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# Leisure Painter & the artist

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## Inspired by the landscape

Essential techniques &  
creative ideas

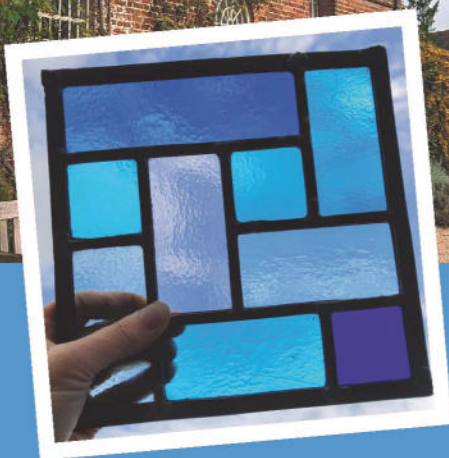
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Welcome to the September issue of *Leisure Painter & The Artist*. This month we're highlighting glorious summer and the drama of colour.

We start with our cover star, Jem Bowden, who is exploring the six general principles for composing a landscape, in the first of a three-part series. Jem shares insights on focal points, balance, depth, and artistic licence, encouraging you to explore your surroundings with a viewfinder and develop your own compositions through careful observation and creative tweaks.

Colin Joyce demonstrates how just a few colours and simple techniques can bring atmospheric skies to life. Colin's step-by-step guide is perfect for those wanting to add vibrancy and mood to their landscapes. Continuing the theme of using a limited palette, Colin Steed works on a summer landscape with just seven

colours, highlighting tonal planning and confident brushwork.

For coloured pencil enthusiasts, Helen Carter explores the less sunny side of summer with an essential clinic on drawing realistic raindrops. Her clear five-step method demystifies capturing light and transparency, helping you add sparkling details that bring drawings to life. And, just in case you do happen to be caught in a summer shower, Elena Parashko provides top tips for painting outdoors, from managing weather challenges to staying safe and flexible while working en plein air.

Complementing this, *The Artist* (starting on page 63) brings us Catherine Beale

who embraces the unpredictable beauty of watercolour with her innovative dripping paint technique, transforming landscapes into dynamic, abstract expressions, alongside Hannah Dale of Wrendale Designs and her whimsical yet deeply naturalistic world of wildlife illustration,

blending scientific observation with expressive brushwork.

All of this and so much more to help fuel your artistic journey! Enjoy!

“One tiny brushmark can balance a big, dark mass or area of wash, if placed in a way that creates equal importance or impact.”

*Jem Bowden*

*Ingrid*

INGRID LYON Editor

September 2025 Vol. 59: No. 9: Issue 666

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# SEPTEMBER 2025 Contents

## Features

### 10 The art of arrangement

Learn six general principles to consider in when composing a landscape by Jem Bowden

### 16 Drama in the sky

Part two: Create beautiful early morning and evening skies in acrylic with Colin Joyce

### 22 Raindrops on roses

Helen Carter provide guidance on how to draw the effect of a waterdrop

### 27 10 tip tips for painting on location

Follow Elena Parashko as she heads to the great outdoors and shares her kit advice

### 30 Lesson in the landscape

Learn how best to apply fluid watercolour washes and build your confidence in this demonstration by David Webb

### 36 Meadow gate

Rachel McNaughton takes you on a soft-pastel journey to create a beautiful summers scene.

### 40 Figured out

Learn how to include figures in your urban setting in this advice-packed feature from artist Tim O'Brien

### 44 Coffee-break inspiration

Tony Undershill shares how to best utilise your time and teach yourself key skills in small breaks in your day

### 47 Bookmarks

Regular Leisure Painter contributor

Liz Chaderton shares how to create colourful bookmarks – perfect for taking on your summer holidays or giving as gifts

### 52 Sunshine and shadow

Follow Colin Steed as he paints a summer scene in just seven colours



## On the cover

Jem Bowden's *St Monans Old Kirk and Reflection*, watercolour, 12½x20½in. (32x52cm) can be found on pages 10 to 15



## Regulars

- 3 Editor's welcome**  
A warm welcome from your editor
- 6 Editor's choice**  
Understand art in a new light and learn in this incredible experience
- 8 Spotlight on art**  
The latest news, events and more
- 57 Art Clubs**  
Exhibitions, Best in show and the Art Club Challenge
- 60 Coming next month**  
What to look forward to in the October edition

## Your Community

- 42 Subscriptions**  
Secure your inspiration with our amazing subscription offer
- 35 Online learning**  
Enjoy learning at your leisure from our expert tutors in our recorded classes
- 62 Start Art Guides**  
Try a new media with our Start Art beginner guides



## Highlights

**72** Sally Bulgin talks to artist Paul Weaver and discovers more about his life and art practice.

**76** Acclaimed writer Caroline Saunders sits down with the beloved British illustrator Hannah Dale, the creative mind behind Wrendale Designs. Known for her whimsical watercolours of woodland creatures, Dale opens up about her art journey.

**82** Patricia Crossley-Hayes talks to royal tour artist Alan Cotton about this experiences of travelling with with King Charles III.

**90** Classically trained artist, Luca Indraccolo paints a figure portrait and shares his method of drawing with paint.

**102** In the third of six articles on unlocking the potential of watercolours, Catherine Beale encourages you to embrace the drips while exploring painting pouring

# Editor's choice

Last chance – for something a little bit different, check out National Portrait Gallery Unframed. Immerse yourself in the nation's favourite portraits, see art in a new way and learn things you may never have known.

**F**rameless Creative, a leading creator in immersive experiences, has joined forces with the National Portrait Gallery on the first ever touring immersive art experience inspired by a UK art institution. *Stories – Brought to Life* by the National Portrait Gallery Unframed is a deep-dive into the lives of people

featured in the London gallery's extensive collection, from the Tudor period to the current day.

Designed to push the boundaries of storytelling, it promises the highest quality digital projection, Hollywood-style visual effects and the latest audio tech with music and creative narratives to bring to life the gallery's

best-loved portraits. Sitters featuring in the experience include Grayson Perry, Nelson Mandela, Emmeline Pankhurst, Queen Elizabeth I and William Shakespeare.

The Piazza, MediaCity, Salford Quays, M50 2EQ, Until 31 August 2025  
[npgunframed.com](http://npgunframed.com)

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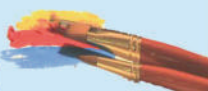
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# Spotlight on art

A round-up of events and ideas to enjoy live and online

## Spotted by the editor

"Alisa Shea (b.1974) works exclusively in watercolour. Based in Northport, New York Shea works from an easel in her kitchen! I spotted this online and couldn't believe the incredible detail. Her work is stunning. [Alisashea.com](http://Alisashea.com)



**The Common Thread** - Watercolor - Paper - 25x16in (2020)

## A must share!

"I took a pottery course and made a watercolour palette as one of my projects. I wanted something that can hold all my colours in one place without being too big (plus extra spots for my own mixes). One of the best things about watercolour is how little paint is needed to get things done."

Ang Ngo.

Photo credit:  
Ang Ngo on  
Facebook



## WOW!

Tate has launched an endowment fund and secured £43m from donations in what it calls "one of the most ambitious cultural fundraising campaigns of its kind in the UK".

Donations to the Tate Future Fund have come from individuals, foundations and Tate trustees.

The aim of the campaign is to raise an endowment of £150m by 2030 to help support the Tate's exhibition programme.

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



## Exhibition of the month

**Caroline Walker: Mothering** – an exhibition of new paintings exploring themes of motherhood and childcare is currently on at **The Hepworth Wakefield**.



Caroline Walker, *Daphne*, 2021. © Caroline Walker. Courtesy the artist; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London and New York; GRIMM, Amsterdam / New York / London; and Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh

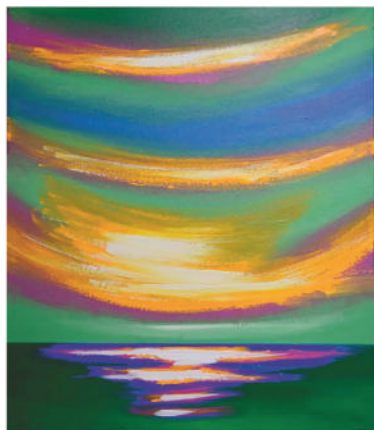
OVER 27%

### We asked you

In a recent survey we did with our Studio members, the poll revealed the most popular medium used by you is watercolour with drawing and sketching coming a close second!

## Seen on Painters Online

Found in the gallery of our website, Painters Online – ‘*green skies abstract seascape*’ the original artwork of abstract and landscape artist Stuart Wright.



**Green skies abstract seascape** by Stuart Wright.



This year's prize winner is Sikelela Owen, her painting **Knitting**, oil on canvas, 152x183cm.

## Prize winner

The Royal Academy of Arts' Summer Exhibition is a unique celebration of contemporary art and architecture, providing a vital platform and support for the artistic community. Each year, the Royal Academy presents a number of prizes for outstanding works within the exhibition. The prestigious £35,000 Charles Wollaston Award, one of the most significant art prizes in the country and now in its 27th year, is presented to the 'most distinguished work' in the exhibition. Find out more at [royalacademy.org.uk](http://royalacademy.org.uk)

## One to... read

Spend time perfecting your colour mixing with 1,500 Color Mixing Recipes for Oil, Acrylic and Watercolour. (Quarto). Currently discounted on [painters-online.co.uk/artsupplies](http://painters-online.co.uk/artsupplies)



## One to... try

Little Birdie Art and Crafts have launched a Tree-Free Paper Product Range, created with a focus on sustainability and eco-conscious crafting. The non-wood range is made from recycled textiles like cotton rags and denim, as well as agricultural waste such as banana fibre, spent barley and lemongrass. The entire process is chemical-free and consumes less energy and water, making the products biodegradable, durable and safe to use, a perfect alternative to traditional paper.

[littlebirdiecrafts.com](http://littlebirdiecrafts.com)



## One to... experience

Exhibition 'in situ: Refik Anadol' is running until 19 October 2025 at the Guggenheim Bilbao, Euskadi, Spain. The inaugural in situ exhibition will be an immersive, architectural, and multisensory artwork by Refik Anadol (b. 1985, Istanbul, Turkey), an internationally renowned media artist and pioneer in the aesthetics of machine intelligence.

[guggenheim-bilbao.eus](http://guggenheim-bilbao.eus)



# The art of arrangement

Part 1 Six general principles to consider when composing a landscape, by **Jem Bowden**



### You will learn

- What **composition** means.
- How to site a **focal point** and **provide balance** in your artwork.
- **Observations to make** and **questions to ask**.

This is the first of three articles in a series about composition. In this first article, I'll make key points using example paintings and reference photos, and leave you with a practical exercise to do before next month.

Making successful paintings can be boiled down to just three simple statements.

- 1 Good control of the medium's techniques.
- 2 Relating those techniques to the various aspects of composition.
- 3 Careful observation of the subject.

BELOW LEFT:  
*The Forth Rail Bridge and North Queensferry*,  
watercolour,  
12½x20½in.  
(32x52cm)

BELOW RIGHT:  
*St Monans Windmill*,  
watercolour,  
12½x20½in.  
(32x52cm)

## Emphasising the focal point

A subject, which is a distinctive or stark shape set against the sky should allow for a strong composition so long as all the surroundings are borne in mind and the scene is composed with balance and other factors taken into consideration. Scale is relevant to the scene found in *The Forth Rail Bridge and North Queensferry* (right) and I emphasised deliberately (and slightly exaggerated) the largeness of the bridge. To do this, the relative size of the boats and buildings was essential to work out. I placed a large vessel in the water along with a tiny one for this purpose, as well as to create more interest and to draw the eye in further on close viewing. Because the bridge is contained within the left of the composition, I slightly enlarged (and made taller than in reality) the most prominent building on the right, which is a well-known landmark in the area.


The two sides of the river – the foreground and distance in compositional terms – provide depth, which is essential in conveying landscape in general, and are connected by the bridge itself, which functions as a lead-in through the composition.

Often when starting out in painting, the basics of composition are neglected, in favour of grasping the techniques of the medium. However, a well-painted but badly composed picture has no chance of being great overall, whereas a well-composed picture may not need to be painted especially well to be effective.

This is a simplified way of looking at it, but I hope it shows how integral composition is to a successful painting. Composition is also referred to as the design of a picture. In common with other design, it is partly functional in purpose, and partly aesthetic. The term relates to the contents of an image when considered as a whole, and how the subject is located within the frame or image edges. There are conventions, and you may have heard of the so-called rules. These are useful as a guide, but can also be discarded to good effect. In essence, consider what needs to

be considered then make informed, creative decisions of your own.

Often when starting out in painting, the basics of composition are neglected, in favour of grasping the techniques of the medium. However, a well-painted but badly composed picture has no chance of being great overall, whereas a well-composed picture may not need to be painted especially well to be effective.

Composition is also about 'controlling' the viewer. A good composition will often catch the viewer's eye from across a room, which is where it begins.. 



