ADVICE • IDEAS

HOW TO PAINT FOLDS AND CREASES

HAZEL SOAN SHOWS US HOW SHE DESCRIBES FORM WITH CLOTHING

There is no doubt that folds and creases in fabric are two of the chief delights of painting clothes. The reason is simple: they create patterns of alternating light and shade, and this tonal variation is very satisfying to behold and to paint.



WET-IN-WET

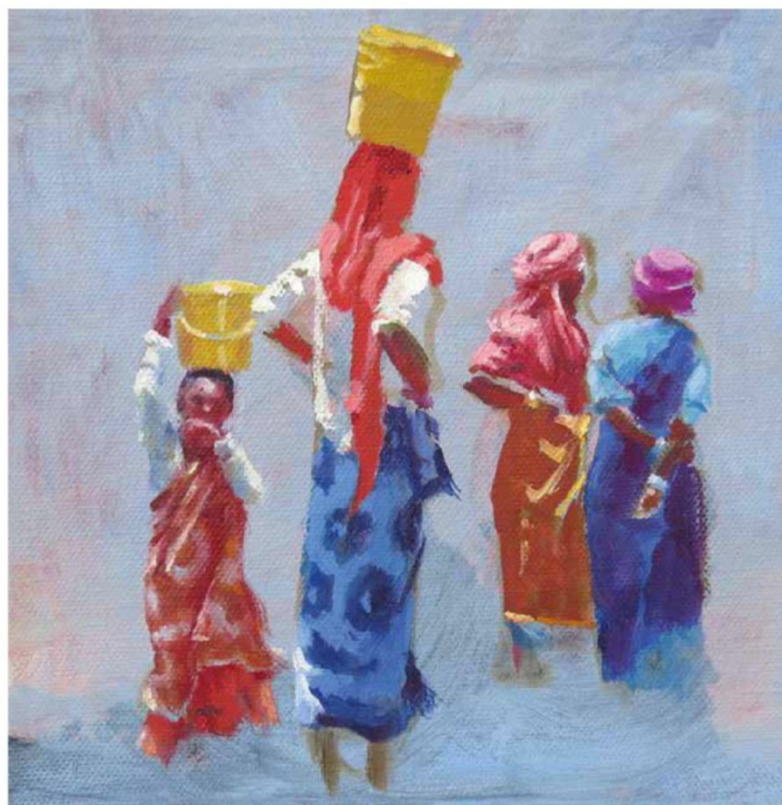
ABOVE: *Saffron Robes*, watercolour, 25.5x18cm

The wet-in-wet technique of watercolour makes representing folds a quick process. I painted the robe with pale orange and then, along the line of the fold shadows, added more concentrated pigment into the damp wash. The paint spread out gently, creating effortless gradations in tone.

LIGHT AND SHADE

RIGHT: *Balanced View*, oil on canvas, 20x20cm

In this oil painting, it is light rather than shadow that is added to show folds. I painted the darker, shaded colour of the sarong first and then added the highlights on the ridge of the folds with paler paint.



CHANGES IN TONE

LEFT: *Listening to the Wind*, oil on canvas, 122x76cm

This is an extract from *Learn to Paint People Quickly* by Hazel Soan, Batsford, £9.99.
www.batsford.com;
www.hazelsoan.com

HOW TO DRAW

JAKE SPICER GETS TO GRIPS WITH USING A MECHANICAL PENCIL

Graphite comes in many forms, from powder to thick solid sticks and the ubiquitous pencil – it is one of the first drawing materials we use and is often central to artists' practice. I was, therefore, surprised when I realised the most neglected item in my case was the mechanical pencil. Their leads don't need sharpening and they retain a consistent point, making them ideal for sustained sketching as much as precise technical drawing. I thought I would share the joys of this often overlooked drawing tool.



TOP TIP

When drawing fur make marks in the direction you would stroke an animal, with the flick at the end of the line marking where the hair ends

1 LOOSE UNDER-DRAWING

With the mechanical pencil held loosely and at a shallow angle to the page, I quickly sketched the simple shapes of the dog's head to establish its proportion on the page.

2 ANCHORING FEATURES

I find when drawing animals it is easy to get caught up in surface texture and lose a sense of the underlying structure. With this dog, I drew in the dark shapes of the eye, nose and collar early as anchors around which the rest of the drawing could be developed, holding the paper out at arms length to judge the relative relationships of the features.

3 DIRECTION OF FUR

Before getting lost in texture and tone, I established the shapes and flows of key masses of fur – particularly in the forelock, muzzle and ear. I drew a few dashes throughout to note the direction of fur, guiding my later marks.

4 TEXTURE

Then the fun bit – once the structure of the head was well established with anchoring features providing structure and the directions of fur noted, it was easy to fill in the spaces between, using short dashes built up to suggest the tone and texture of the coat.

Jake's new book *You Will Be Able To Draw By The End Of This Book* is available in March from Ilex Press, £14.99. www.jakespicerart.co.uk



MASTER TIPS: DAVID HOCKNEY

DISCOVER THE PAINTING TECHNIQUES OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST ARTISTS

Now in his 80th year and with a full career retrospective underway at Tate Britain, David Hockney can lay claim to being the greatest living painter. His 1972 painting *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)* – part of a series depicting swimming pools – helped to define his style for the public, but it's also a lesson in the power of strong composition.

At first, it seems cool and harmonious but something darker lurks just beneath the surface – and on the horizon. A man swims beneath the water; Peter Schlesinger, the artist's soon-to-be-ex-lover stares into the pool. The figures' L-shaped arrangement – the swimmer horizontal, the watcher vertical – suggests both intimacy and distance, movement and stillness, change and inertia. The scene is divided by a horizontal line, above which are tilting lines of the verdant hills, while below are the cool geometric shapes of the pool. The landscape looms behind the men – a dash of ochre suggests dying vegetation and introduces foreboding, while the foggy sky contrasts with the transparent effect of the water, rendered in two shades of blue, suggesting the men's world is soon to change.

Portrait Of An Artist (Pool With Two Figures) is on display in *David Hockney* at Tate Britain, London, until 29 May. www.tate.org.uk

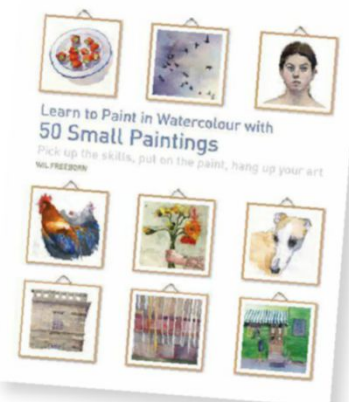
Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures) 1972. Acrylic paint on canvas. 214x304.8cm. Lewis Collection © David Hockney. Photo credit: Art Gallery of New South Wales, Jenni Carter

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Learn To Paint In Watercolour With 50 Small Paintings by Wil Freeborn

One of Scotland's foremost artists, Wil Freeborn's delight in recording life's intriguing detail is perfectly captured in this beautifully presented book. Introducing techniques as he moves through increasingly complex subject matter, the small-scale tutorials are ideal if you're just starting and daunted by a big, blank canvas or for those who want to practise recording the minutiae of their immediate environment.

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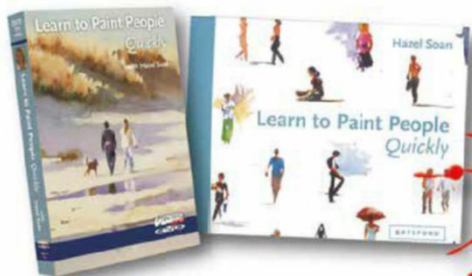




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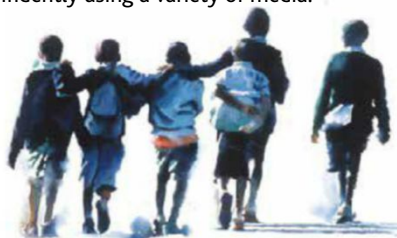
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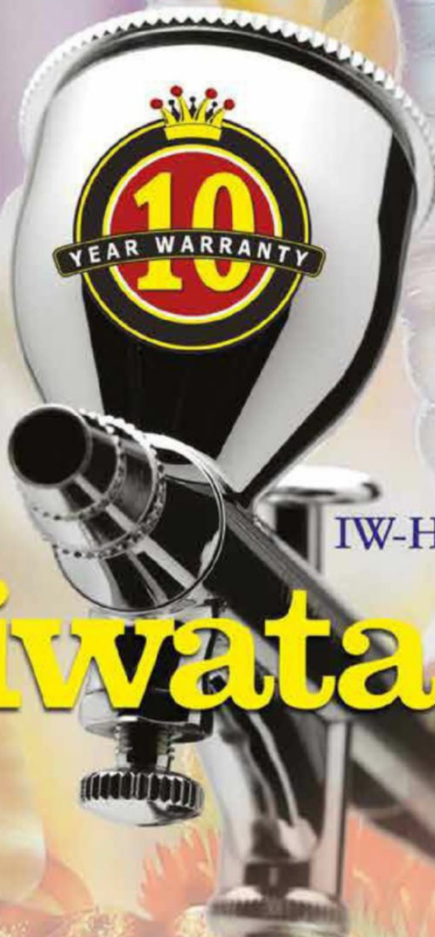
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GRAHAME'S WATERCOLOUR TIP

If you feel you are getting a little too tight with your watercolour, try a few pen and wash sketches. Use waterproof ink and you can loosely splash on the watercolour, safe in the knowledge the pen drawing will provide the structure of your sketch and maintain its strength through the transparent washes.

Grahame Booth will be painting in Granada with Arte Umbria/Painting in Europe on 20 May 2017. Full details at www.paintingineurope.com; www.arteumbria.com

WHY NOT TRY... JAPANESE INK PAINTING

ARTIST AND TUTOR **TAKUMASA ONO** EXPLAINS THE BASIC TECHNIQUE OF SANBOKU-HO

Elegant Japanese ink painting is all about the colour changes in the ink. There are three different densities – dark, medium and light ink. Together, these are called sanboku, meaning three 'sumi' inks. Painting with the three different tones in one brush stroke is known as sanboku-ho. Dip your brush into water or light ink, and then dip only the tip into the dark ink before painting.

Takumasa Ono teaches at West Dean College and the Japan Society. www.takumasaono.com



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MASTERCLASS

TULIP FEVER

BOTANICAL PAINTER **SANDRINE MAUGY** EXPLAINS HOW TO CAPTURE THE DELICATE BEAUTY AND VIBRANT COLOURS OF A SPRINGTIME PARROT TULIP IN WATERCOLOUR

I always look forward to this time of year, not only because it's when nature wakes up and the landscape becomes colourful again, but also because parrot tulips appear in the borders. I am mesmerised by their wonderful shapes and bright hues, and I find them an absolute joy to paint.

In this masterclass, I will show you how I approach this exciting subject, from drawing the feathery petals to painting the many colours that need to sit together without turning too muddy.