## Adding interest to a scene

A feature, such as a windmill (seen in *St Monans Windmill*, above), makes a strong focal point, which easily draws the viewer's eye. A composition needs other areas of interest, which will add to the sense of place, atmosphere, and space, and move the eye around. In this painting, these include:

- The footpath and line of fence providing a lead-in from the foreground.
- The far distance adding depth beyond the focal point.
- The light in the sky and small details (like figures and rocks) providing a sense of scale and additional interest for close viewing.



## Providing a balance

When composing the type of scene that you see in *In Kenly Woods, March* (above) it is important to pay attention to the relative spacing of the trees, and the placement of the path (a visual lead-in) to avoid symmetry. Although you could say it is still a matter of opinion or taste, symmetry in landscape composition can look jarring, and in general doesn't represent the effects

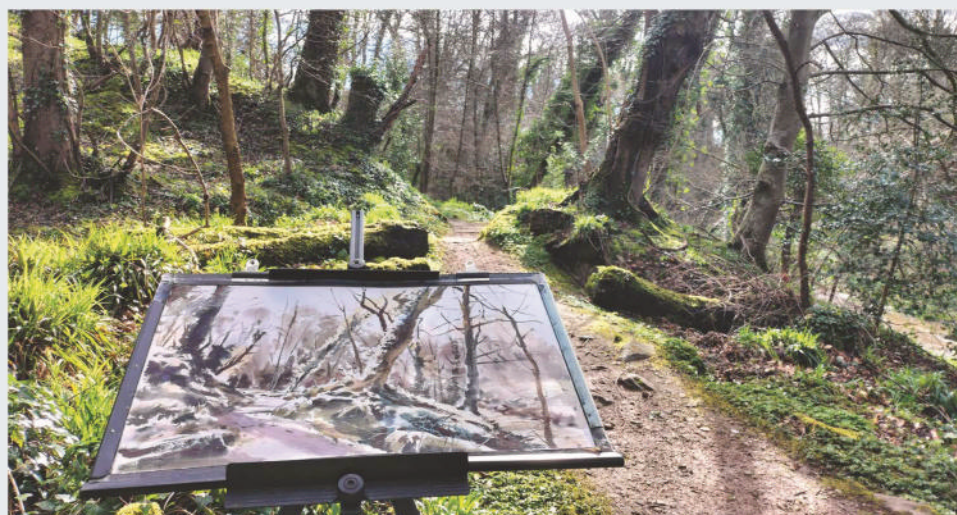
“Although you could say that it is still a matter of opinion or taste, symmetry in landscape composition can look jarring, and in general doesn't represent the effects of wild nature at landscape level.”

of wild nature at landscape level (albeit it does in an individual leaf). Having a smaller area of picture to one side of a path than the other conveys the landscape more how we experience it

***In Kenly Woods, March*, watercolour, 12½x20½in. (32x52cm)**

in general. Balance, however, is a big concept in composition, regarding the placement of all things in very much a relative sense. Think of a painting as an ecosystem, where everything affects everything else. One tiny brushmark can balance a big, dark mass or area of wash, if placed in a way that creates equal importance or impact.

I arrived at this composition using a viewfinder in combination with artistic licence, as usual. Many trees were omitted, some were moved slightly or leaned more, and I picked out interesting areas at different heights and distances away for sharper focus, to create interest, and move the eye around and into the depth of the scene.





## Observation and questions

Landscape artists practise composition whenever they are outside, and it becomes second nature to size up almost everything as a potential painting subject. It helps you find and enjoy beauty in any place or situation, as well as meaning you never run out of things to paint.

As you consider composition you are drawn into noticing what makes parts of a scene 'catch the eye' in a good way, or cause distraction. It also makes you observe and notice the role that tone, colour and shape play, how detail can be a good and a bad thing, and how everything interacts.

These two photos show variations on the same subject, one that is local to me and I can observe in different situations of weather, time of day, season, or position of tide. The photos were taken from just

a few metres apart and on separate occasions. To compose this subject if you were at the scene, what would you bear in mind? Let's compare the two, make observations and ask some relevant questions.

Landscape artists practise composition whenever they are outside, and it becomes second nature to size up almost everything as a potential painting subject.

**ABOVE & BELOW:** Photographs are a great way to consider composition so take your own to practise the principles of composition. The subject in both photos here is Crail harbour in Fife, Scotland, but see how they are composed just slightly differently.



### Observations

1 Notice how the light (and therefore shadow) situation greatly affects the composition, because tone carries a lot of weight in a picture, which needs to be balanced, convey depth and more.

2 The left-hand photo has slightly better depth, owing to haziness, giving the background headland a lighter tone than some areas of the foreground. In this aspect at least, the general effectiveness of the composition is better.

3 The left-hand photo also has a tree closer to the foreground than anything in the below-left photo which provides a different type of shape and adds to the interest.

4 On the other hand, the light effect is perhaps less dramatic to that in the below-left photo, and the foreground area is entirely shaded, creating a large section of the composition of the same tone and with potentially interesting details subdued. Is this a problem? Other questions will help us make conclusions.

### Questions to ask

1 Which looks better from a distance, and why?

2 On closer inspection which is more atmospheric, interesting, beautiful (or whatever else you think important) and why?

3 Is one better balanced in any way? (We'll look more at this in the coming articles).

4 Might it be possible to return on another occasion to capture the best of both?

5 If we were to paint a version of the scene from these photos, could little tweaks of artistic licence make something work better, also capturing best aspects of both?



**Misty Morning Light near Keynsham**, watercolour, 12½x20½in. (32x52cm)

## Using artistic licence

This is when we use our judgement to make imaginative or creative changes to what we observe, with a view to making a composition work better. Often there will be slight problems with an almost-perfect composition, which can be overcome with just a little tweak somewhere. In *Misty Morning Light near Keynsham* (above) I used artistic licence when working from a photograph, to create greater depth (and sense of haziness) by lightening the tone of the background area, which was in reality just as

dark as the foreground trees. *Note, this is one thing that could be done in combining aspects of the two harbour photos.* The background area was also painted wet in wet for softness, and in blue, both of which are common painting methods to emphasise distance. The fence posts and long grass provide foreground, and the bird adds a balance to the dark mass of the trees. Note how a small shape can balance or carry as much weight in a composition as a big shape.



**Jem Bowden**

Jem is a plein-air watercolour landscape painter and teacher. For information on Jem's ethos, process, and the tuition he offers, please visit his website [www.jembowdenwatercolour.co.uk](http://www.jembowdenwatercolour.co.uk) You will also find him on Instagram, where he posts from the locations he paints on Instagram, [jem.bowden/](https://www.instagram.com/jem.bowden/) and on Facebook, [jembowdenwatercolour](https://www.facebook.com/jembowdenwatercolour)

## Becoming familiar with the scene

The sky plays an important role in *St Monans Old Kirk and Reflection*, that is, to draw the eye upwards to the top-right of the composition as a balance for the water reflection that pulls the eye to the bottom-left.

This painting was completed entirely outdoors in front of the subject. Here, my artistic licence was to invent more water in the scene than was there in reality. I wanted to paint essentially this composition, the view from exactly this spot, with the reflection of the church being an essential component. I took with me a photo (on my phone) that I'd taken from the spot on a previous visit to the location, when the tide was in. At the time of the painting, I made sure to arrive when I knew the tide was going out, but still with a large puddle that showed the church's reflection. A few times through the painting process I glanced at my photo to help me paint a hopefully believable interpretation of



the rest of the water, whereas in reality, after a while the foreground was entirely dark rock and seaweed, which doesn't make for a great composition. (Painting this was quite a challenge, balanced throughout on a small, slippery rock!) This is an example of revisiting a location at different times to discover how best to capture it.

**BELOW:**  
***St Monans***  
***Old Kirk and***  
***Reflection***,  
watercolour,  
12½x20½in.  
(32x52cm)



## Composition exercise

I will leave you with a little exercise for you to practise in finding your own compositions based on the principles we've considered so far. I hope you'll enjoy following the process in these four steps, and this will be useful towards next month's exercise. (If you are unable to go outdoors you can instead follow the equivalent of these steps indoors, to create an interior composition.)

### Step 1

If you can get outside, take a viewfinder out with you and explore a location close to you. An ideal viewfinder nowadays is a smartphone or any digital camera with a screen. In very bright sun it may be tricky to see the screen perfectly, but otherwise I find these ideal.

### Step 2

Before you go, consider the light, weather, time of day, and what will work best considering what you know about the location, if anything. Otherwise just let all this be part of the adventure.

### Step 3

At the location, visually explore it fully. Find different subjects, composing them through the viewfinder. Keep taking photos. Look from vantage points that are towards the light and away from the light. If it is bad weather, without direct sunlight, it can be just as atmospheric, but in this case look particularly for interesting arrangements of shape.

### Step 4

Consider how much sky and how much land you have in your compositions. Make sure you get depth from foreground to distance, as in our examples. Try out a crouched viewpoint, and any higher vantage points you can see. Just keep taking photos all the while, which you can observe and question later at home.

# Drama in the sky

**Part 2** With a handful of acrylic colours and a few easy techniques, create subtle and atmospheric skies that enhance early morning and evening views, with **Colin Joyce**

## You will learn

- You don't need much **equipment** to paint with acrylics
- How **different brush shapes** help you to create a varied painting
- To **add vibrancy to your artwork** with a carefully chosen **limited palette**

You will find the first part of this series, focussing on atmospheric skies using watercolour in the August issue of *Leisure Painter & The Artist*. Go to [bit.ly/LPTASingleIssue](http://bit.ly/LPTASingleIssue) to buy your copy today.

In the second article in this three-part mini-series on painting skies, I will explore the use of acrylics – a versatile water-soluble medium with unique properties that's ideal for painting skies with atmosphere.

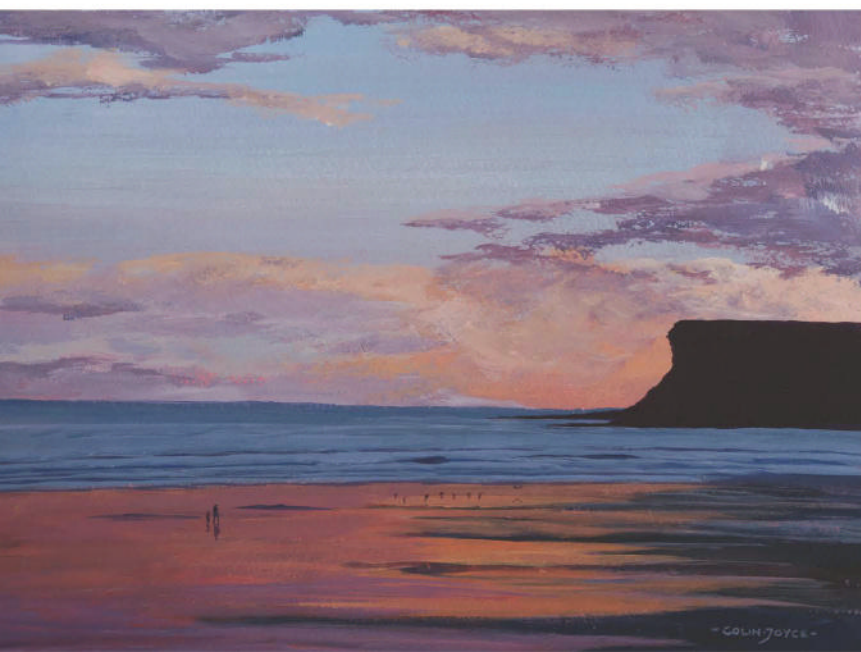
Acrylics can be watered down to mimic the look of a watercolour painting. The main difference between the two media is that acrylics dry very quickly and, once dry, are fixed and impervious to water. If you choose to use them in a thicker, more impasto way, you have a bit more time to work with them. They are still almost dry after five to ten minutes.

## Vibrant colour

To illustrate how landscapes can benefit from atmospheric skies painted



I should point out before I begin that I don't dilute the paint at any point, as this reduces the vibrancy of the colours and their covering power. The paints will also dry even quicker when diluted!



with soft-body acrylics, I've included a variety of paintings here. The first scene, *Industrial View* (above) shows a simple evening sky where the orange glow transfers onto the beach. Without that warmth, the scene would be much less appealing as a subject to paint. *Saltburn Beach* (left) is from a similar viewpoint to the industrial view, just looking in the opposite direction on the same evening; proof that you don't need to move much to find inspiration for another painting. The setting sun was now hidden by the headland, which is silhouetted and adds a lot of contrast. The cool blue sky offers a balance to the warmth in the clouds and beach. Acrylics allow you to add lighter colours

**ABOVE:**  
**Industrial View**, acrylic on acrylic paper, 9½×12½in. (24×32cm)

**LEFT: Saltburn Beach**, acrylic on acrylic paper, 9½×12½in. (24×32cm)



### TOP TIP

Always keep your brushes in a container of water.  
Never let acrylic paint dry on your brush as it  
will be ruined in only minutes.

on top of dark underlayers, something that watercolour can't do. You can see here how the lighter warm clouds were placed after the rest of the sky.

In neither of these paintings is the sky the main subject. What the sky does, however, is create the atmosphere that's so important. In both, birds and figures attract your attention as we are inclined to seek out living things in paintings and photographs.

In *Beach Reflections, Essaouira* (above) there are manmade objects in the painting but, again, the powerful sky creates a perfect backlit scene for

us to enjoy, including the silhouetted figures on the beach once more.

In my final example, *Fire in the Sky* (below), the sky certainly is the main subject. Taken from a ship, I positioned the lighthouse away from the brightest part of the sky to enhance the composition. I used thick paint where the yellow and red appears then gradually added white to reduce the intensity of the clouds thus boosting the brightness of the sunset. I added more detail in the lighthouse and cliffs than the photo suggested.

### Understand acrylics

The main three types of acrylics are: heavy body, soft body and flow formula.

**Heavy body acrylic** is like oil paint and can be used with brushes or painting knives. You have a little more time to work with this thicker paint, but it can be thinned to make it flow more.

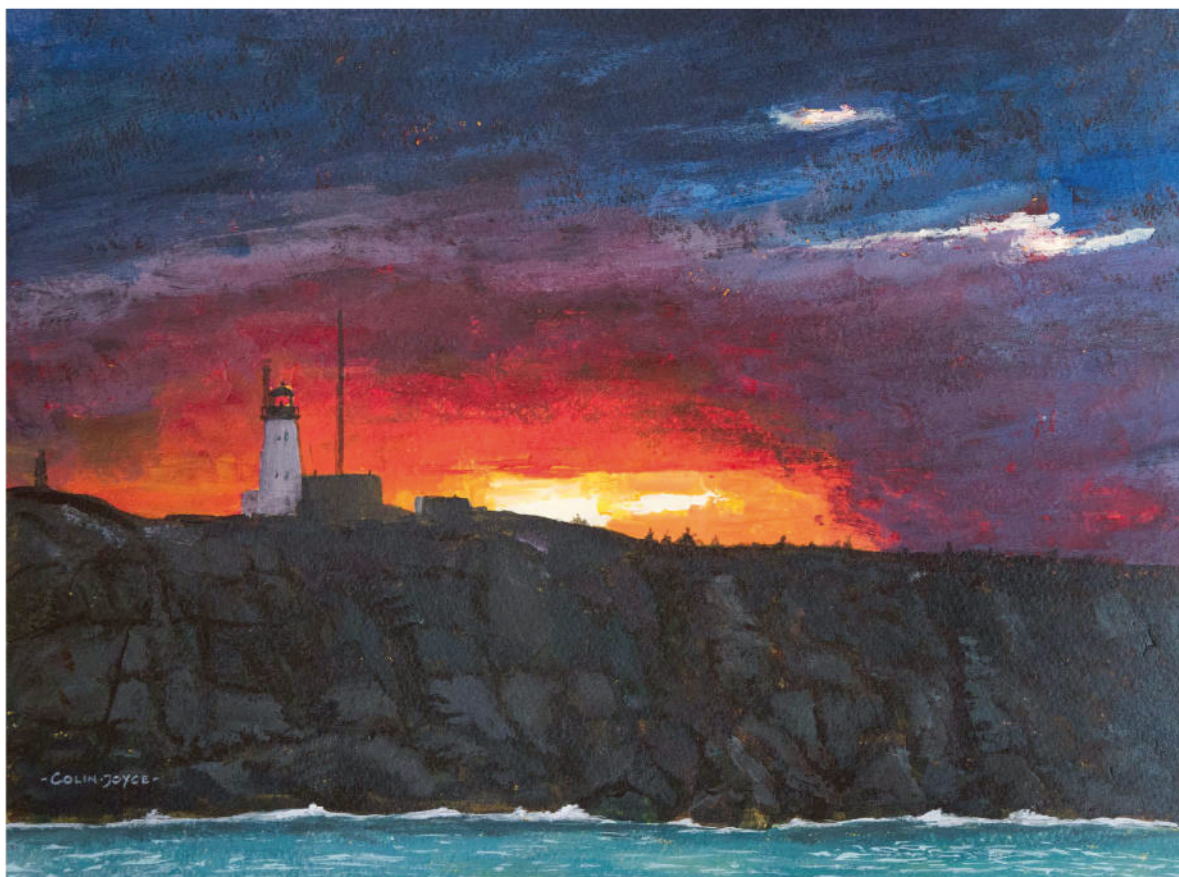
**Soft body acrylic** is probably the most common. You still have plenty of control and are most likely to use brushes but it dries in a few minutes. Once dry you can paint over it without fear of disturbing what's underneath.

**Flow formula acrylic** is exactly as it sounds; it's similar to pouring olive oil from a bottle. I only use the first two types, but consider experimenting with this third category.

**Surfaces** Pretty much any surface will accept acrylic paint. The most common are paper and canvas. Paper made especially for acrylics is also available, and tends to be heavyweight with a textured surface.

**Brushes** Although soft watercolour brushes can be used with acrylics, tougher bristles that offer more rigidity are better. Try synthetic bristles or hog hair. I used flats and rounds for the following demonstration of Venice.

**Acrylic mediums** There are various mediums for acrylics, including: extenders to slow the drying time; flow enhancers; and texture pastes. Acrylics dry to a dull matte finish and a variety of varnishes are also available. Always start by adding a small amount to your paint to see how it changes the paint's characteristics, and test the results before adding it to your painting.



ABOVE: *Beach Reflections, Essaouira*, acrylic on acrylic paper, 9½x12½in. (24x32cm)

LEFT: *Fire in the Sky*, acrylic on acrylic paper, 9½x12½in. (24x32cm)



The Finished Painting *Morning Skies*, Venice Lido, acrylic on Hahnemühle Acryl 350gsm acrylic paper, 9½x12½in. (24x32cm)

## The colours of the sunrise, Venice

### You will need

#### Surface

- Hahnemühle Acryl 350gsm acrylic paper block, 9½x12½in. (24x32cm)\*

#### Brushes

- Flats ¾in. & ½in.
- Round No. 2 for fine details

#### Soft body acrylics

- Cobalt blue
- Crimson
- Hansa yellow
- Burnt umber
- Titanium white

#### Miscellaneous

- Stay wet palette (Daler-Rowney), which keeps the paints moist
- Two glass jars, one for clean water and one to hold brushes to prevent drying out
- Kitchen roll for drying and wiping brushes

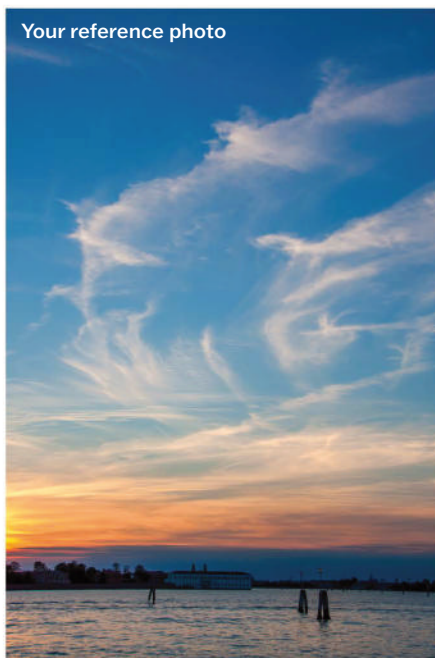
\* This paper is in a block of 50 sheets, glued on all four sides so it won't buckle.



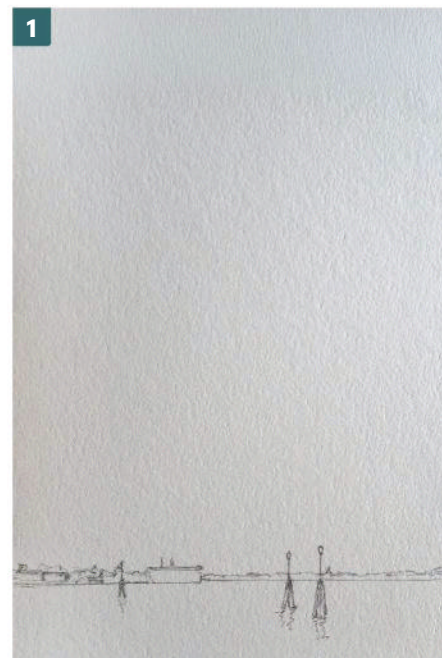
#### Reference photo

Download a reference photo with the following link [bit.ly/SEP25REF](https://bit.ly/SEP25REF) or by scanning the QR code

Your reference photo



1



Venice is one of my favourite places to visit. I was captivated by this view of the morning skies over the Lido whilst travelling along the water in a vaporetto (waterbus) and just had to take a photo. I've been meaning to paint this for some time.

I should point out before I begin that I don't dilute the paint at any point as this reduces the vibrancy of the colours and their covering power. The paints will also dry even quicker when diluted!

### Step 1 Drawing

Use a pencil to sketch the position of the land and main marker posts as a guide.

### Step 2 The sky

1 With your largest brush and pure cobalt blue (or phthalo blue), start at the top,

#### TOP TIP

The sky is always a deeper blue high up, and becomes lighter as it nears the horizon.

left-hand side and paint downwards. As you progress down the paper, add a little white to reduce the intensity of the blue. Don't paint where you want to place the white clouds.

2 Add more white to the mix to suggest the streaks of cloud; keep close to the original shapes in the photo as they look dynamic. By dragging the flat of the brush towards the blue you will achieve the effect of those wisps of cloud.

### Step 3 Cloud detail

With this close-up view you will see how I continued to develop the white clouds, the

#### TOP TIP

Acrylic paint will appear glossy when wet and show a dull matte look when dry.

texture of the paint used and the angle of the brushmarks. It's not pure white; there's still a touch of blue on the brush.

### Step 4 Add warmth in the sky

1 Now tackle the warm orange sky by mixing yellow with a touch of crimson and

2



3





applying it with horizontal brushstrokes. A bit more yellow here and more crimson there will help to create variation. You can also add burnt umber carefully.

**2** Allowing a minute or two for that to dry then mix white with a touch of orange for the warm white cloud in the middle.

## Step 5 The water

The water contains the colours of the sky so change to the  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. brush and, with a little more white, use the colour mixes in the stay wet palette to add the water.

## Step 6 The final cloud details

The lowest part of the sky is a mix of blue, crimson and a little white. This really brings out the warmth of the orange sky above. Use the thin edge of the flat brush to add those wisps of thin cloud where the colours meet.

## Step 7 The land and buildings

Middle and distant strips of land are almost a silhouette. Mix blue and burnt umber to produce a dark colour and add using the small round brush. Place the large white building in a subdued blue hue. Try to keep a little variation in the tones.

## Step 8 Detail in the water

Use blue, white and a little burnt umber to add more depth and form to the water. I kept it plain in the distance and added more detail in the foreground by suggesting small waves.



## Step 9 Final touches

Add the marker posts with their lights, a few suggestions of smaller ones in the distance then sign the painting, calling it done.



*Next month, we will move onto painting skies in oils – the medium with perhaps the most forgiving nature and certainly the longest drying time. Make sure you don't miss an issue and subscribe today – turn to page 42.*



## Colin Joyce

Based in Fife, Scotland, Colin regularly provides demonstrations and workshops for art groups throughout the UK. He will be leading a painting holiday in Ballycastle, Northern Ireland in Sept. Visit his website [www.colinjoyceart.com](http://www.colinjoyceart.com) or email [colin@colinjoyceart.com](mailto:colin@colinjoyceart.com) for more information.

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## New! Rosa Gallery Granulated Watercolours

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## Artist Pastel Starter Bundle

Designed for those who want to take their pastel art to the next level, the Artist' Pastel Starter Bundle offers professional-quality materials for a superior creative experience. Whether you're an aspiring artist or a seasoned creator, this bundle provides everything needed to achieve stunning results while following the *StartArt: Pastel* guide.

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**START**  
**ART**



# Raindrops on roses...

Helen Carter answers your questions and provides helpful guidance, tips and tricks for using this versatile medium. This month, draw the effect of a waterdrop

## You will learn

- How to **create the effect of a drop of water** using a five-step guide
- To know your subject by **careful observation**
- To recreate **different shapes and lighting**

## Question

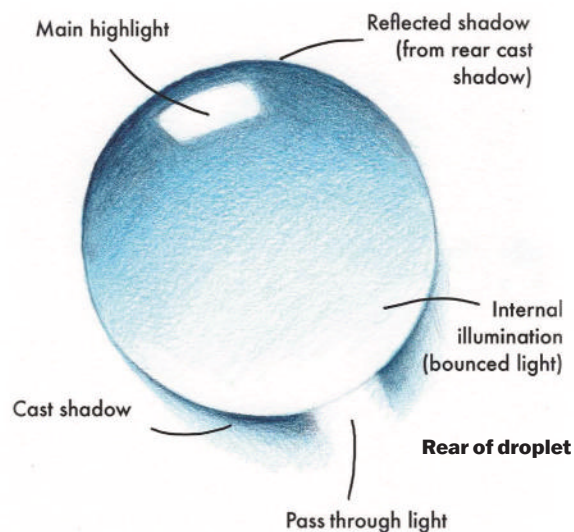
I have a photo of a rose with raindrops on that I'd like to draw. Can you help me understand how to add them?