I start by mapping out the strong structure, making sure all the petals are anchored around the characteristic tulip core. I then transfer the drawing and paint the

shadows, giving form to the flower head before applying the colour washes.

The core is the focus, so it is important to secure its shape early, making sure it doesn't get lost among the surrounding looser washes. Finally, I paint the petals, first wet-in-wet, then with a finishing session of dry brushwork to refine the details and texture as well as strengthen the stronger and darker colours.

I hope that you enjoy painting this lively and colourful spring subject – it might even inspire you to plant your own tulip bulbs in the autumn to paint next year.

www.sandrinemaugy.com;

Instagram @sandrinemaugy

MATERIALS

•BRUSHES

Pro Arte Prolene Plus 007 number 3/0, 0, 2, 5 and 8

•WATERCOLOURS

Daler-Rowney: Lemon Yellow, Permanent Yellow and Permanent Rose. Winsor & Newton: French Ultramarine, Perylene Violet, Quinacridone Red and Cerulean Blue.

Royal Talens: Rembrandt Sap Green and Permanent Red Violet

•WATERCOLOUR PAPER

Saunders Waterford High White 640gms HP

•TRACEDOWN TRANSFER PAPER

•TRACING PAPER

•PORCELAIN PALETTE

•CARTRIDGE PAPER AND

DRAWING TOOLS



1 DRAW THE SUBJECT

The focus point is the pistil and six stamens, so this is where the drawing starts. The central vein of each petal joins this anchoring point. It is important all petal bases meet in the centre, even when they are hidden behind other petals. Once the central veins are in place, you can draw the petal outlines.

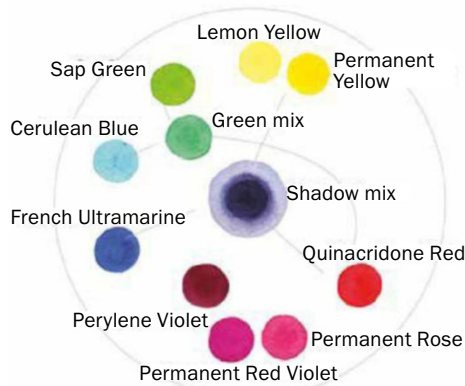


2 TRANSFER THE DRAWING

Trace the drawing with a lightweight tracing paper. Tape the top of the tracing to the edge of the watercolour paper, and slip the sheet of Tracedown transfer paper underneath, dark side down. Use a different colour pencil to go over the line so you can easily see which lines are left to transfer.

3 SELECT THE COLOURS

It's time to select the colours. I used two yellows: Lemon, which is paler, and Permanent, which is richer. I also used a Quinacridone Red (which layered with the yellows will make the orange/apricot hue), a pink and a magenta for the petals, a violet maroon for the anthers and some of the veins, two blues and a green.



4 MIX THE SHADOW COLOUR

Following the principle of harmonic shadows, I used three of the painting's primary colours to mix a grey shadow colour. For the blue, I chose French Ultramarine (transparent and granulating for texture); for the red, I used Quinacridone Red, the main red in the petals; for the yellow, I selected Permanent Yellow, the rich yellow at the base of the petals. >





5 PAINT THE SHADOWS

Using the shadow mix watered down in another palette well, start mapping the centre of the flower, painting the shadows but also blocking in the black anthers. Follow with the central veins, and then the folds and creases in the petals, working half a petal at a time, wet-in-wet, to keep your washes soft and avoid hard lines.



6 COLOUR THE MIDDLE

Before painting the stronger colours, it is a good idea to lay down some of the paler hues around the centre to make sure it does not get accidentally covered with pink, magenta and red. If a staining colour flows over the wrong areas, it is there to stay. With the Permanent Yellow in place, it is easier to see where the pinks and reds should start.

7 PAINT THE WET-IN-WET BASE

Each petal is worked in two separate sections: the central vein area plus the first half; then the central vein area again plus the other half. This first layer is worked wet-in-wet, covering the area with pure water, using a no 8 brush, before dropping the colour with a no 2 or 5, depending on the size of the section to be covered.

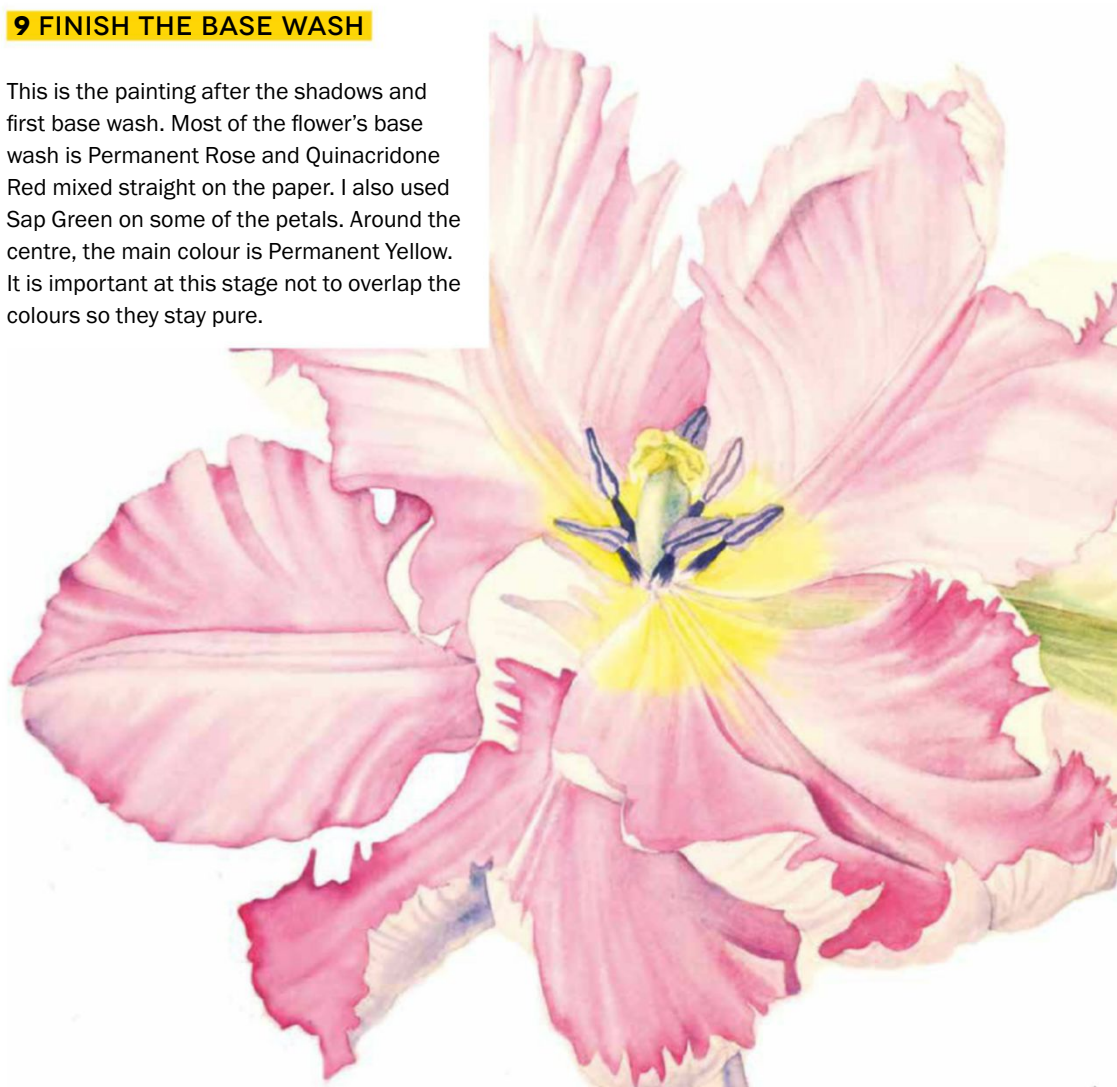


8 FILL IN THE LEAF AND STEM

The green for the leaf and stem is a mix of Sap Green, Cerulean Blue and Quinacridone Red. This gives a greyish, turquoise-green with a milky texture, which is perfect for this particular tulip. This is painted wet-in-wet. Some veins will be picked up with a dry brush later on to bring out the texture. A glaze of Lemon Yellow is then painted on the stem.

9 FINISH THE BASE WASH

This is the painting after the shadows and first base wash. Most of the flower's base wash is Permanent Rose and Quinacridone Red mixed straight on the paper. I also used Sap Green on some of the petals. Around the centre, the main colour is Permanent Yellow. It is important at this stage not to overlap the colours so they stay pure.



10 MIX WITHOUT A PALETTE

For the second wet-in-wet wash, I still prefer to mix colours straight on the paper, rather than on a palette. Again working half a petal at a time, wet the paper and drop the unmixed colours following the pattern of your subject. The main colour is Permanent Rose and dropped in colours are Quinacridone Red and Permanent Yellow.



11 USE DRY BRUSHWORK

Now it's time to emphasise and strengthen colour, pattern and form with some dry brushwork. The technique is used to bring out details and emphasise texture, so it is applied only in small areas. The idea is not to cover the beautifully soft and loose washes, but to balance them and let them shine while bringing in some detail.

12 FOCUS ON THE CENTRE

The cherry on the cake is finishing the central part of the flower. For the stamen, use a concentrated version of the shadow colour, painted with a dry brush to keep it dense and dark. Perylene Violet is layered with the shadow mix to create a powdery, dark-maroon texture. Permanent Red Violet is added along some veins to bring them out.



Top tip

It is important that all the petals meet in the centre, even when they are hidden

PROJECT

A TASTE OF THE

exotic

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATOR AND ARTIST **FIONA SWAPP** SHOWS YOU HOW TO CAPTURE THIS PRETTY *DENDROBIUM NOBILE* ORCHID IN WATERCOLOUR



Three years ago I received this orchid as a birthday gift from my parents, and found it quite different to the moth orchids I see day-to-day in Aberdeen's florists and garden centres. It was in bud and ready to flower when I was asked to create an exotic painting for this article, so it was the perfect opportunity to tackle this specimen with gusto.

My usual limited palette of three colours (Aureolin, Indanthrene Blue and Helios Purple for this plant) could be too advanced for some beginners, so I have used paint with limited mixing straight from pans to show what can be done with layering. I have limited the use of wet-in-wet: although it's an effective technique that I use day-to-day in my artworks – as do many botanical artists – I have found students who are not used to wet-in-wet find it quite challenging. Here goes.

www.fionaswapp.co.uk

MATERIALS

•PAINTS

Artist-quality watercolour paints, tube and pan.
Winsor & Newton: Aureolin, Green Gold, Permanent Sap Green, Oxide of Chromium, Indanthrene Blue, Violet
Dioxazine, Permanent Magenta. Sennelier: Helios Purple

•PLASTIC ERASER

•BLUE TAC (WHITE)

•PALOMINO BLACKWING SHARPENER

•PAPER

A2 200gsm cartridge paper for sketching, 640gsm (300lb) Hot Pressed

•BRUSHES

Size 3 and 5 synthetic Golden round brush with good, springy points and a short handle



SPRING BOTANICALS



1 I started with preparatory sketches from the live plant on A2 200gsm cartridge paper. From these drawings I created a composition using the live plant and close-up photographs of where the flowers and leaves attach to the stem, noting parts of the plant and colour mixes as I went along.