## Answer

Raindrops on roses always make me smile, and I've drawn a few over the years. Although they look complicated, they're not at all, and the best part is you can make them all kinds of shapes and sizes, and they still work. The secret to making them look realistic is understanding how the light behaves, because it is different with a transparent object than with a solid one.

When adding drops to a larger artwork, it is tempting to draw a circle

### Front of droplet



and have the water sit like a ball on the surface, but in reality they can be many different shapes, and they rarely sit on the surface as a full sphere. Think of waterdrops more like water-balloons – they slump and spread, with a flat bottom that follows and moulds to the surface they're on.

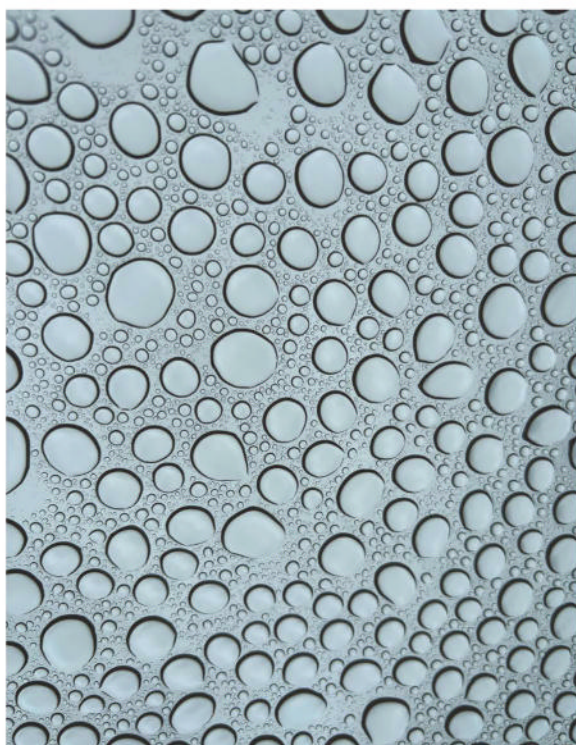
They can spread in strange ways. Gravity will help create the classic teardrop shape, fatter at the bottom with a more pointed top, and when they run into each other you might find long thin drops or giant ones that dwarf those around it. Imperfections in the surface can create notches and bulges and often you'll find a string of smaller ones in a line.



**LEFT: *Rainy Rose*, Derwent Lightfast on Fabriano BlackBlack paper, A4. If you'd like to draw this one yourself, find a full real-time video tutorial available to purchase on [helencarterartist.com](http://helencarterartist.com)**

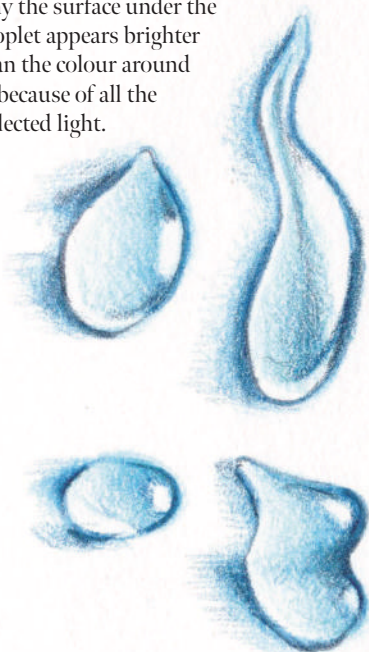
**BELOW LEFT: *Droplets on a Leaf*, Prismacolor Premier pencils on hot-pressed watercolour paper, 6x4in. (15x10cm) (taken from reference image 'pexels-liz-thoppil-7 46812329-18577309'). This little drawing shows the chaotic nature of real waterdrops on a leaf. They are all different and follow the same principles as the five-step guide.**





Once you understand the shapes and the lighting, you can add waterdrops to pretty much anything.

If you study a close-up image of a waterdrop, the first thing you'll notice is the internal highlight (illumination) opposite to the main highlight. Highlights are formed by light waves bouncing off a solid object and into our eyes, but waterdrops are not exactly solid so a lot of light carries on to the inside of the droplet, hitting the back walls causing a second, much larger area of internal illumination as those waves bounce around and back out into our eyes. This is why the surface under the droplet appears brighter than the colour around it, because of all the reflected light.



**ABOVE:**  
**Inspiration**  
Unreal-looking  
waterdrops  
(pexels-dimitri-c-  
33524157-  
31947023)

**BELOW:**  
**Odd-shaped drops** These steps (right) will help you create droplets of almost any shape. Remember to decide on the direction of the light source first and be consistent with that across your drawing. **LP**

## 5 step guide to drawing a waterdrop



How to draw a waterdrop

Let's draw a simple waterdrop using four blue pencils.

### Step 1

Draw the outline with the lightest blue.

### Step 2

Decide which direction the light is coming from then colour the inside of the waterdrop with the lightest blue, being sure to leave a shape for the main highlight. Gradually lighten your pressure as you colour to the opposite side, leaving a slim white crescent at the far edge. Add in the cast shadow along the outside edge opposite the main highlight, leaving a gap the same width as the highlight you created for the passthrough light.

### Step 3

With the next darkest blue, blend on top of the previous layer, darkening the reflected cast shadow along the top, and the cast shadow along the bottom.

### Step 4

Again, with the next darkest blue, blending the layers and deepening colour towards the top edge and cast shadow creating a smooth gradient from dark to light.

### Step 5

With the darkest blue, press firmly to create the top edge and blend slightly into the droplet in a crescent shape that surrounds the main highlight. Draw the underside of the droplet and colour against that edge within the cast shadow, easing off the pressure to create a gradient.

There is a cast shadow at the rear, like you'd see from a solid object, but this shadow is reflected on the front wall of the droplet, causing the darker forward edge. You might also see a gap in the cast shadow which is caused by light passing straight through. This will always be directly opposite the main highlight. **LP**

*Next month in the coloured-pencil clinic, I will be exploring how to create realistic shine and reflection... it's all in the contrast! Make sure you don't miss an issue and subscribe today – turn to page 42.*



**Helen Carter**

Find out more about Helen and her work by visiting [helencarterartist.com](http://helencarterartist.com)



In partnership with  
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# ANNOUNCING THE 2025 TALP OPEN

## ART COMPETITION PRIZE WINNERS

We're thrilled to reveal the prize-winning artworks from *The Artist and Leisure Painter* Open Art Competition 2025, in partnership with Patchings Art Centre!

Congratulations to our prize winners, and the artists selected to take part in this year's exhibitions. This year, we've again broken our previous record for the number of entries, and the standard of work entered was incredible – it's a joy to view all of the works entered.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to all of the artists who entered, our judges, David Curtis, Liz Wood, Sally Bulgin, Jane Stroud and Ingrid Lyon, Patchings Art Centre, ArtOpps, and all of our fantastic prize sponsors.

Take a closer look at all of the prize-winning entries, plus those selected for this year's exhibitions, on our website. Visit [bit.ly/ TALP2025Exhibitions](https://bit.ly/TALP2025Exhibitions) or scan the QR code.



### THANK YOU TO OUR PRIZE SPONSORS





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2. Arina Colun
3. Deborah Bliss
4. Carlos Fentanes
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16. Paul Hunter
17. Rebecca Holton
18. Michelle Fanoie
19. Ezra Yi Chan
20. Jitrachote White
21. Lizzie Black
22. Louise Hawkins
23. Kelly Rodriguez
24. Neil Rogers
25. Owen Catchpole
26. Michael Minas
27. Paul Talbot-Greaves
28. Nigel Collins
29. Martin Harrison
30. Yana Barabash
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32. Pam Williams
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38. Louise Hawkins
39. Roberto Prestigiacomo
40. Tony Carey
41. Kathryn Beaurain
42. Petra Richards
43. Russell Edwards
44. Glafira Kotova
45. Philip Montgomery
46. Paul Talbot-Greaves
47. Tracy Love
48. Pete Underhill RBSA



In partnership with  
Patchings Art Centre

# ANNOUNCING YOUR 2025 TALP OPEN PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD WINNERS

We're thrilled to announce the winners of this year's TALP Open 2025 People's Choice Award winners, as voted by you, our dedicated artist community!

Congratulations to the winners, who have each won £100 to treat themselves to some new supplies from Art Supplies with Painters Online and thank you to everyone who took the time to vote.



Take a closer look at all of the prize-winning entries on our website at [bit.ly/ TALP2025Exhibitions](https://bit.ly/TALP2025Exhibitions) or scan the QR code.



ABOVE: The Artist category winner  
*The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly* by Julia Tooley

BELOW LEFT: Leisure Painter category winner  
*Quiet Resolve* by Jitrachote White

BELOW RIGHT: Young Artist category winner  
*Romance* by Jessica Brodigan



# TOP TIPS FOR PAINTING ON LOCATION

Follow **Elena Parashko** as she packs up her kit and heads to the great outdoors to paint

As the weather warms up, it's the perfect opportunity to get outdoors and paint on location. Painting en plein air, which translates from the French to in the open air, is a romantic notion, but if you don't plan for the inevitable challenges of dealing with the elements, it can prove to be quite frustrating. The secret is to be prepared, flexible, open-minded and resourceful, and finally, to have fun. Here are my top ten tips to help make painting on location an enjoyable and rewarding experience. **LP**

**BELOW: One of my resourceful students puts a dumped refrigerator to good use while painting on location in Fiji**



## Safety

Locations for painting outdoors don't have to be anywhere exotic; your own backyard may hold a wealth of painting inspiration. If you don't have a yard or garden then local parks and even urban streets are a wonderful resource. Wherever you choose to paint outdoors, always be mindful of your personal safety, especially if it's an isolated or remote location. Team up with painting buddies or have a friend or partner tag along and read a book while you paint. No matter how engrossed you become in the painting process, you always need to be aware of your surroundings and what's going on. Safety is your first priority.

## Wind

In windy weather, a canvas or pad on an easel acts like a sail and can easily blow away or topple the easel. Use large bulldog clips to secure paper or canvas. To improve stability of your easel, weigh it down by attaching a bag and filling it with something heavy like a nearby rock or your bottle of water. Attach another bag to your easel for all rubbish and used rags so they don't blow away into the environment. Use clingfilm to cover paint on the palette that you are not using to protect it from drying out, or from sand and other debris being blown into it.

## Onlookers

Curious onlookers should be expected if you set up to paint or draw in a busy public place. Most people are happy to look over your shoulder and watch the process for a short period of time then go about their business. Do your best to stay focused on your task and not feel embarrassed or distracted by the attention. Occasionally you may encounter a fellow creative who will strike up a conversation, ask questions or even want a photo with you. Be polite and enjoy the interaction.

## Sunlight

Position yourself in a shady spot so glare from the sun is not bouncing off your white canvas or paper and into your eyes. To avoid sunburn, wear a broad-brimmed hat, long sleeved shirt and sunscreen. Remember to stay hydrated by drinking lots of water. This is easy to forget when you are absorbed in painting and there is a lot going on around you.



My en plein air painting group working under the shade of tall pine trees on Norfolk Island

### 5 Climate

Wear appropriate clothing to protect yourself from heat, cold and rain to make your en plein air painting experience as comfortable as possible. If you are travelling any distance from home, check the weather forecast beforehand as you will need to bring everything with you on your excursion. Pack plenty of water and snacks. Insect repellent and sun screen are also good to include.

“The secret is to be prepared, flexible, open-minded and resourceful, and finally, to have fun.”



### Moving light and shadows

When painting outdoors, you need to work fast, as nature does not stand still to pose for you. The sun rises and sets, changing the direction of light and shadows by the moment, clouds drift by, casting their own shadows, and the tide comes in and goes out. It helps to have a relaxed attitude towards your painting process when working en plein air. Consider these artworks to be rough studies that are rendered quickly to capture the essence of the moment, rather than fully developed paintings up to your usual standard.

On location it's wise to use quick-drying media like watercolour or acrylics that wash out in water rather than slow-drying oils that require turps for cleaning brushes.

When you get back home, you can either store these studies and appreciate them for what they are; tidy them up and complete them; or use them as reference material to do a larger painting when you have time for more detailing. Photographs are another useful resource if you are struggling to capture a moment in time with paint on location.

**LEFT:** A quick watercolour pencil study done of Mt. Otemanu in Bora Bora. Along with photos, this was used as reference material for a larger detailed painting when I returned home.

**BELOW:** The finished painting **Bora Bora**, oil, 16x22in. (41x57cm). This painting of Mt. Otemanu, completed in my studio at home





Caught in the rising tide of Savusavu Bay, Fiji

### Changing tide

Whenever you are painting a body of water, you need to check the tide charts so you know if the tide is coming in or going out. On an en plein air trip to Fiji, my local guide took us to the banks of a bay and assured me the tide was going out so my students and I set up our equipment along the shoreline and started to paint. Before long, it was evident that the tide was coming in as it started lapping at our feet. Instead of fighting nature, we literally immersed ourselves in it. Moving our easels and equipment to higher ground freed us to continue painting with chairs in the water and palette and canvas on our laps.

Washing brushes between colours was just a matter of swishing them in the surrounding water and wiping them dry on our aprons. This unexpected experience of painting with our feet in cool water, surrounded by fish, turned out to be the highlight of the trip.

### Uneven surfaces

When exploring outdoor locations, you never know what kind of terrain you may encounter so it's a good idea to wear closed shoes with good grip to prevent slipping or stubbing a toe. Be careful on uneven or sloping surfaces and other trip hazards, especially if your hands are full carrying painting gear. If you have no alternative but to set up your easel on an uneven surface, stabilise it by weighing it down with a bag filled with something heavy like a rock or bottle of water.



Setting up painting equipment at a beach location

### Look after your body

It is more physically demanding to paint on location than it is to paint at leisure indoors. Depending on how far afield you go, you may be required to carry equipment, travel then walk some distance on uneven terrain. The weather could unexpectedly change, you may be far from conveniences and there could be nowhere to sit.

Consider these factors, your level of fitness and any health issues before deciding on the location for your outdoor painting adventure. Bring only what is essential to keep your load light, wear comfortable shoes and appropriate clothing for the weather. If you will need to sit, bring a lightweight portable chair. Remember sun protection, stay hydrated and rest when necessary to ensure you have a pleasant outdoor painting experience.

### Unexpected occurrences

As with every other aspect of life, expect the unexpected from time to time. Regardless of what is planned, you need to be flexible and have a sense of humour about what shows up. A few years ago, I was leading a painting workshop on location in Fiji. We had already painted the sky and distant mountain range and were about to paint the headland when a local decided to burn off their rubbish right in the middle of our landscape! The whole scene was suddenly engulfed in thick smoke, which blocked all visibility. Not to worry. Instead of seeing this as a disaster, we had our lunch break, then worked on the foreground. By the time that section of our paintings was complete, the smoke had cleared and we could continue.

RIGHT: Smoke obscuring visibility of the scene we were painting in Fiji



BELOW:  
The finished painting  
**Tropical Breeze**,  
acrylic,  
10x12in.  
(25x30cm)



### Elena Parashko

Find out more about Elena, her book, online tutorials and more at [elenaparashko.com](http://elenaparashko.com) or email [info@elenaparashko.com](mailto:info@elenaparashko.com)


# Lessons in the landscape

**Part 2** Revel in applying fluid watercolour washes, mixing colours and building confidence, in this step-by-step demonstration by **David Webb**

In the August 2025 issue, I spoke about the subject of using photos as reference material for paintings. I talked about the advantages and some of the challenges that they may present to the artist. I also described my own ways of using photos in a creative way, such as cropping and making small compositional sketches to help overcome the potential trap of merely copying the photo.

The subject of this painting is Gallox Bridge, Dunster. As you can see, the photo, which I have cropped, (right) is quite sharp from front to back and edge to edge. If I were painting or sketching this scene from life, which I have done, I would not include so much information. For one thing, there wouldn't be time to do that before the sun moved round.

Also, the eye is selective, and the camera is not. I like to decide which parts of the scene are important and which parts require less emphasis.

The second illustration (right) shows the two sketches I made from the photo. In the tonal sketch, my focus was the distribution of different areas of tone – light, medium and dark – and how they can work to emphasise different features. The dark belt of trees in the background helps the light-toned bridge to stand out. The same goes for their reflections. I then created a small colour sketch of the scene, based on the photo and my tonal sketch using the following colours: cobalt blue, opera rose, burnt sienna, raw sienna and quinacridone gold. 



**ABOVE:**  
Your reference photo



**LEFT & BELOW:**  
Small tonal and colour sketches (from August 2025 issue)



Colours used

# Summer landscape

## You will learn

- How to **mix colours** on the paper and in the palette
- To create **nuanced loose and lively washes**
- How to **apply fluid watercolour washes**

## You will need

### Paper

- Bockingford NOT 140lb (300gsm), stretched or taped onto a board
- 11x15in. (28x38cm)

### Brushes

- Synthetic mop Nos. 2 & 6
- Nylon flat for lifting out 2cm

### Watercolour

- Cobalt blue
- Opera rose
- Burnt sienna
- Raw sienna
- Quinacridone gold

### Miscellaneous

- 2B or 3B pencil
- Mixing palette with large mixing wells or mixing area
- Eraser
- Kitchen towel



### Reference photo

Download a reference photo with the following link [bit.ly/SEP25REF](https://bit.ly/SEP25REF) or by scanning the QR code

## Step 1

Begin by creating a pencil outline of the scene. I added a couple of figures on the bridge to add scale. Make sure that you draw the reflection of the bridge the right size. It's also important to ensure the figures' reflections are directly in line underneath and not to one side. Prop up your board at the back so that you have a gentle downward slope to work on; this helps the washes flow evenly down the paper.

## Step 2 Wet-in-wet background

**1** To create a soft, pale background wash, mix colours wet into wet on damp paper. First create separate puddles of the five colours then dip the No. 6 brush into clean water and wet the entire surface of the paper.

**2** To create a green background in the area above the bridge dip the No. 2 brush into diluted raw sienna and brush this into the top left-hand corner. Pick up cobalt blue and brush this into the raw sienna and blend it on the paper surface. This mix creates a natural-looking cool green. Paint from left to right. When you get to the bridge, add quinacridone gold, which creates a much warmer green.

## Step 3 Lifting-out technique

Some of the green wash will inevitably bleed down into the bridge. Use a damp

flat nylon brush to lift this out. You may have to do this more than once so rinse out the brush each time then use a piece of kitchen towel to soak up any excess water off the brush. It needs to be just damp, not wet. Use the brush edge-on to remove any paint that may also have bled into the two figures.

## Step 4

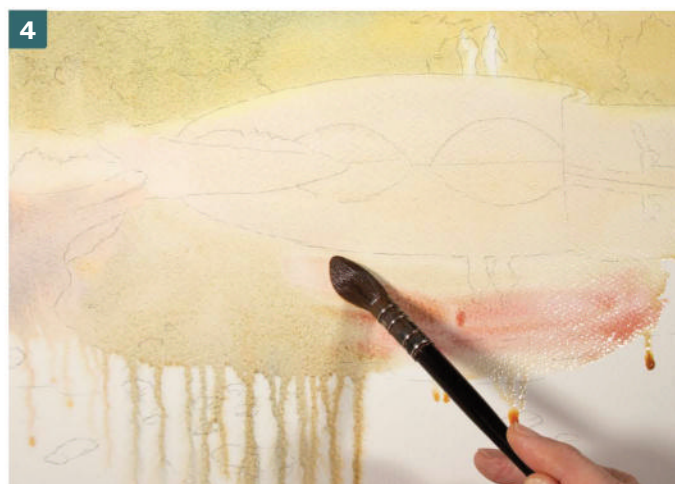
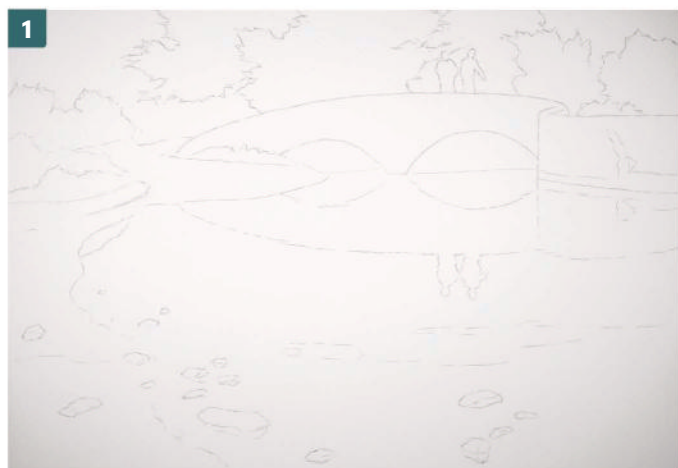
Use dilute raw sienna and burnt sienna to paint the area of the bridge and its reflection then paint the reflected trees, using the same colours as you did before. Add the bank on the left and the foreground area with a wet-in-wet mix of burnt sienna, cobalt blue and opera rose.

## Step 5

Allow the wash to dry completely. There should be no streaks or hard edges and the wash looks paler once it has dried.

## Step 6

The next step is to define the different shapes within the scene with harder edges, and build up the tonal values. Paint from light to dark beginning with the palest wash and so the next layer will be darker in tone. Begin with a mix of raw sienna and cobalt blue and create negative shapes to indicate bushes and trees.



## Step 7

Work from left to right, carefully painting around the two figures on the bridge.

## Step 8

On the right of the two figures, add quinacridone gold to the mix and use less cobalt blue, to create a warmer, sunnier yellow-green on the trees.

## Step 9

For the grass-covered bank on the far left of the picture, add a little burnt sienna to the bottom edge of the green while it's still wet.

## Step 10

Use a loose, watery blend of cobalt blue and burnt sienna to suggest the stonework on the sunlit surface of the bridge. I then

repeat the effect in its reflection. Use a stronger mix of burnt sienna, with just a touch of cobalt blue, for the underside of the bridge arches and their reflections.

## Step 11

On the horizontal surfaces of the bank side, use a thin wash of burnt sienna, cobalt blue and opera rose loosely mixed on the paper, leaving gaps here and there to suggest dappled light.

## Step 12

The next step is quite a large wet-into-wet wash so you'll need plenty of water to avoid streaks. Begin at the top edge of the wash with a strong mix of burnt sienna and cobalt blue then repeat the colours that you used in the trees above the bridge. Lift

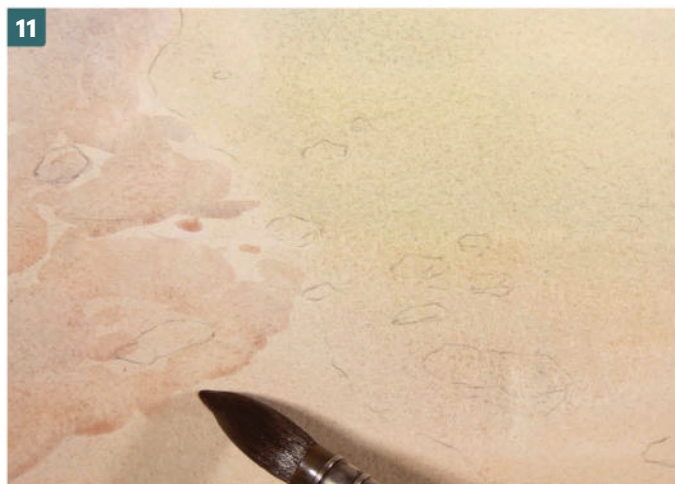
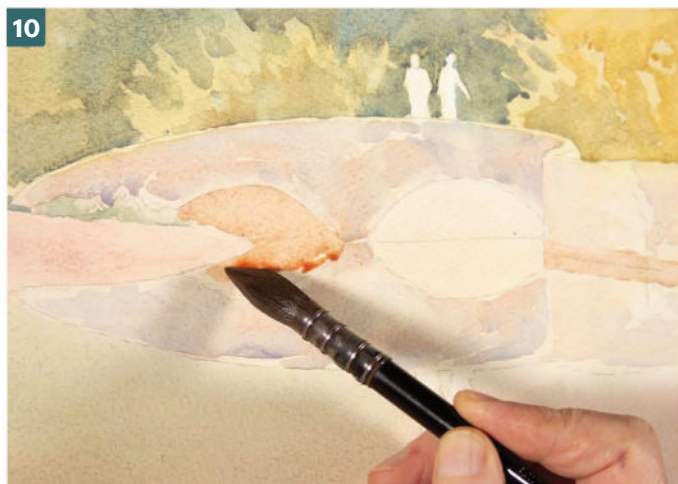
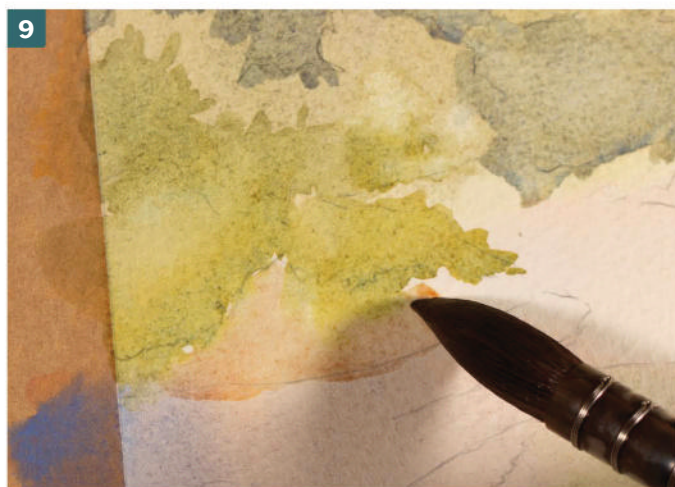
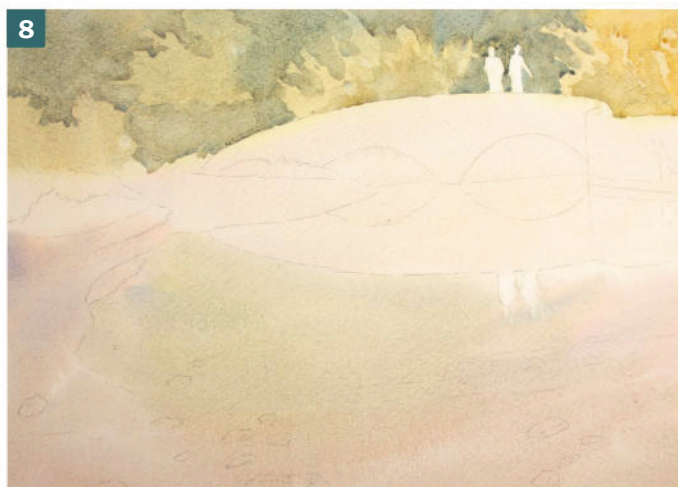
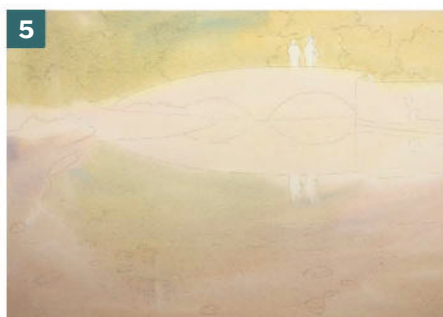
out the lighter parts of the tree reflections with a damp brush.