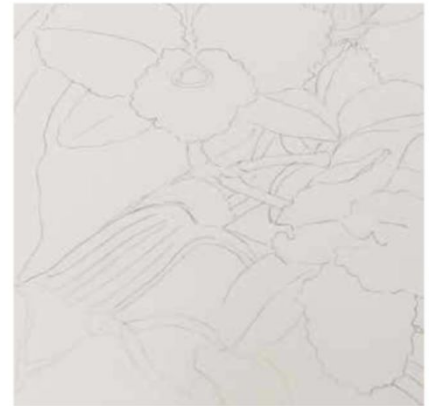


3 I started the painting with a no 5 brush adding an underlayer of Green Gold where there were warm tones on the leaves, stem and flowers. The centre of the flowers were enhanced with a orange mix of yellow and Helios Purple, and Permanent Sap Green at the very centre.

5 When the green base was finished, I added the Permanent Magenta by placing a wash of water on the first of the flower buds. Once the water layer had created a slight sheen, I dropped in some colour. I worked on the shaded areas and then used the dry brush technique on the body of the bud using the paper surface to give a light, textured appearance.



2 With the composition fixed, I transferred the image onto paper using a lightbox. Normally, I would use an H or 2H pencil with light strokes. For this demo, I drew in a B pencil. Once transferred, I used the white tac to remove excess graphite.



Top tip
Create a great composition using the live plant along with some close-up photographs of its details

4 Adding layers of Oxide of Chromium, I paid attention to the shadows – I brushed in the direction of any lines I saw. This helped to give the plant form. Use a magnifying glass to help you see the details of the plant and also while you are painting.

6 I started painting the open flowers with Permanent Magenta the same as on the sepals but, as there were distinct markings on the petals and lip, I used the tip of the brush to create a pattern by scumbling. ➤





7 Once the flowers had their basic colour, I over-painted them with a thin layer of Helios Purple in the areas that had brighter pink on the petals.



9 You will notice that, at this stage, I decided to amend the inner lip of the lower flower, as I found there was too much orange in the centre. I did this by lightly wetting the area I wanted to remove and using a dry brush to pick off the colour.

10 On the stem's paler green areas there was a sheen of blue, so I added a very light wash of Indanthrene Blue to give the same impression. I also used Indanthrene Blue in the darker areas of the leaves and stem to sculpt them more.



8 Finally, I enhanced the veining on the buds and on any petals and sepals that were showing the reverse with Violet Dioxazine.



11 The final touches were made using the no 3 brush, adding some Green Gold to the stem's pale joints and veins, as well as adding the final details to the centre of the flowers with a pink-red mix of Helios Purple and Aureolin, and Permanent Magenta to the edges of the lip of the flowers.

PROJECT

Delicate BEAUTY

HERE **FIONA SWAPP** HELPS YOU TO CREATE THE INTRICATE DETAIL OF A PHYSALIS WITH WATERCOLOUR AND COLOUR PENCIL

Sometimes a painting can be just as successful if you don't use any watercolour washes and line work with very fine brushes – especially if you don't have a steady hand. If that's the case for you, I'd advise you use quality colour pencils that are lightfast and suitable to use sparingly in conjunction with your watercolour paints. The pencils I'm using here are not water soluble so can be used for the initial drawing before you add the washes and details.

www.fionaswapp.co.uk

1 I started by drawing the basic shape with the Olive Green pencil and added the smaller lines that you see in the same colour.

2 Next, I added the brown lines using both the Bistre and a Gold Ochre pencil. Use the Cream pencil where you see a halo of light on the edge. This will give a resist when over-painted, so make sure that you don't overdo it.

3 Here I used Winsor Orange paint, which was directly applied to the paper.

4 I mixed all four colours to match the physalis. I would normally mix a maximum of three colours but, because the physalis has a slight muddy look to it, it works well in this instance. I washed the colour over the main areas and left some highlights.

5 I then used the same mix once more, this time concentrating on the shadow areas.

6 I washed Winsor Orange where I could see the fruit showing through, as well as in the shadow underneath the fruit. You will notice that, by now, you can see the resist appearing on some of the veins and edges. It's very useful for small details such as this.

7 I mixed a slightly greener shade of the basic four-colour mix and used it where you can see the green shadows.

8 I added a thin wash of New Gamboge over the paler colours to give a slight warmth and to pull the areas together.

9 Finally, I went over the main veins using the Juniper pencil before amending any shadows with the basic paint mix.

MATERIALS

•PENCILS

Faber-Castell Polychromos colour pencils: Cream (102), Gold Ochre (183), Bistre (179), Juniper Green (165) and Olive Green (173)

•PAINT

Winsor & Newton watercolour paints: Winsor Orange, New Gamboge, Indanthrene Blue, Permanent Magenta

•PAPER

300gsm (140lb) Hot Pressed

•BRUSHES

Size 3 Kolinsky sable round brush. A round synthetic brush of the same size, as long as it has a good point, would work equally well

DEMO

Velvet rose

MARIELLA BALDWIN GUIDES YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS OF CREATING A DETAILED BOTANICAL WATERCOLOUR OF A ROSA GALLICA, A DRAMATIC ROSE OF THE VERY DARKEST PURPLE

There are a number of reasons botanical artists are put off by roses. One obstacle is the sheer beauty Pierre-Joseph Redouté achieved with his rose paintings. Accepting I would be unlikely to surpass them led to a sense of resignation – but also the freedom to have a go anyway.

Botanical painting, by its very nature, is about detail. I like sketchbooks, not only for loose sketches and notes, but also for making shaded drawings in continuous tone, which help when the flower has long faded. Continuous tone, with no gestural marks, is the seamless

gradation from one tone to the next. Use a greyscale from 0 to ten – with 0 being the paper – to relate to the application of paint. I like to use guidelines. Breaking down the whole into quarters helps to follow the complexity of the petals and keep the drawing contained.

Cultivated double roses are almost completely defined by their complicated mass of petals. Each rose has a unique character, even though they can appear similar to another. The art is finding the personality and, in this case, that's the particular velvety murrey colour.

www.mariellabaldwin.com

MATERIALS

•PENCILS

2H/HB, Pentel p203 mechanical pencil 0.3mm and clutch pencil, Faber-Castell TK9400

•ERASER

Tombow, mono zero, ultra-fine 2.3mm

•BRUSHES

Isabey series 6229, size 2, 4 and 6

•WATERCOLOURS

Winsor & Newton: Cobalt Blue, Permanent Rose, Transparent Yellow, Winsor Violet

(Dioxazine), Viridian, French Ultramarine, Burnt Sienna, Scarlet Lake, Alizarin Crimson, Rose Doré

•PAPER

Arches Hot Pressed 300 g/ms

•TRACING PAPER

•ARTIST'S SKETCH BOOK
Handmade from a selection at Green & Stone of Chelsea

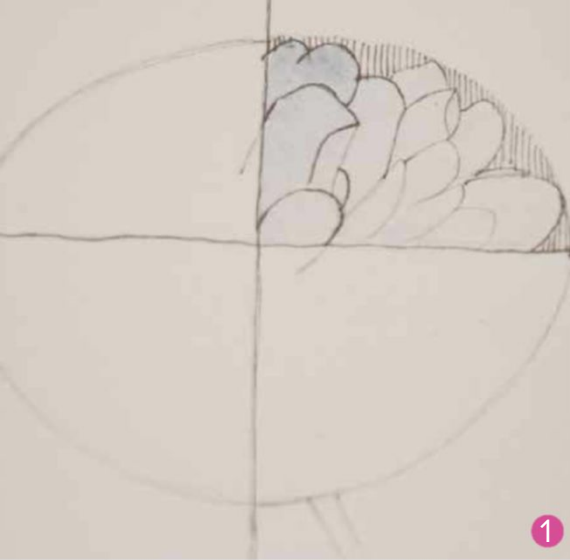
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LOOK AT THE NEGATIVE SPACES AND HOW THE FLOWER FITS TOGETHER

EXPRESSIVE BOTANICALS



1



2



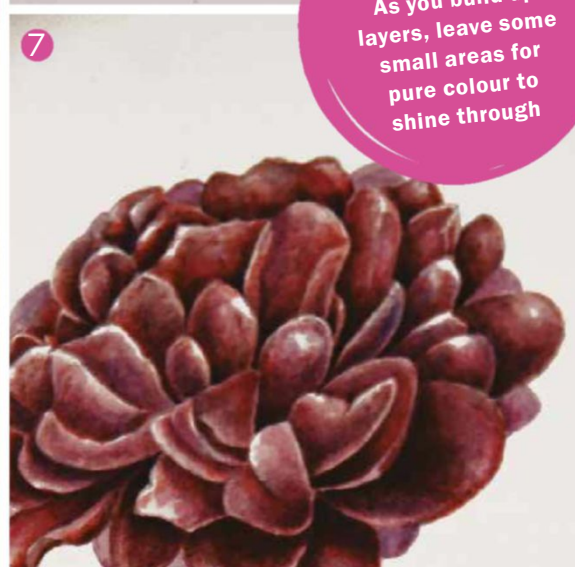
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4



5



7

Top tip

As you build up layers, leave some small areas for pure colour to shine through

1 Keep the initial drawing simple. Look for geometric shapes and symmetry as guides. Look at the negative spaces, how everything fits together and the overall shape and outline. Take a flower apart to understand its construction. Look at the form of the whole, the individual parts and the tonal values.

2 Work out the darkest darks and lightest lights, differentiating between form and colour – the use of a directional lamp can help. Examine the plant to establish a useful palette that directly relates. I work with a limited palette and expand it towards the end.

3 Begin with an accurate line drawing, using shading to clarify awkward areas, if necessary. Using overlays on tracing paper means the line drawing can be kept clean and clear. Before embarking on the painting, navigate the whole drawing with an eagle eye and make sure that everything has been accounted for.

4 The first layer should be applied as pale as possible without painting over the pencil lines. Because of the rose's smoky colour, I begin with a pale wash of Cobalt Blue. Next I add the shadows where petals overlap, making a muted grey from my palette.

5 Build up the colours, increasing the amount of pigment with each additive layer but leave some small areas for pure colours to shine through. Thinking about the form of each individual petal, and the form of the whole as progression is made, will help to keep the work under control.

6 Accurate colour mixing is important. Don't worry about matching the colour from the beginning. Hot Pressed paper allows paint to be built up in layers, so colours can be applied layer by layer to achieve the appropriate final match. The greater the tonal range, the greater the feeling of three dimensions.