## Step 13

Break up the right-hand edge of the wash to create ripple effects on the water. In the foreground change the colours in the wash to indicate the browns of the riverbed, mainly burnt sienna with a touch of cobalt blue.

## Step 14

Create deeper shadows on the background trees using cobalt and raw sienna. Add opera rose for some of the darkest areas. For the figures make pale washes of raw sienna and opera rose for the skin tones, and a light wash of cobalt blue on the clothing on the left-hand figure, and opera pink with a little cobalt blue for the figure on the right.



**Step 15**

Make a strong mix of cobalt blue with opera rose for the cooler wash under the bridge arches.

**Step 16** ▶**Step 17**

While the wash is still damp, lift out the figures with a damp No. 2 brush.

**Step 18**

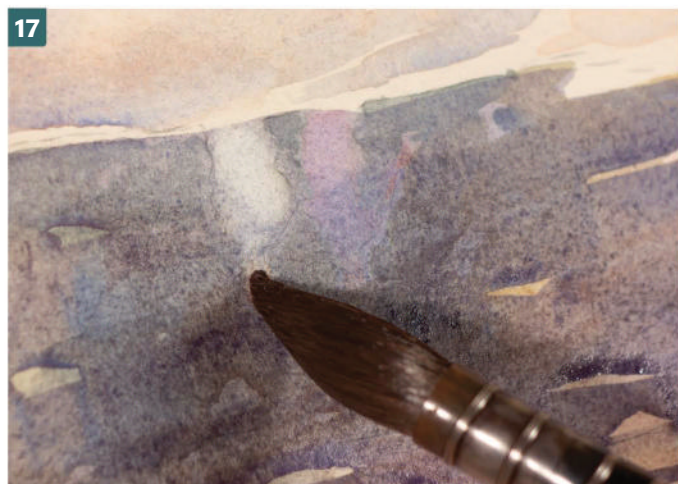
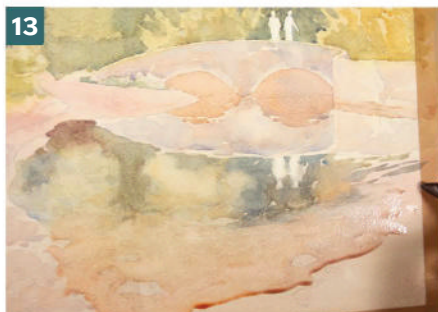
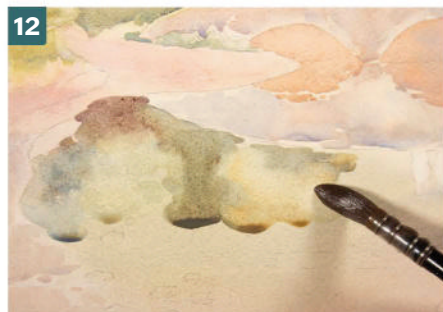
It's time to evaluate what you've done so far and add final details. Add a third, darker wash of cobalt blue, burnt sienna and a little opera rose to the deepest shadows inside the bridge arches. Work your way down the paper, adding small shadows to the rocks and bank.

**Step 16 The shadow**

Use mix of cobalt blue, opera rose and burnt sienna for the shadow area of the small bank on the left. Then comes the tricky part! A tall tree on the left, just outside the picture, creates a large shadow across the surface of the water. Again, use cobalt blue, opera rose and burnt sienna to create a strong, but watery, wash starting from the top left and working across and down the paper.

**TIP**

It's important to keep a wet edge to the wash as you work down the reflection. This is why it's important to have your board at an angle when working, to maintain the bead. Here and there leave a few gaps to indicate light filtering through the tree.



### Step 19

Dilute the shadow mix with a little water to create the shadows on the figures, but it's important to ensure that they stay lighter than the dark background.

### Step 20

The light is coming from the left so all shadows are on the right of objects, as you can see in these foreground rocks.

### Step 21

Finally, add a few darker ripples to the water surface on the right.

### Step 22

Finishing off a painting is always tricky. I don't want to describe every single detail, but I do add one or two spots of shadow on

the background trees, the bridge wall on the right, the small upright bank on the left and a few submerged rocks and stones. Then it's brushes down. All done!

You will find the preparation for this project in the August issue of *Leisure Painter & The Artist*. Go to [bit.ly/LPTASingleIssue](http://bit.ly/LPTASingleIssue) to buy your copy today.

### For all of your watercolour supplies

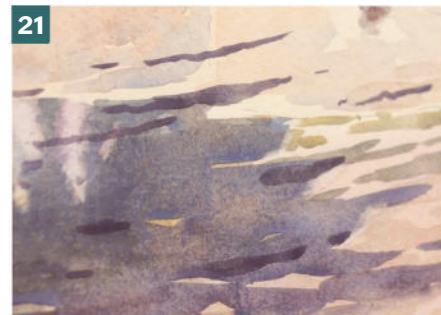
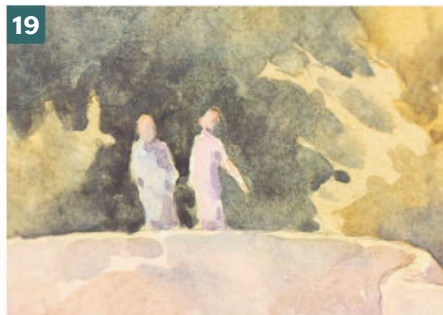


Visit:  
[bit.ly/ArtSupplies\\_Watercolour](http://bit.ly/ArtSupplies_Watercolour)



**David Webb**

Find out more about David and his work by visiting [davidwebbart.co.uk](http://davidwebbart.co.uk)



The finished painting **Gallox Bridge, Dunster**, watercolour on Bockingford NOT 140lb (300gsm), 11x15in. (28x38cm)

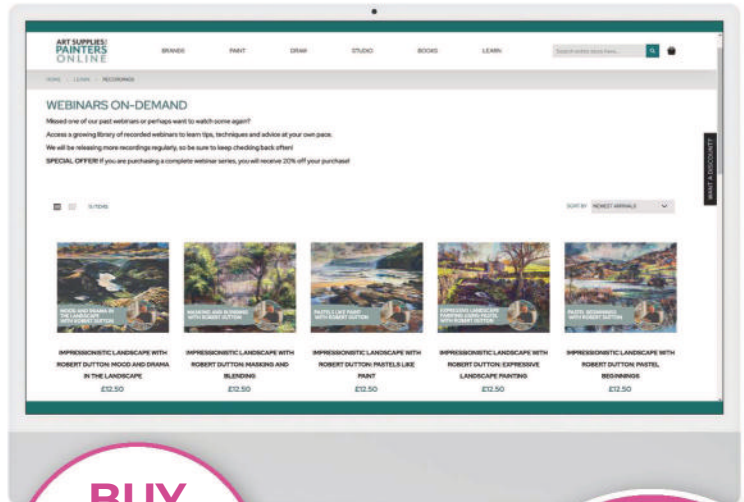


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**SCAN ME**



# Meadow gate

Take out your most summery colours and follow Rachel McNaughton on a soft-pastel journey

## You will learn

- How to work with the **colours you have**
- Practise **scumbling with soft pastels**
- How to create **effective aerial perspective**

## You will need

### Surface

Saunders Waterford High White 140 lb rough paper 10x15in. (25.5x38cm)

### Colours used

- **Sky:** pale blue, warm white, cream and pale pink
- **Distant landscape:** mid blue, pale blue, warm lemon, cream, mauve and pale green
- **Trees:** mid and deeper mauve, pink, darkish grey-blue and darker purple-blue
- **Mid-ground field:** green and warm creams
- **Hedges:** dark and lighter greens
- **Tree trunks:** warm white and pale cream, dark greys and browns
- **Foliage:** different greens, bright yellow-green.
- **Gatepost:** beige and brown.
- **Foreground:** different greens and blues, creams, browns and mauves
- **Shadows:** purple and dark green
- **Gate:** dark brown or grey

*It is always difficult to suggest colours in pastel as there are just so many. I have tried to give a rough description of the colours and tones used but you, of course, will have to go with what you have got. You can adjust colours on the paper by overlaying with another colour to achieve what you want.*

## Step 1 The sky

**1** With a pastel pencil or similar, draw the two tree trunks, horizon, distant trees, hedge and position of the gate posts. There is no need to draw the gate itself.

**2** Using pale blue, warm white, cream and pale pink block in the sky. Start with the white cloud and then introduce the other colours. Apply plenty of pastel and then blend with your fingers. Don't over rub.

## Step 2 Distant landscape

Using mid blue, pale blue, warm lemon, cream, mauve and pale green sketch in the distant hills and fields. The most distant hills take pale blue and mauve with a little blending with a clean finger. Then work forwards introducing cream and warm lemon tones. Suggest a few trees and hedges with pale green and mauve and a light scribble. Carefully and lightly blend where necessary. (Rubbing too much will result in dull colours.)

## Step 3 The trees in the mid-ground

With mid-mauve and deeper mauve, pink, and darkish grey-blue scumble in the trees on the left then, using a dotting stroke to create ragged edges that suggest leaves. Try to achieve the combination of colours without blending with your finger unless necessary. Gradually build up the colours, overlaying light and dark to give form and shape, although keep everything misty and indistinct so that the trees stay in the distance. Use a darker purple-blue to add dark gaps between the tree trunks.

## How to scumble using soft pastel

Lightly layer a new colour over an existing layer of pastel to create a thin, broken effect. Use uneven, irregular marks that allow the underlying colour to show through. This will create a lively, textured surface.

## Step 4 The bushes, foreground tree and gate post

**1** With shades of green and warm creams block in the mid-ground field. Start with horizontal strokes in the distance then with deeper colours change to more vertical strokes to suggest the upward direction of things growing especially in the gateway.

**2** Block in the hedges at either side with dark green, allowing some of the paper to show through. Then add texture with lighter greens on top.

**3** Add warm white and pale cream to the tree trunks then introduce dark greys and browns for the pattern of the bark and the finer branches.

**4** Add foliage by dragging a variety of greens (use the side of the pastel) and dots then a bright yellow-green for highlighted leaves.

Suggest larger areas of broken foliage with pastels dragged lightly over the sky, allowing the sky colour to show through.

**5** Draw the gateposts with beige and brown. Pay attention to a light and a dark side.





### TOP TIP

Blending with a finger is tempting but only do this where necessary. Too much blending will result in a fuzzy picture and dull, dirty colours.

#### Step 5 The foreground

Block in the foreground with mid-green (lighter than the hedge) allowing the colour of the paper to show through. Block in the path with creams, browns and mauves and build up the grasses and plants on the verges with different greens and blues and more vertical strokes. Add flowers in drifts.



#### Step 6 The shadow

**1** To finish add the long shadows cast by the trees in purple across the path and dark green across the verges. Observe the direction of the pastel strokes over the grass; these should be vertical (like the grass itself). If you draw them in horizontally, it will not look right. Shadows follow the contours of the surface on which they fall.

**2** Using a pastel pencil or a broken pastel, put in the gate using a dark brown or grey.



**Rachel McNaughton**

Find out more about Rachel and her work by visiting [artbyrachel.co.uk](http://artbyrachel.co.uk)

The finished painting **Meadow Gate**, pastel on pastel paper, 10x15in. (25.5x38cm)

# Figured out

How to include figures in your urban settings with ease, by Tim O'Brien



**ABOVE:** A sketch I drew outside St Paul's Cathedral on Remembrance Sunday 2024 using Sakura Micron pens and water-soluble pencil crayons. While the focus of my sketch was Wren's architecture, I have indicated the military personnel, two armed police and the Lord Mayor's car in a loose style to indicate movement.

**BELOW:** A plein-air watercolour sketch of Trafalgar Square, created as I waited for the Royal Society of Marine Artists' (RSMA) private view to open last September. The figures are just simple lines or blobs to indicate the hustle and bustle of the view.

## You will learn

- To build confidence in **adding details to your paintings**
- An array of ideas and inspiration for **drawing and painting figures**
- How to **work from photographs**

When I lead a session on drawing or painting urban scenes in my weekly art class, I've often noticed how students shy away from adding details, such as vehicles, street furniture, lampposts and especially figures. There is often a fear of 'ruining' a painting, especially perhaps after mastering the topic of perspective with the buildings. But they soon find that it's the details that not only enhance the realism of the subject but also give the townscape a sense of activity and life.

Whether you are working from a photograph or sketching plein-air, including figures will enhance your work and give the buildings a sense of scale; street scenes, railway stations and markets come alive. Don't worry, you don't have to capture every minor detail as the figures can be as simple as wobbly lines, abstracted shapes or blocks that recreate the atmosphere and movement of the scene.





**ABOVE LEFT:** I drew these figures with a 4B and 6B pencil, based on photographs I took at a food market at Burghley House, Stamford. There were a lot of dog owners, which gave the figures an extra movement to their pose. I find it is easier to take photos at an event where you can photograph the stately home, but figures are very much a part of the same scene, naturally doing something. If they spot you, they either turn away or stand still, rigid, like a statue.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** When drawing figures in a sketchbook I have used a range of sketching pencils from HB, 2B, 4B and 6B, biros and fineliner pens, although I occasionally use a traditional carpenter's pencil, which might seem like a radical approach, but it is one that works for me. They are flat in shape, which prevents them from rolling off the woodwork bench and have a broad-shaped graphite that helps shade in large blocks of tone, and you can tilt them onto the thin side for a thinner line. The downside is that they only tend to be in HB and are not as easy to sharpen as a traditional pencil. You can buy special sharpeners, or you can use a knife and sandpaper.

## EXERCISE 1

### Quick pencil sketches

To help get you into the rhythm of drawing or painting figures, practise drawing from life or from photographs you have taken in your sketchbook. Start by drawing simple blocks. Observe how

the shape of the body may be slanted by the person putting their weight on one foot when standing still or if they are turning round, the hips will slant in the opposite direction to the shoulders. Capture that movement with those shapes and you are on the road to success. Proportions are also key

in that you don't want the head too big or the body too short or long. I find the best poses are where the figures are doing something, whether it is walking a dog, cycling, pushing a pram or holding their takeaway coffee. Shadows also help to anchor figures to the ground.

## EXERCISE 2

### Watercolour practice

Now you have drawn figures in pencil, have a go at painting people with watercolour as another warm-up exercise. Again, you can use reference photographs you have taken of your favourite urban scene. Don't worry if the colour washes merge as it adds to the technique. Don't become overwhelmed with trying to add small details; keep it loose and free and add shadows to anchor them to the ground.



Inspiration for Exercise 2. How did you get on?



## EXERCISE 3

### Paint a scene from a photograph

I have chosen to paint a scene of my local independent greengrocer shop from a photograph I took last December during the weekly market day. Subjects are everywhere, so you don't have to look far, but if you don't feel confident in painting plein-air, why don't you take a photo of a street scene that features shoppers and work from that instead.

## Project name

### You will need

#### Surface

- Hahnemühle Expression Watercolour 140lb block of 20 sheets
- 9½x11¾in. (24x30cm)

#### Brushes

##### Rosemary & Co Sable blend

- Series 402 No. 10
- Series 768 No. 12
- Series 401 No. 1

#### Professional Handmade Watercolours by Jackman's

- Storm clouds
- Ultramarine blue
- Cerulean blue
- Viridian green
- Spring green
- Naphthol red
- Cadmium red
- Alizarin crimson
- Cadmium orange
- Yellow ochre
- Raw sienna
- Burnt umber

#### Cotman Watercolour

- Lemon yellow hue
- Dioxazine purple
- Sap green
- Light red



#### Reference photo

Download a reference photo with the following link [bit.ly/SEP25REF](https://bit.ly/SEP25REF) or by scanning the QR code



### Step 1

Using a HB or 2B pencil, draw your scene on to your watercolour paper.

### Step 2

Initial, thin wash from a mix of yellow ochre and naphthol red to give a light tonal background. The paper ruckled quite a bit with the watery wash, but dried out again, flat, like a drumskin within 15 mins due to the paper sheets of the watercolour block being glued around the edges to create ready-made stretched paper. It would have dried quicker had I used a hairdryer.

### Step 3

Add colour to the building, canopy, fruit boxes and other details such as the lampposts. I tried to keep the brushwork loose and fade it towards the edge of the paper.

### Step 4

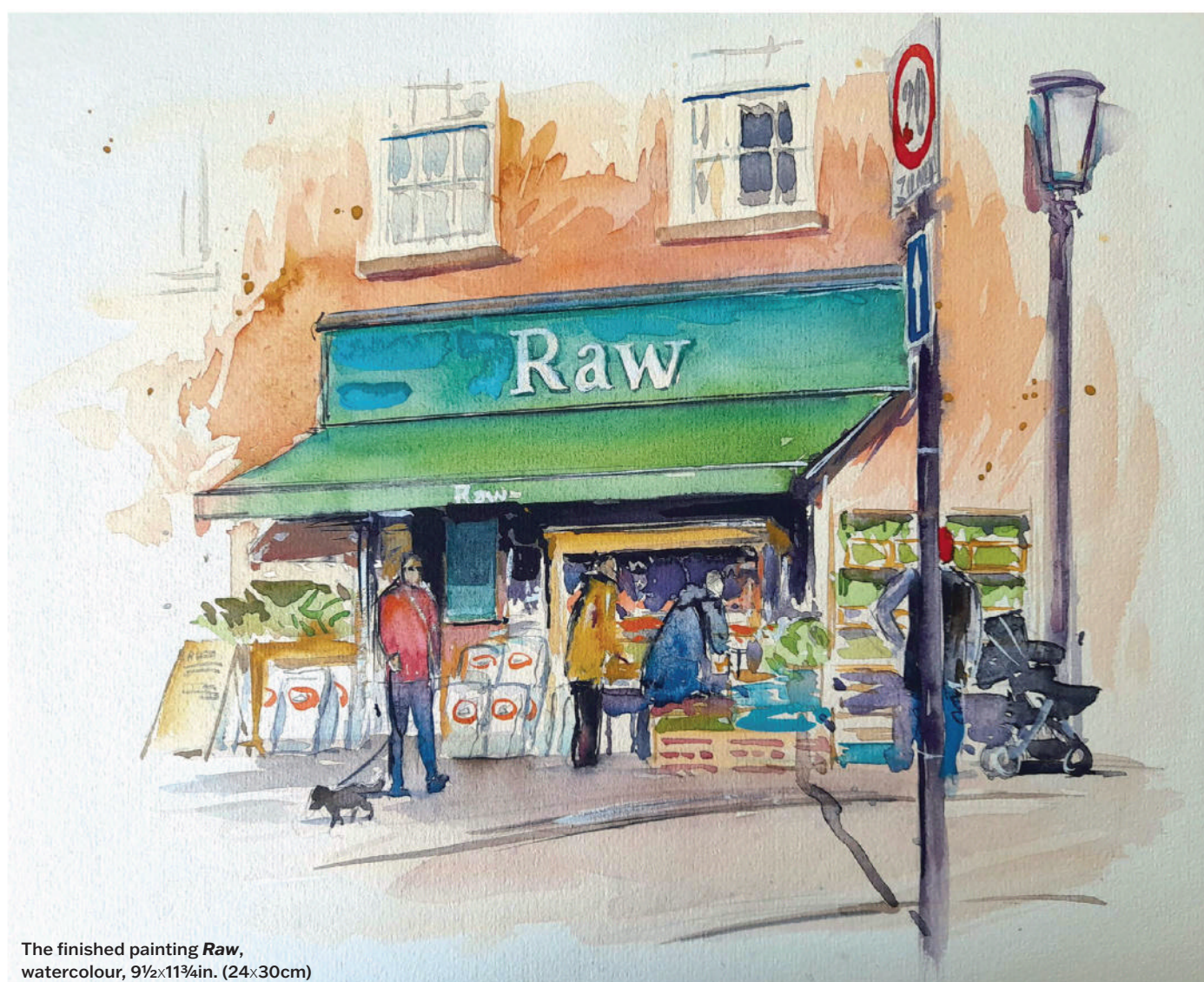
Add more details to the shop and then add figures by drawing them in block form in pencil before painting washes of colour as per the warm-up exercise. Try and keep your brushwork loose to create movement. I especially like the Series 402 brushes as they are tapered to a much longer and finer point which allows me to 'draw' with the brush. The splatters were unintentional but add character to the scene.





### Tim O'Brien

Tim is a freelance artist, based in Nottinghamshire and likes to work plein-air and in the studio. His website is [www.timobrienart.co.uk](http://www.timobrienart.co.uk) or you can follow him on Instagram @timobrienart



The finished painting **Raw**,  
watercolour, 9½x11¾in. (24x30cm)

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# Coffee-break inspiration

Use your coffee and tea breaks today to capture a little garden arrangement, with **Tony Underhill**

Last month I showed you how I used my morning coffee break to draw a simplified version of the items on my kitchen window sill and my afternoon tea break to paint them; and hopefully proved how with a little bit of creative thought, even the most everyday scenes and objects can make great subjects for developing and practising your artistic skills.

In this issue, we will be simplifying, drawing and painting a scene of garden ornaments in two 20 or 30-minute coffee or tea break sessions. **LP**

## You will learn

- To **build confidence and skills** in drawing
- To **work quickly** for successful results
- To use **line-and-wash techniques**

## You will need

### Surface

- Mixed media or watercolour paper 5½x8½in. (14x21cm)

### Pen

- Faber-Castell PITT Artist Pen – Black waterproof ink - 0.5mm

### Watercolours

- See colours, below

### Miscellaneous

- Round No. 6 brush
- Pencil
- Eraser
- White gel pen



### Reference photo

Download a reference photo with the following link [bit.ly/SEP25REF](https://bit.ly/SEP25REF) or by scanning the QR code



Your reference photo

## Exercise 1 Morning coffee drawing

### Step 1 Observation

**1** Decide what you think you'll be able to draw in however long you plan to take for your coffee break. I opted to include all three objects and omit the background, but if you draw a little more slowly perhaps choose the lady bowler and just one of the pots.

**2** Look carefully at your chosen objects to get a feel for their relative positions and proportions. Then imagine each object in its own two-dimensional box and how those boxes would overlap each other.

### Step 2 Boxes

Sketching lightly in pencil, draw a horizontal line for your objects to sit on and position your imagined boxes until they suit your eye. To make sure she'd fit on my paper, I started with a box for the lady bowler and then used that to size and position the other two boxes.

### Step 3 Main shapes

Add the main shapes of the lady bowler; a circle for her head and a hat on top, a single shape for her body and dress, and two more



New gamboge



French ultramarine



Quinacridone rose



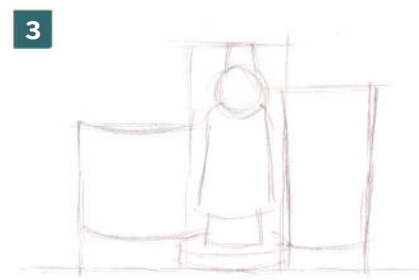
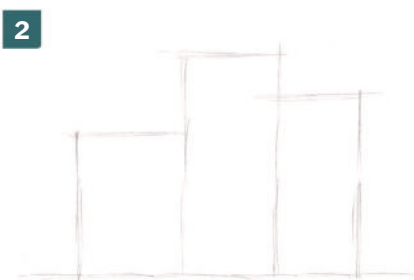
Pyrrrol scarlet



Buff titanium



Sap green



for the legs /shoes and the base. Add the sides of the blue pot and some curved lines for the top and bottom of the pots.

#### Step 4 Smaller shapes

Add the smaller shapes on the lady bowler – the hat and nose, arms and dress, and legs and shoes then the shapes for the pot 'feet' and the scalloped edge of the blue pot; and some guidelines for the decorative rings and ridges and the soon-

to-be daffodils. Add the outline of the cast shadow on the blue pot and hint at some decoration on the terracotta pot.

#### Step 5 Develop the drawing

Switch to your pen and develop the drawing. Remember it's a fun coffee break sketch; so enjoy sketching freely and loosely rather than fussing over precision and unnecessary detail. Erase your pencil lines

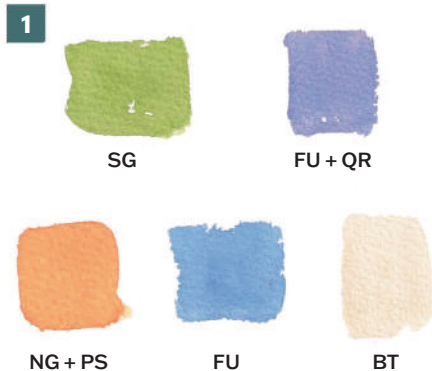
#### Step 6 The final touches

Firm up any linework you think needs it and add some simple vertical hatching on the pots to help suggest their circular form and for the cast shadow, and a few dots on the bowler to suggest some texture. Add any final touches to suit your eye; in my case a horizontal line to ground the objects and a cast shadow to link the bowler to the blue pot.