7 Finally, add the detail and harmonise the whole painting by making use of transparent glazes. Increase the tonal range if necessary by intensifying some of the darkest areas. Detail will only be seen in the mid-tones and be absorbed by shadow in the dark areas and faded in the lightest areas.

HOW TO PAINT

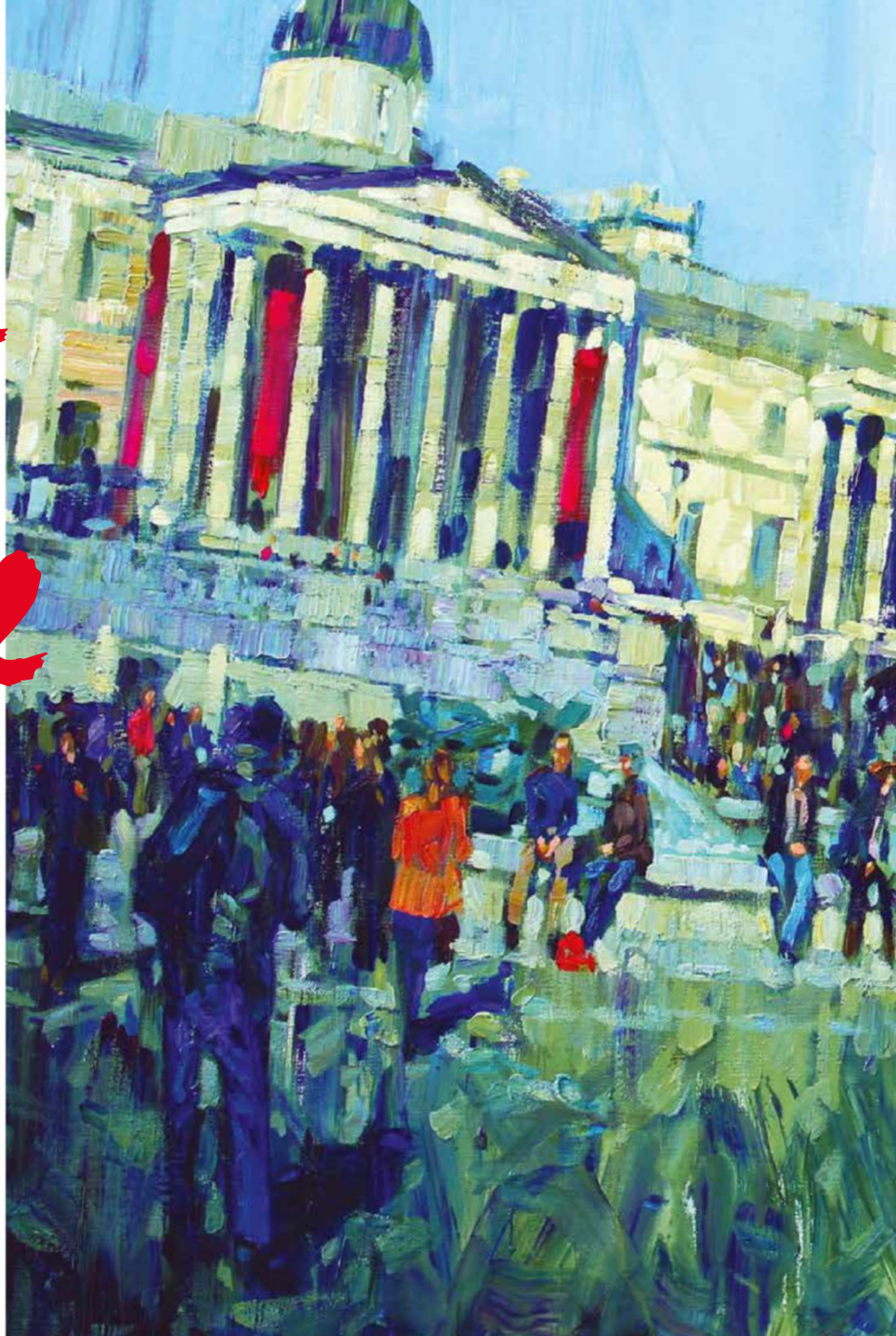
Street Life

ACRYLIC ARTIST **HASHIM AKIB** EXPLORES HOW TO EXPRESS THE FRENETIC ENERGY OF A CROWDED SCENE WITH HIS PAINTING OF BUSTLING TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Because it is such an iconic part of London, Trafalgar Square is brimming with tourists most of the time. I have made a few alterations to the scene; the photo was a straight-on shot and I have tilted the perspective so, compositionally, it is more dramatic. The tourists on either side help balance the scene and the angle creates a almost seesaw effect with most of the figures on the right.

The addition of shadows from unseen trees makes the scene much more enticing and helps frame the figures in the mid-ground. The spidery shadow branches create multiple diagonals that lead and invite in the viewer. The number of figures provides variety, but the shots of red could be reduced with more contrasting colours replacing them. A minor detail in the photo is a sculpture in the background, which was installed during the London 2012 Olympic Games. If included, it would date the artwork and remove the timeless quality so, in this case, I decided to leave out the sculpture.

This is an extract from Hashim Akib's new book *Painting Urban And Cityscapes* published by The Crowood Press, £16.99. www.crowood.com; www.hashimakib.com



1 I begin with a simple green outline to get to know the scene and to make sure everything important fits the picture plane. Using a soaked 3-inch flat brush I load white with Ochre, Cerulean, Sienna, Cobalt, greens and violet, and blend the colours to create a mainly Ochre green-blue tint. I begin with large downward strokes to fill the buildings behind, adding a variety of diagonal, criss-crossing marks for the foreground, actively allowing certain thick, impasto marks to come through to contrast with the more diluted ones. When the first application hits, I improvise according to the natural effects created.

MATERIALS

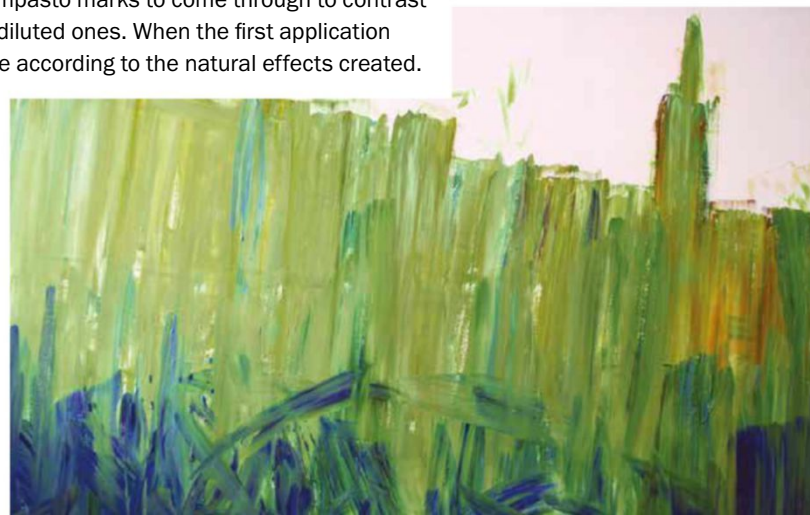
•COLOURS

Lemon Yellow, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Orange, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Sap Green, Pale Olive Light, Phthalo Green, Cerulean Blue, Cobalt Blue, Cyan, Violet, Titanium White

•BRUSHES

3, 2, 1½ and 1-inch flat head brushes

•FLOW IMPROVER





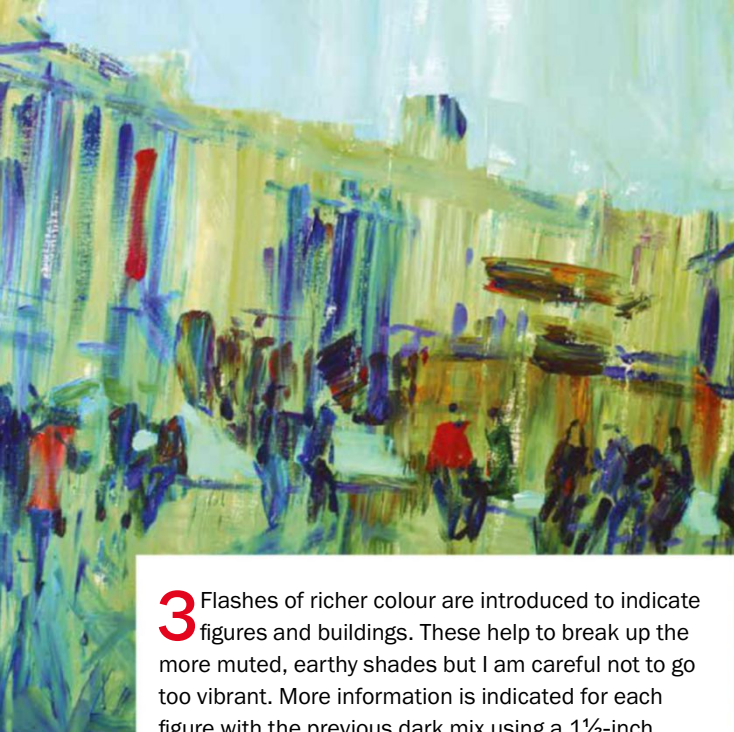
HASHIM ARIB

BELOW Hashim worked from this photo of Trafalgar Square, but tweaked the perspective and detail

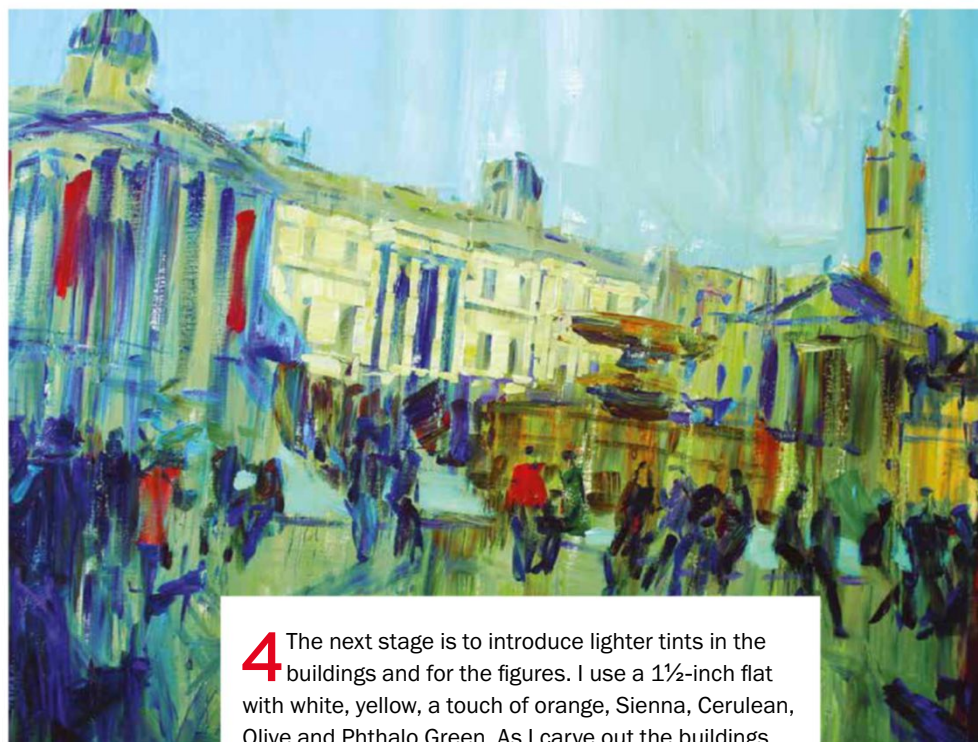


2 Before the initial layer dries, I introduce thicker paint with a clean 1½-inch brush to define architectural detail in blues and violet, and the fountain with Ochre, Sienna and Sap Green, and blobs of violet, cyan, Sienna and Phthalo Green for figures. The marks in the foreground are blues, violet and greens mixed with the lighter tints. Once dry, I turn the canvas upside down to apply the sky in thick and thin washes. I use my wet, 3-inch brush with white, Cobalt, Cerulean, violet and a touch of Ochre, and apply mainly downward strokes. >





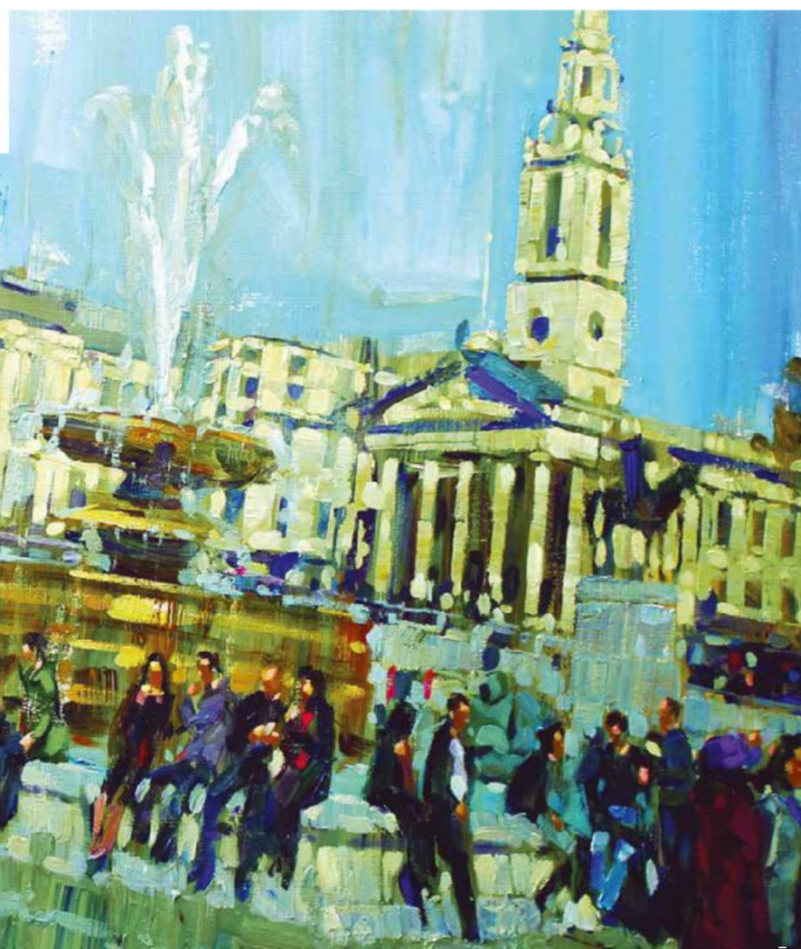
3 Flashes of richer colour are introduced to indicate figures and buildings. These help to break up the more muted, earthy shades but I am careful not to go too vibrant. More information is indicated for each figure with the previous dark mix using a 1½-inch brush. It is vital to avoid being too illustrative when describing each person, as this will make them look stilted. I apply gentle dabs with angled and loose brush strokes; however, there is plenty of paint on the brush.



4 The next stage is to introduce lighter tints in the buildings and for the figures. I use a 1½-inch flat with white, yellow, a touch of orange, Sienna, Cerulean, Olive and Phthalo Green. As I carve out the buildings with lighter tints, the under-painting shimmers through and forms mid-tones, shadows and the interior of the windows. At this stage, more of the drawing is adjusted and defined, and certain liberties are taken with the accuracy of the architectural detail. As long as the image holds together, I am always willing to allow certain discrepancies.



5 Arches and columns are not easy to paint accurately so be prepared to wipe off mistakes with a damp tissue, allowing the layers close by to dry first. Once the buildings have been defined, I work on the areas around the fountain with similar light tints but with added blue, violet and green. These are quite laborious sections but, once covered, the scene starts to come together. The foreground receives little attention other than a few thick, blocky tints as the early flurries already serve a function.



Top tip

Provide a story by picking who your main characters will be. Here, two people in red give focus

6 The last stages see a final round of stronger tints on the buildings where more white is added to the original tints, and figures are highlighted and fleshed out with certain colours heightened. The fountain is applied with a thick white, blue and yellow mix. Certain other details are developed using a 1-inch brush, including the crowds behind the fountain, which are mainly left understated. Possibly more could be added and built up but it may be at the expense of the early spontaneous applications so I decide to end the painting here.





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Under pressure

RICHARD ALLEN HAD BARELY PAINTED A LANDSCAPE WHEN HE ENTERED SKY ARTS' LANDSCAPE ARTIST OF THE YEAR, BUT WENT ON TO WIN THE SHOW. HE TALKS TO **ALICE WRIGHT** ABOUT HIS TECHNIQUES AND THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING ON REALITY TELEVISION

With clients including *The Guardian* and *The New Yorker*, Richard Allen had established an enviably successful career as a freelance illustrator. He had won a clutch of international awards and illustrated a popular children's picture book published by HarperCollins. But, five years ago, he decided to shake things up and return to painting.

Having studied fine art, specialising in painting, at Central Saint Martins, London, Richard pursued illustration as a practical career path. Yet, by 2012, he needed to challenge himself as an artist and explore a new direction. "Being pretty successful as a freelance illustrator means aiming towards having a certain recognisable, identifiable way of working," he explains. "At the outset it seems like something that's almost unachievable and you're desperately working towards that objective. Then, when you achieve it, you're very aware of being pigeon-holed."

Richard's illustrative style is imaginative, whimsical and often humorous, but his paintings are intensely observed and "determinedly figurative and representational". Because his illustration process is almost entirely digital with the opportunity to change and correct, oil painting reintroduced a sense of jeopardy. "Reverting to painting let me to do something akin to starting again," he says.

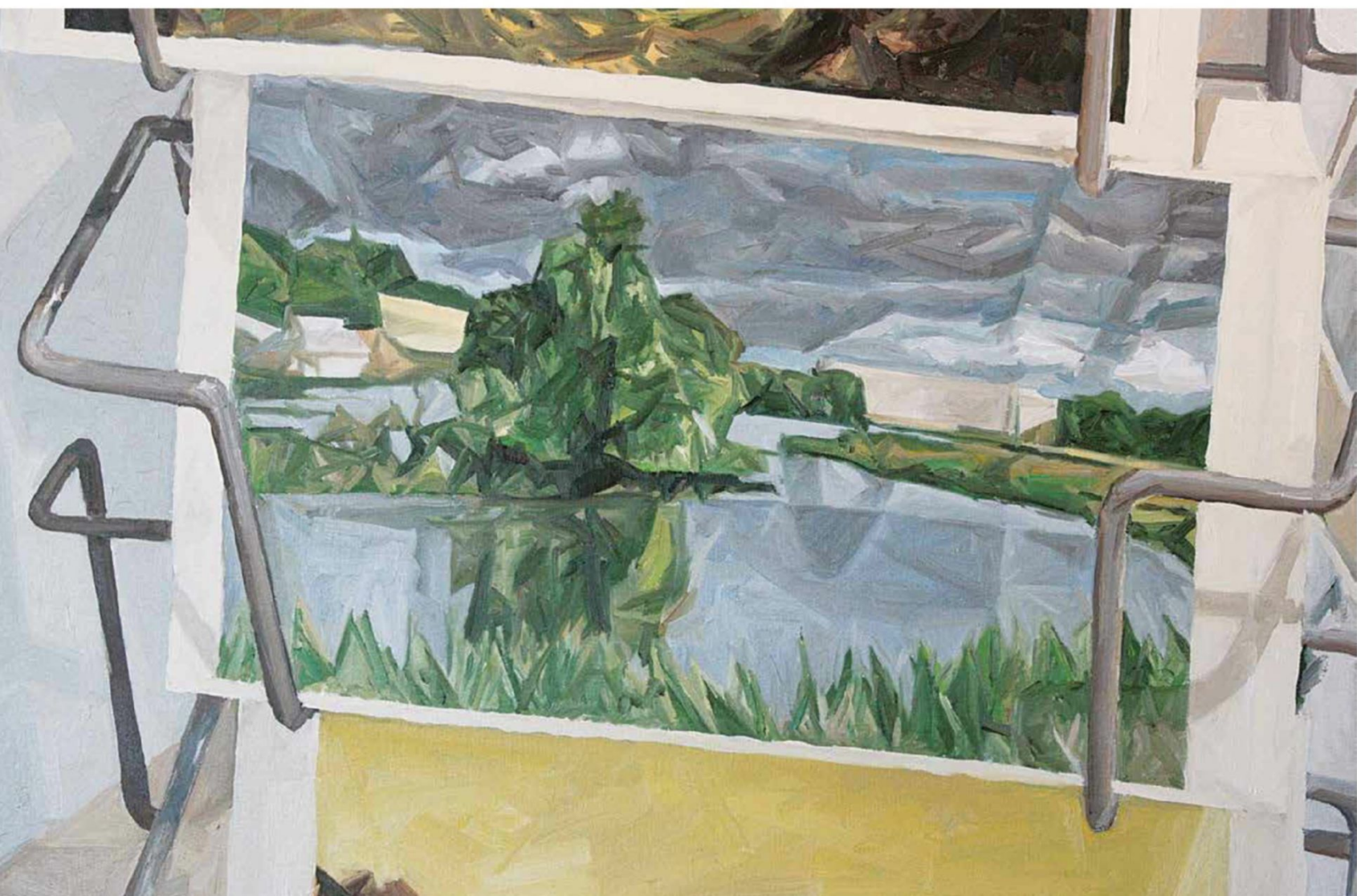
It was a bold decision, but Richard is an artist who is unafraid to push himself, which was demonstrated by his decision to enter Sky Arts' *Landscape Artist of the Year* 2016. He went on to win, despite little experience of painting conventional landscapes or working en plein air. The programme saw contestants take part in heats filmed >



CHRIS LOBINA, SKY ARTS

**“I HADN’T
REALLY DONE
ANY PLEIN AIR.
IT WAS KIND
OF A BLAG”**







Enjoy it

Richard may have been “machine-like” on the show but says he tried to enter a “zen-like” state of mind where he was enjoying the activity and the process of painting

at locations around the UK, judged by artist Tai Shan Schierenberg, curator Kathleen Soriano and art historian Kate Bryan. Three artists made the final at Petworth in West Sussex, where Richard walked away with the title. His achievement is made more remarkable by the fact that he intended to enter the *Portrait Artist of the Year* competition, but missed the deadline. Entries for *Landscape Artist of the Year* were still open so, on a whim, he entered that instead. “I had a painting that was sort of a landscape,” says Richard. “I’d taken pictures of a view which I’d made into a postcard and then made into a still life – a picture within a picture. That was my submission. I hadn’t really done any plein air. It was kind of a blag.”

Painting on the show was a sharp contrast to Richard’s usual studio practice, which he describes as “very shut away. I do things at my own pace. I’ve alienated my portrait sitters by being so ponderous.” Filming for the programme not only put him under constant scrutiny, but he was working against the clock as well as being asked to comment on every stage of his work. This suddenly thrust him into the limelight, and made him paint in a very public way with the judges and viewers around the country invited to air their opinions on his work.

Richard likens his decision to enter to someone who has refused to go the GP for years and then decides to reveal all on the television programme *Embarrassing Bodies*. Yet he says the experience was overwhelmingly positive. And as well as the prize, which included a number of commissions for the National Trust and £500 to spend at Cass Art, he left the competition with a new passion for landscape and more confidence in talking about his art. He says, most of all, the show has been an affirmation of his work. Despite his success as an illustrator, he saw himself as an amateur when it came to painting, so the public approval was a huge vote of confidence.

Since the show, Richard has continued landscape painting, and says the experience of working en plein air is starting to feed into his process. “Having won a competition as a landscape artist, there’s a certain obligation to continue down that path.” However, he is largely back in his studio – a room he has “commandeered” in his home in Bournemouth – working primarily on still lifes, or from drawn and photographic references.

Artists he admires range from Rembrandt and Titian to Lucian Freud and Frank Auerbach. The German artist and theorist Max Doerner has also been an influence,

ABOVE *Cyclamen 6* and *7*, both oil on linen, 40x35cm

TOP LEFT *JMWT homage* (2016), oil on linen, 61x91cm

BOTTOM LEFT *Postcard* (2016), oil on linen, 61x91cm

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ABOVE Postcards, *Hardy Country*, oil on linen, 96x91cm

LEFT Richard Allen gets a hug from his dad after winning Sky Arts' Landscape Artist of the Year



CHRIS LOBINA, SKY ARTS

primarily his book *The Materials Of The Artist And Their Use In Painting*, published in the early 20th century. "That's probably my only real guide as far as techniques and materials go," says Richard, who favours techniques such as working wet-in-wet, using opaque areas of paint and not layering things too much.

Richard tries to keep his palette limited, "with perhaps the odd interesting colour that I've got hold of and am determined to use".

The artist also stretches his own canvases and begins with a loose preliminary drawing in charcoal, before "attacking things fairly directly". Writers often quote the saying, "The art of writing is the art of applying the seat of one's pants to the seat of one's chair," and Richard says the same is true of painting. "You can go through these rituals or you can do things to wait for the muse, but just getting on with it is the best way."

Applying those first few strokes to the canvas can often feel like a jump into the unknown, but Richard is clearly unafraid of taking bold leaps – both in his work and his career. And it is the excitement of not knowing what might happen that drew him back to painting. "You can surprise yourself and it feels like someone else is doing it," he says. "There's a delicate balance between something that feels very intentional and something that's quite accidental. That intentionality versus the accident – that's when it is at its best as a process."

An exhibition of Richard's landscapes, portraiture, still life and other work will take place from 25 March 2017 at Petworth House in West Sussex. www.richard-allen.com

RICHARD'S TIPS FOR COPING WITH SCRUTINY

JUST GET ON WITH IT

When working against the clock, there's little time for lengthy contemplation or elaborate preparatory rituals. "I had to be fairly calculating and focused, and almost kind of machine-like," Richard says. Just getting stuck in can be the most effective way to overcome any uncertainty.

GO WITH THE FLOW

Richard says some contestants seemed to come unstuck when it rained during the first heat. Richard adapted to conditions, even coming to almost

see it as a positive: an overcast sky meant that he wasn't trying to capture dramatic, fleeting moments of light.

PAINT FOR YOURSELF

Being critiqued can be terrifying, as well as dispiriting if the feedback is negative. But Richard says that he learned the best way to deal with criticism is to realise you can't please everyone. "There are things you like about your work or process, and you can't convey that to everyone, as much as you would like to be liked, or like for your work to be liked."



DEMO

Painting wildlife

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Any painter who has tackled the challenge of capturing wildlife will know it presents one obstacle more significant than any other – movement. Before the development of photography, this challenge was even greater.

Famously, the most successful French painter of his day, Jean-Louis Ernest Meissonier, had a railway track built in the garden of his house so that he could place himself and his easel on a moving platform to study a galloping horse in movement. The task was particularly important to him because he painted so many depictions of cavalry charges.

Joaquín Sorolla painted working horses and cows pulling fishing boats out of the sea onto a Valencia beach, using teams of models and assistants up to 20 strong. There's evidence to suggest he used photographs for additional reference, too. In Britain, perhaps the greatest group of wildlife artists were the Newlyn School, with exceptional proponents including Frederick Hall, Stanhope Forbes and Alfred Munnings.

The evolution of the camera has made the drawing element of capturing moving creatures much easier, but even the best modern cameras still struggle to consistently capture lifelike colour, particularly in high contrast, sunlit wildlife settings.

In this article, I will show how the modern painter can combine quick colour (and value) studies from life, with photographic references for drawing, to create a finished painting.

HOW TO PAINT DEER

1 I took my easel out to Ashton Court in Bristol and painted these studies from life. I didn't get anywhere close to a finished painting, but they provide useful visual notes for later. The light tones of the deer are very warm and orangey, while the shadow tones are a cool greyish hue.

2 On the same trip, I painted a quick study of the deer park landscape. The colour of grass varies depending on the time of year, its length and the sun's angle. When the sun was behind me, the short grass produced a very light, pale green.

3 Deer move a lot, so while painting the studies I kept looking for moments when they would 'strike a pose' or come close enough for a good photo. As >

EVEN THE BEST MODERN CAMERAS STILL STRUGGLE TO CAPTURE LIFELIKE COLOUR

**1****2**



Top tip

Work with a muted, lower contrast arrangement and seek contrast as things develop

you can see in the images, the colours I captured in the photo are different from those I observed from life.

4 I created a composition by combining photos, as well as a little 'artistic licence'. I liked the deer standing in shadow juxtaposed against the surrounding light – an inverse spotlight. I blocked the painting in with big, rough areas of colour and used alkyd medium to increase paint flow and speed up drying.

5 When selecting colour, I considered the hue, value and chroma of each area. I prefer to work from a muted, lower contrast arrangement, seeking more contrast as things develop. This preserves harmony across the colour and value scheme. Most of this painting is 'scumbling': rough, scrubby, thin strokes.

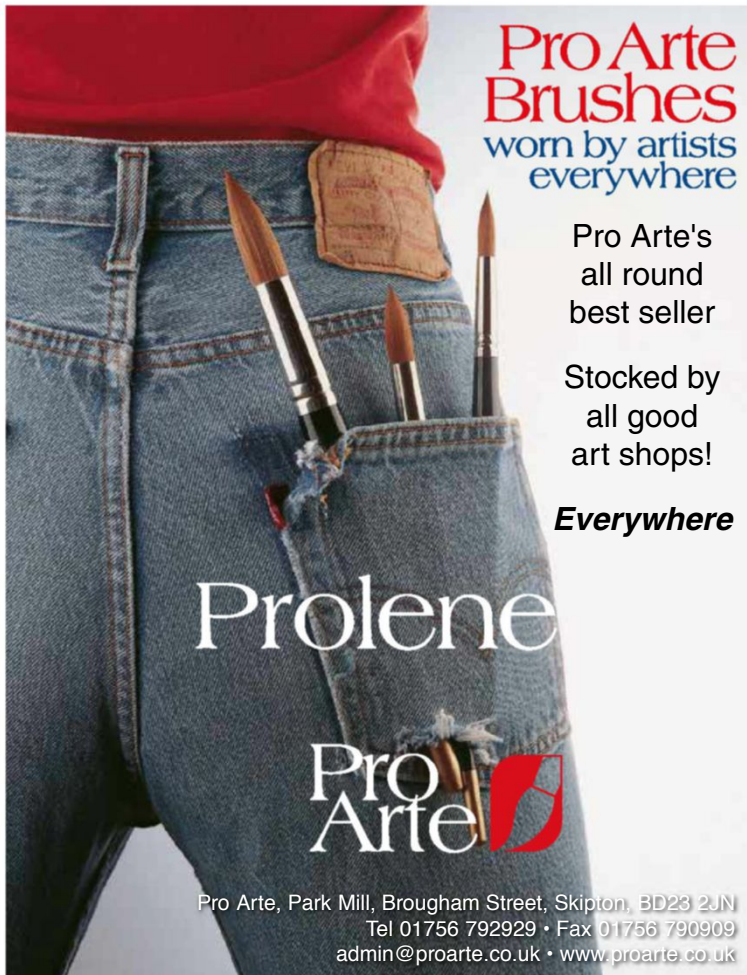
6 It was important not to let the tree on the right clash with the background, so I muted the

oranges. I didn't have a life study for the tree and it was lit differently in the photo, so I used trial and error to find the right degree of muting.

7 When happy with the broad arrangement, I started tidying up and refining smaller shapes to bring the painting towards a finish. I looked to push the contrast by darkening some parts of the trees, as well as beginning to render the forms of the deer.

8 I added more broken texture to the tree on the right, and then finished the deer. Without wanting to lose the painterly quality, I needed enough detail to give the central deer some expression, and the reclining deer the texture of ruffled fur. When adding detail, it is crucial to work within the value range that I have already established, so as not to disrupt the overall light impression.

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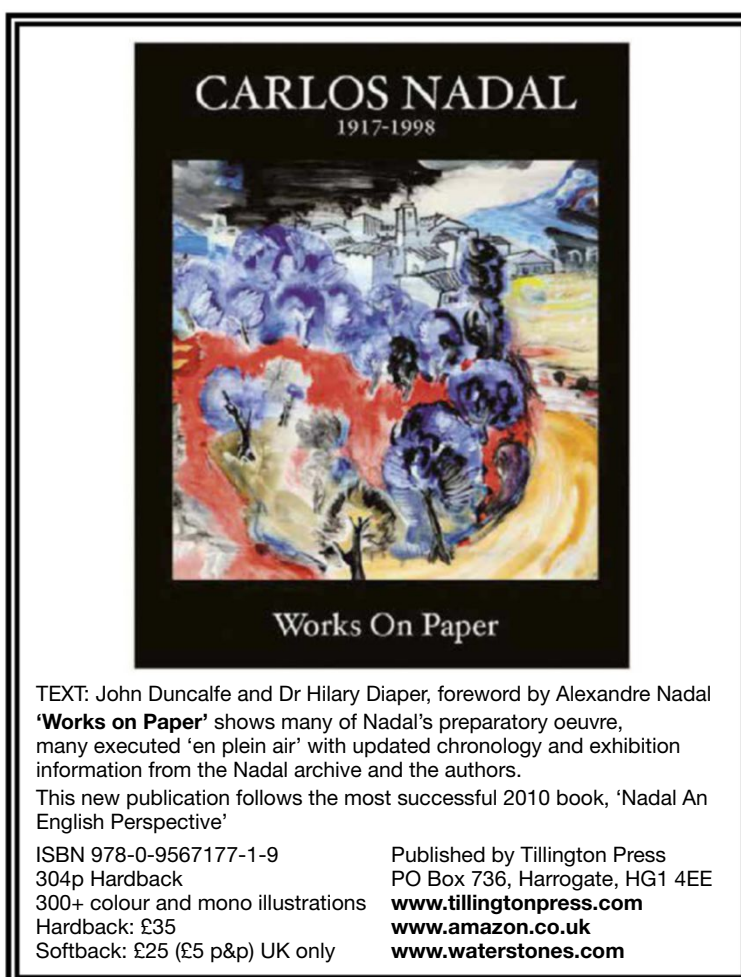
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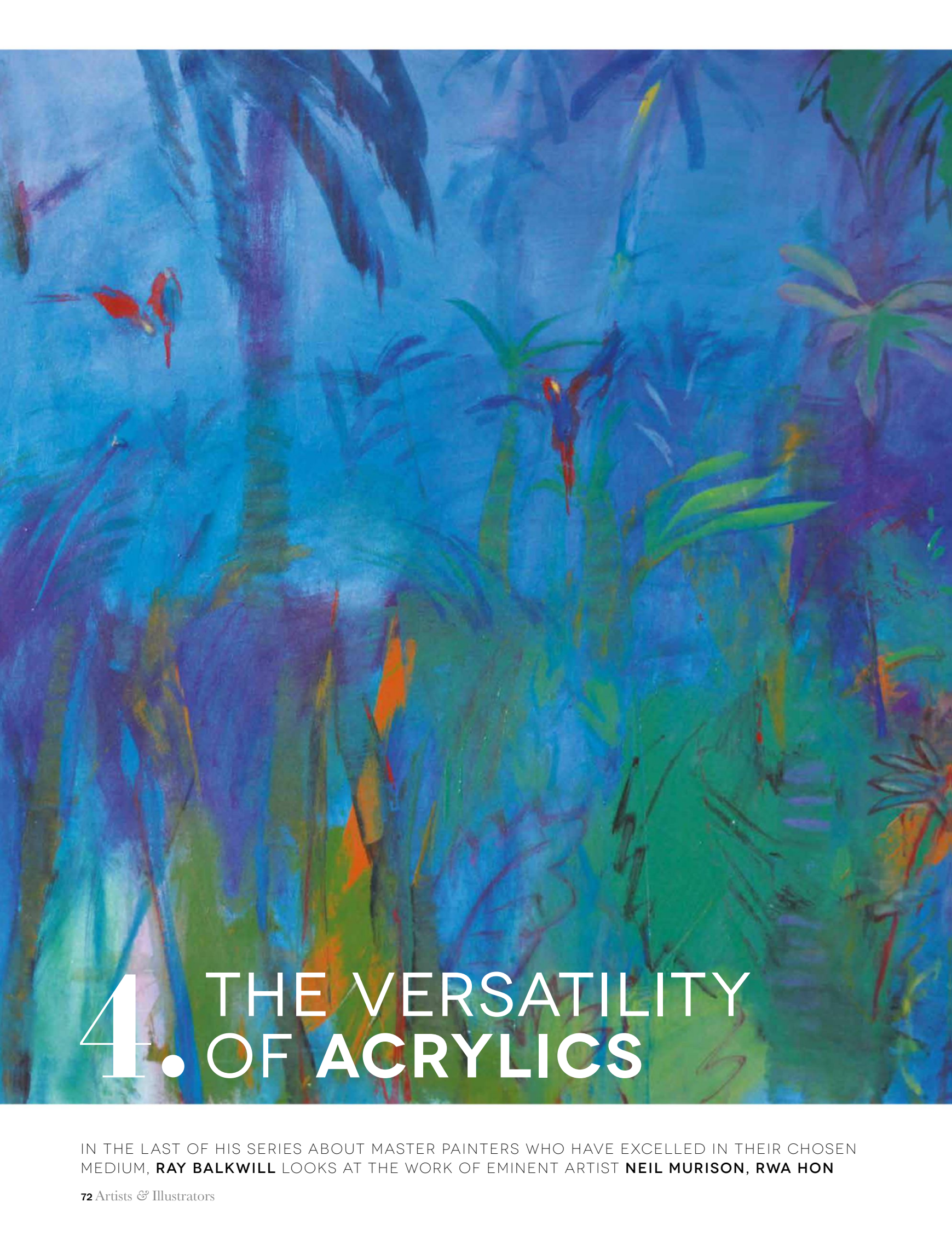
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4. THE VERSATILITY OF ACRYLICS

IN THE LAST OF HIS SERIES ABOUT MASTER PAINTERS WHO HAVE EXCELLED IN THEIR CHOSEN MEDIUM, **RAY BALKWILL** LOOKS AT THE WORK OF EMINENT ARTIST **NEIL MURISON, RWA HON**

In the first article of this series, I talked about the importance of dialogue between the subject and the artist's medium. How each painter responds to a subject and displays their work's emotional and physical characteristics is as unique as their personalities. An emotional response is an inseparable part of the decisions and perceptions that go into picture-making.

My choice of artist for this last article is someone who exemplifies these qualities perfectly – in Neil Murison there is, perhaps, no better exponent of the medium. He is renowned for his use of acrylics to capture light and mood, and his work reflects his many interests, enthusiasms and responses to different experiences.

His landscapes are infused with spirit and their loose-flowing brushwork immediately conveys a powerful sense of place to the viewer. He explains, "As in all paintings, creating impact principally relies on what I would term 'the language of paint'. The brushstrokes have to read in a particular way, so they convey the right meaning." I ask Neil why acrylics were his preferred medium. "Acrylics can be used as watercolour in a transparent way, but also have much greater covering power and can be

his travels, but he also works from photographs. Supports include canvas and mount board, and he begins by covering the surface with the most important image elements. He prefers a white background rather than staining with a colour.

He says, "Acrylic paint is extremely versatile and is an expansive medium – to work well, it needs plenty of water. It is important to use a variety of brushes, and these should include one- and two-inch decorators' brushes. A large glass palette is excellent for acrylics because, when the paint is dry, it can be cleaned with a window scraper."

INSPIRATION

"My inspiration is to respond to this amazing world we live in," he says. "I like to feel I am an abstract artist, but my work is firmly based in landscape." His travels revealed a passion for the rainforest and sparked a long love affair with palm trees. He adds, "My first visit to the tropics left me besotted with the motif and I'm now finding the same passion for our native woodlands." He has become entranced by changing light conditions – along with dramatic changes in season – which present endless opportunities to capture the magic of

"CREATING IMPACT RELIES ON WHAT I WOULD TERM 'THE LANGUAGE OF PAINT'. THE BRUSHSTROKES HAVE TO READ IN A PARTICULAR WAY"

used with household decorators' paint – its advantage being that it dries quickly and the same painting can be worked on several times in the same session."

Another advantage is that, unlike oils, acrylics can be used without toxic solvents and be cleaned up easily with just soap and water. Neil came to emulsion paint at an early age when he started at art school in Bristol in 1946, a time when materials were in short supply. "I had been working with a builder friend in the holidays mainly doing house painting, and had become good at using linseed putty as a filler, as well as Walpamur, which was an oil-bound distemper," he says. "As I wanted to work large, I incorporated these materials into my work. As time went by these were replaced by Polyfilla, polymer and acrylics."

MATERIALS AND PROCESS

Throughout his long career in fine art Neil has been adventurous and endlessly inventive, saying: "At the end of a painting session, there is usually paint left. With the help of more water and some more paint, I take off a number of monoprints and this is where the imagination starts." He likes to think of himself as an 'image-maker'; he feels the image is the most memorable element in a painting.

As with most artists, drawing plays a major role in his picture-making process. The source of his ideas comes mainly from sketchbooks produced on

nature. Whatever the subject, he is always exploring ideas relating to light and space.

With a distinguished career spanning nearly 70 years, Neil is as enthusiastic about his art today as when he started. Exhibited widely and winning much acclaim, he was made a full member of the Royal West of England Academy and, later, an honorary member.

As these masters of their medium have proved, there are no shortcuts to success: their work is a combination of skilled craftsmanship, creative bravery and sheer determination. But, perhaps, the most important attribute that every master painter requires is a desire and an honesty in what they do. As Marc Chagall once said: "If I create from the heart, nearly everything works; if from the head almost nothing."

Neil Murison's work can be seen at David Simon Contemporary, Bath, and at the Tinca Gallery, Portishead. www.davidsimoncontemporary.com; www.tincagallery.co.uk

NEIL'S TOP TIPS

- Use plenty of clean water, a large palette and a wide variety of brushes, including decorators' brushes
- Find ways of stimulating new images by painting things from memory

ABOVE *Garden of Eden*, acrylic on canvas, 102x122cm

HOW TO PAINT

Expressive Trees

ACRYLIC ARTIST **FRASER SCARFE** DEMONSTRATES HOW YOU CAN CAPTURE THE NATURAL BEAUTY AND DRAMA OF TREES AT THIS TIME OF YEAR

I have always been fascinated by trees: so solid and permanent, yet always changing. As a novice painter I avoided them like the plague, and those that I did attempt were either lollipops or overgrown shrubs.

The trouble is that we often mistake trees for being very uniform shapes, when in fact they are as varied and interesting as people, changing their foliage with the seasons just as we change clothes.

If any part of your day involves a regular walk past trees you start to notice these things. The texture on the bark, the lean of the branches, the shape of the leaves – these add up to give a tree tremendous character.

UNDERSTANDING STRUCTURE

Having avoided painting trees in the early stages of my career, there came a time when I realised enough was

enough. A few years ago I decided to conquer my tree phobia and paint some indepth close-ups of single trees. The task of painting these trees became much more like that of painting a portrait as I struggled to convey the complexity of each individual subject. These exercises taught me to identify and understand the structure of a tree, the growth of the roots, and the patterns and shapes formed by the branches.

Most instructional guides will tell you the same but, before you start to worry about the leaves and foliage, you really need to get a grasp of the underlying structure of the tree itself.

These days, I have several favourite trees nearby that I like to visit from time to time – and it is much like catching up with old friends.

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WE OFTEN MISTAKE TREES FOR BEING UNIFORM SHAPES, WHEN IN FACT THEY ARE AS VARIED AND INTERESTING AS PEOPLE, CHANGING THEIR FOLIAGE WITH THE SEASON JUST AS WE CHANGE CLOTHES

12 APRIL

On this bright spring day, I visited a fairly unassuming tree in parkland close to my studio. I have not painted this particular tree before but have noticed it on various walks. As with any new subject, my first thought was to make some quick drawings and thumbnail sketches to familiarise myself with the subject and play around with ideas for composition.

I made a fairly lengthy drawing on the spot and returned to the studio to work out a composition for a possible painting. As this painting is going to focus solely on the one tree and very little else, I decide to opt for a square panel.





SPRING TREES

This painting was all about the tree and I really wanted it to fill the entire canvas. I am glad that I opted for the square composition. It is a slightly unusual choice for me, but I think that it works here.

With so many branches still visible this early in the year, I built the pattern of the tree quite slowly, aiming to follow its natural contours and flow. It can be challenging, at times, not to get lost with this approach, but it helps to give the tree a more three-dimensional look.



1 INCORPORATE GLOSS MEDIUM

I wanted the paint to have a richness and almost oil-like look. To achieve this, I mixed small amounts of gloss medium with all of my colours. This meant that all the paint I mixed had a richness and higher gloss level than usual. You can see here the glossy surface area that this creates. >

2 FINE DETAILS

I used a range of small brushes to build up the finer branches and twigs. You may also find that you need to add some extra water or clear medium to your branch mixes in order to help them flow.

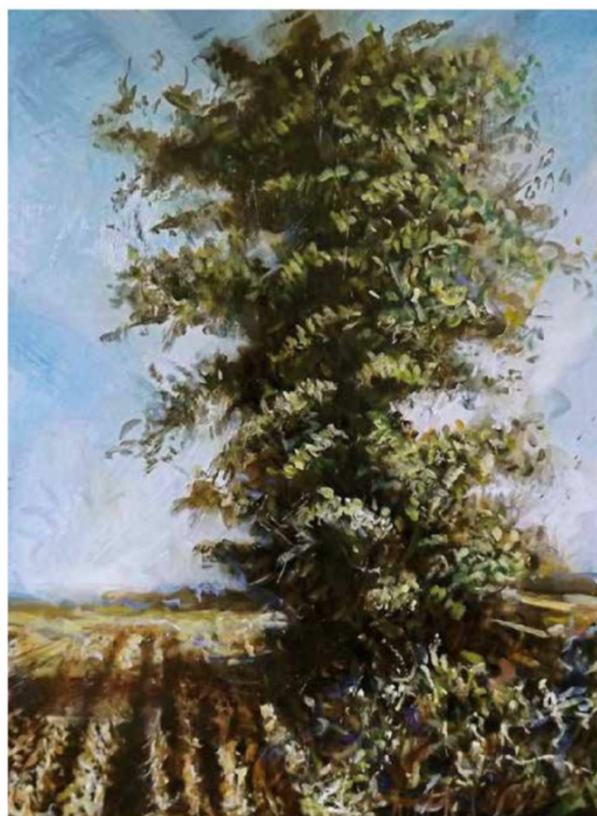
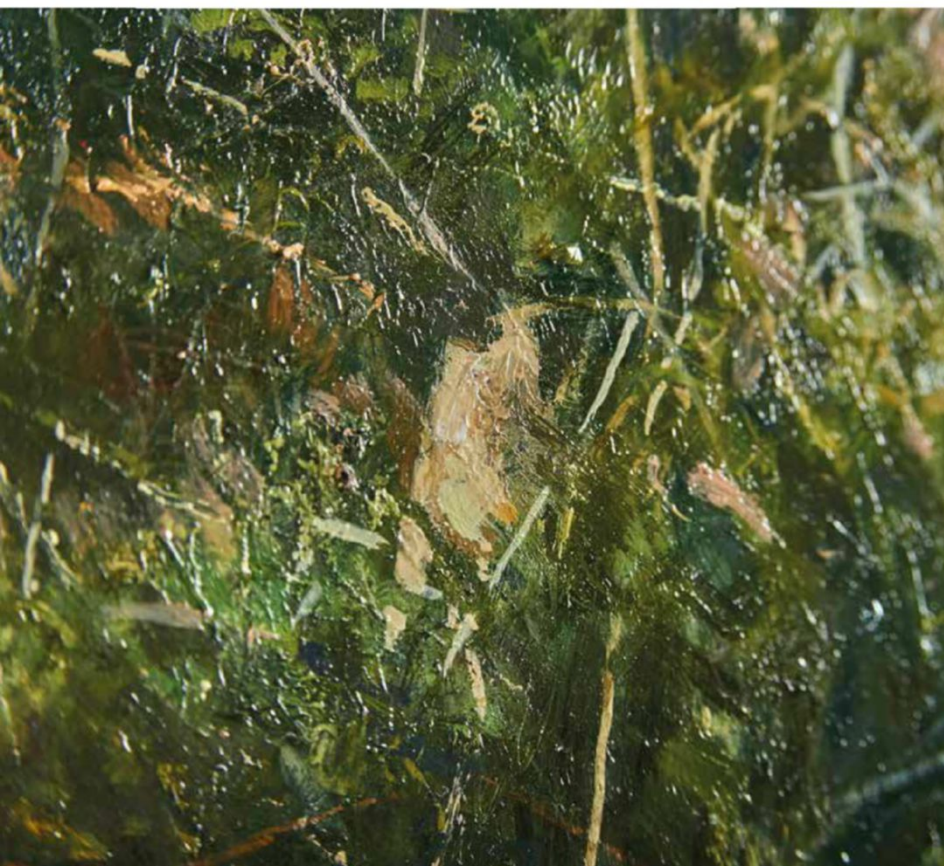
Top tip

Build the pattern of the tree slowly, aiming to follow its natural contours and flow

3 CREATE CONTRAST

With so many greens in the bottom half of the picture, I needed some contrast. A mix of Naples Yellow and Titanium White was used to create the highlight colour used to suggest twigs and branches, and even the rock in the foreground shown here.

This is an extract from Fraser Scarfe's *How To Paint Atmospheric Landscapes In Acrylics* published by Search Press, £19.99. www.searchpress.com



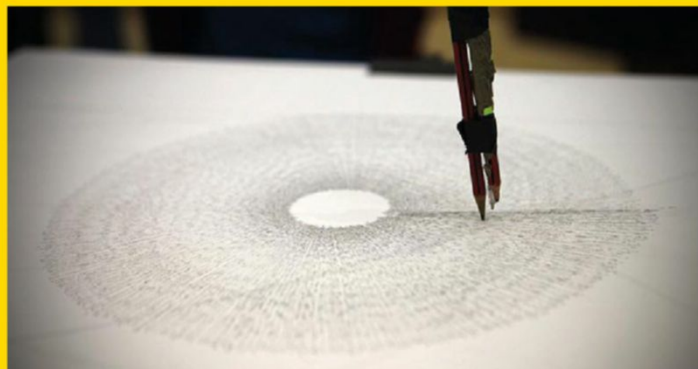
AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH - THE LIME TREE

This tree was painted during the change in seasons between late spring and early summer, the time at which trees tend to fill out quickly and display a range of vibrant greens.

I chose this tree as a subject because it was almost complete foliage – thus presenting a real challenge. I built up the foliage in a series of thin layers, gradually allowing the paint to get thicker as I progressed.

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1

HE WASN'T ALWAYS A PAINTER

George Chapman found success as a painter relatively late in life, having worked in graphic design. He is best known for his paintings and etchings of the dramatic industrial landscape of the Rhondda valley, South Wales, in the 1950s and 1960s. He discovered the Rhondda – where he eventually came to live – by chance on a return journey from his holiday home in West Wales. The place remained a fascinating subject for him at a time when he was struggling to discover his direction as an artist.

ARTY FACTS

GEORGE CHAPMAN

PHILIP NEALE DELVES INTO THE LIFE AND WORKS OF THE PAINTER AND ETCHER

2

HE JOINED AN ARTIST COMMUNITY IN ESSEX

In 1951, Chapman and his second wife, Kate, left London and moved to Great Bardfield in Essex. There he took an active part in the thriving artistic community, which included Edward Bawden, Michael and Duffy Rothenstein, John Aldridge, Bernard Cheese and Kenneth Rowntree. He was a contributor to their famous Open House exhibitions when he was still seeking his place in the art world.

4

HE USED TWO NAMES

Initially, George built a reputation as a graphic and commercial designer, working with Jack Beddington for companies such as Shell-Mex, and London Transport. For this work he signed as KG Chapman, as he was christened Kenneth George Chapman. Later, as a painter and etcher, he used George Chapman.

3

HE WAS NOT A SOCIAL COMMENTATOR

Because he was once a communist and always claimed to be a strong socialist, many art critics viewed the subject of George's paintings as a comment on the poverty and social deprivation in the industrial towns and cities during the 1960s. Yet he believed the creative driving force for his work was primarily visual, saying: "I have no social comment to make in my paintings... My job as an artist is to take things as they are."

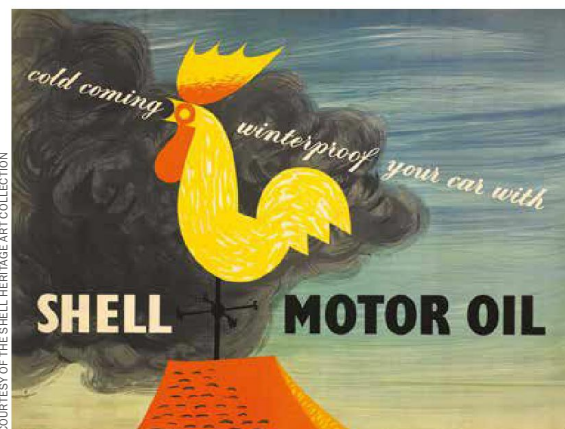
ABOVE
A Steep Road,
oil, 56x62cm
RIGHT
Weathercock,
lithograph,
105x79cm

5

HIS ETCHING PLATES HAD OTHER USES

He recycled his etching plates – some were welded to the hull of his boat Yora. Many were nailed to weak floorboards in his cottage in the Aeron Valley, which was designed by John Nash. These plates were retrieved in 1992 and used to make prints.

Philip Neale is curator of George Chapman 1908-1993: From Bardfield to the Rhondda, which will run from 2 April to 21 May 2017 at Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden. www.fryartgallery.org



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