## Exercise 2 Afternoon tea painting

### Step 1 Colour tests

For a tea break painting session start by taking a minute or two to explore which colours to use to save time later on. I'm more interested in colour harmony and simplicity than precise matches and quickly settle on six colours.



### Step 2 First washes

Touching the paper as few times as possible, paint the terracotta pot with a watery wash of new gamboge and pyrrol scarlet. Make a watery mix of French ultramarine and paint the blue pot. Paint the lady bowler with a weak wash of buff titanium and use a couple of quick sideways strokes for the ground line.

### Step 3 Second washes

Add another slightly stronger wash of new gamboge and pyrrol scarlet on the right and left-hand sides of the terracotta pot. While the wash is still wet, rinse your brush, blot it on some tissue to remove any excess water and use a few gentle downward strokes of the damp brush to blend the wash across the middle section. Do the same on the blue pot with a second slightly stronger wash of French ultramarine. Paint the plants with a watery wash of sap green.

### Step 4 Third washes and finishing touches

**1** Mix a wash of French ultramarine and quinacridone rose for the shadows (more than you think you'll need to make sure you don't run out partway through).

**2** Touching the paper as few times as possible to avoid lifting the underlying wash, add the shadow on the right-hand side of the terracotta pot and blend it towards the middle. Then do the same on the blue pot and the base of the bowler.

**3** Use the same wash to add the shadows on the lady bowler and to link her to the blue pot.

**4** Add a little more of each colour to strengthen the shadow wash and add the cast shadow on the blue pot, the dark areas under the pots and some accents under the rings and ridges.

**5** Assess your sketch for any final touches you think it needs; in my case some more sap green to add form and variety to the plants, some dots to suggest some texture on the ground and a white gel pen for a few highlights on the pots.



The finished sketch *Patio Things*, pen and watercolour, 5½x8½in. (14x21cm)



**Tony Underhill**

For more information about Tony and his work, email [tonyunderhill@me.com](mailto:tonyunderhill@me.com)

# Bookmarks

Liz Chaderton demonstrates the materials and processes used to produce these bright and cheerful small artworks

## You will learn


- An inventive way to use your offcuts of watercolour paper
- How to finish your creations with an extra flourish

In an age dominated by digital screens, there's something magical about the tactile experience of holding a physical book. Whether you're reading a gripping thriller or thought-provoking non-fiction, bookmarks

help preserve your place while adding a personal touch. But what if your bookmark could be more than just functional? Why not create a colourful bookmark that not only marks your page but also reflects your artistic style and, in the process, stretches and reinforces your watercolour muscles.

Creating your own watercolour bookmarks is a simple way to express your creativity and allows room for experimentation, making it an ideal project for all skill levels.

It is a no-pressure way of experimenting with new processes and techniques. If your experiment is not a success, you have only used a sliver of paper. If it succeeds, you have learnt something new in your art and can be reminded of it at each page turn.

In these simple landscapes we will practise pen-and-wash techniques or venture into collage. You might enjoy these so much that you could scale them up into a larger painting. 



## The process

### Step 1

First cut your paper to size and if you want clean edges, tape it to a board. To ensure the tape does not rip your paper upon removal either use a low-tack tape or take off the excess glue by pressing onto your clothing. The lint just stops it being quite as tacky.

### Step 2

Decide on your colour palette. Greys and blues might evoke a winter scene, russets and oranges an autumnal landscape.

### Step 3

Working wet-on-dry, apply stripes of colour to your paper. These may be very stylised but do consider perspective. The fields further away will be smaller than those near by. Colours are paler and cooler in the distance. Try to take this into account as you add colour. Vary the widths of the stripes. Leave a gap of dry paper if you do not want them to bleed, but why not keep some stripes separate and deliberately let others blend?

### Step 4

While it is still damp add darker mixes at the boundaries to give hedges, or drop in darker mixes to create trees.

### Step 5

If you want to experiment with texturing techniques, sprinkle in a little table salt to a damp wash and create frost, or drop in clean water to create back runs, lay a piece of plastic wrap over the damp paint to create interesting wrinkles.

## Materials

### Watercolour paper

- An offcut of paper with a weight of at least 300gsm/140lb. I prefer a NOT surface, but you can use hot-pressed or rough. You can buy books of ready-cut watercolour paper, which offers convenience, especially if you plan to produce more than a few. The paper should be approximately 8x2in. (20x5cm). Whether you use cellulose or cotton is entirely up to you, but do not opt to use up poor-quality paper; it will simply spoil your enjoyment of the paint.

### Tape

- I like a clean border, so use masking tape to edge the piece.

### Watercolour

- This is an ideal opportunity to clean up old palettes or to experiment with new colour combinations in a way that is more interesting than doing swatches.

### Brushes

- As we are doing stripey landscapes, a flat brush works particularly well.

### Pens

- Waterproof fineliners, acrylic markers or other pens you want to experiment with.

### Collage

- Glue stick and collage papers – napkins make great collage material, but an old map or book would also be good.

### Wax to seal

- You will need to protect your finished bookmark. You could laminate or varnish, but I suggest cold-wax medium is an ideal way of waterproofing them. Dorlands Wax is a wax paste designed to be archival and used with watercolours that are not framed under glass. As these are unlikely to become heirlooms, you are fine to use a cheaper non-archival alternative, such as a wax designed to go over chalk paint. It should be clear, non-yellowing and remain flexible. Look for brands such as Frenchic or Annie Sloane.

### Other

- Waterpots, paper towel, hole punch, corner punch, tassel or ribbon.
- Buy bookmarks to paint yourself from our online shop at [bit.ly/BOOKMARKPADS](http://bit.ly/BOOKMARKPADS)

### Step 6

Allow to dry and then add further layers if required. These bookmarks are very simple but you might as well practice all your techniques!

### Step 7

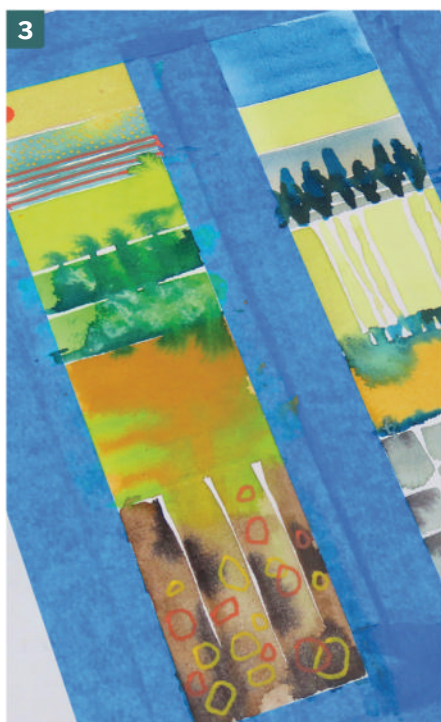
Once dry use your pens and imagination to create the landscape. Acrylic pens are opaque so can put in details such as the sun or moon. Fine liners can be used to outline



Tape down your strips of paper using masking to create a clean edge and then apply stripes of colour, allowing some to touch and bleed. Try to think of the rules of perspective even though this is a simplified landscape.



Don't over complicate it, but do add lots of variety of mark.



Once dry use acrylic pens to mark in the sun or moon and add texture and landscape elements. Respond to the marks on the paper and work intuitively.



Play with lines, dots and patterns. Add more detail such as stones or walls nearer to you.



Using fine liners add further detail and elements. Use a thinner line further away and a thicker one closer to the front, to create the illusion of distance.



If adding collage lay in place before gluing down. As they are only small light pieces, a glue stick should be strong enough.



This snail was from a napkin. See how the tissue paper virtually disappears once glued in place.



A wide variety of lines and patterns adds interest to a simplified landscape.

water marks or bleeds to create landscape elements. Add in fences, hedges, trees, roads, distant houses etc. Try and add more detail closer to you – perhaps a fence or a stone wall.

## Step 8

If you would like to add collage elements, small strips of an old map make a good division between fields. Simply cut to size, adjust placement and then glue in place. Napkins can offer good focal points. Peel off the back layer so you are left with a single ply printed section. Cut out the element you require and carefully glue in place. The background tissue becomes virtually transparent. Be careful as the tissue is fragile once damp.



Once dry, carefully remove the tape. Heat with a hairdryer if it starts to stick. Round off corners before sealing and adding a tassel or ribbon if you wish.

**Step 9**

Once you are satisfied with your landscape, remove the tape. If any paint has seeped under you should be able to lift it with a Magic Eraser or a damp short-haired brush. You may wish to round off the corners either with a punch or free-hand with scissors.

**Step 10**

Now seal your book mark. If you do not do so there is a danger that the watercolour may bleed onto the pages of the book. Follow instructions if using varnish. If waxing, simply rub the wax into both sides of the paper. A thin coat is sufficient and you will feel it dragging if you have missed a spot. Allow to cure; time will depend on how warm it is and how much you have applied. It will feel dry to the touch. Apply another coat and allow to cure. Finally take a lint free cloth and buff the book mark. It will develop a nice sheen, rather than shine. Note how the wax enriches the colours.

**Step 11**

Whether you use a tassel is up to you, but I am rather fond of the lovely colours and they are available online for very little. If using select an appropriate colour and use a hole punch to create a neat central hole. Loop the tassel through.

10



Making bookmarks is seriously addictive and the possibilities are endless!

**Conclusion**

Be warned making bookmarks is addictive and offers endless possibilities. Use them as a no-pressure way to try new techniques or materials. You will learn much through

their creation and best of all, you'll end up with a beautiful set of bookmarks that reflect your unique style and can be cherished for years to come.

**Other bookmark ideas**

**Floral or botanical** Create an abstract background wet-in-wet and once dry use a fineliner to draw flowers or leaves.

**Stencils** These can be used positively or negatively. Create a watercolour background, allow to dry, then scrub through the stencil to lift paint. Or simply stencil with a darker colour in the normal way.

**Patterns and geometric designs** Use the precision of wet-on-dry techniques to create neat patterns, stripes, or polka dots. You can even try creating mandalas or other intricate designs. Or allow shapes to touch and bleed into each other.



**Liz Chaderton**

Find out more about Liz and her work by visiting [lizchaderton.co.uk](http://lizchaderton.co.uk)

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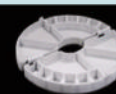


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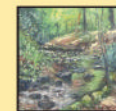
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Visit [www.richardhollandlandscapeartist.co.uk](http://www.richardhollandlandscapeartist.co.uk)

# Sunshine & shadow

From preliminary sketch to final brushstroke, follow **Colin Steed** as he paints a summer scene in just seven colours

The finished painting *Summer Landscape*, watercolour, 11x15in. (28x38cm)



When I go for a walk on a hot summer's day, I search for a route that has lots of cover from trees and tall hedges that line a path or lane. In that way, strong rays of sunlight are broken by shade from overhanging tree branches and the shaded areas allow my eyes to see the true colour of the trees, hedges, grass and path or road. This in turn helps me to determine the tonal values of those areas.

On one such walk, near the top of my studio in Galleywood in Essex, I used the phone on my camera to capture this lovely country lane (right). I then isolated the three main areas into distance, middle-distance and foreground before using three water-soluble graphite pencils (light, medium and dark tones) and a damp brush to make a tonal reconstruction of the scene (below right).

I now had a good indication of where the light, medium and dark areas would be and where the three main areas – distance, middle-distance and foreground – start and

finish. The small distant area has no detail in the finished painting; the middle-distance has a minimal amount, and the foreground is reserved for the most detail. **LP**



Your reference photo - Start by isolating three main areas of the scene (above): the distance area A, the middle-distance B, and the foreground, C. The most distant area is only a small part off-centre to the right. The middle distance is a slightly larger area that includes the road, grass verge, some hedges and over hanging trees. The foreground is a much larger area where we can see the most detail in the verge, hedge and trees.



**Tonal Sketch**, water-soluble pencil on Amelei 270gsm watercolour sketching pad by Pink Pig, 8¼x11¾in. (21x30cm). I used light wash HB, medium wash 4B and dark wash 8B Derwent water-soluble pencils to draw and shade the scene. I also used a wet No. 6 sable brush to gently blend the graphite in the later stages of the drawing to create a tonal sketch. I decided the composition needed a figure. This not only added life and movement to the scene, but also gave it a feeling of scale. As this was an afterthought, I positioned a figure walking a dog in shadow. I used the point of the 8B pencil for this.

## Discover more

Want to see how to create this water-soluble graphite tonal sketch step by step? If you are a Studio Member, you can access this in your Studio Tutorials. Not yet a Studio Member? Turn to page 42 to find out how to join. [bit.ly/STUDIOTUTORIALS](https://bit.ly/STUDIOTUTORIALS)



## Summer light and shadow

### You will need

#### Surface

- Bockingford 140lb NOT watercolour paper
- 11x15in. (28x38cm)

#### Artists' watercolour

- Cobalt blue
- Winsor blue (red shade)
- Cadmium yellow
- Cadmium lemon
- Burnt umber
- Alizarin crimson
- Burnt sienna

#### Brushes

- Pro Arte Renaissance sable round No. 6
- Pro Arte Sablesque pointed mop No. 2
- 3B Faber-Castell pencil



#### Reference photo

Download a reference photo with the following link [bit.ly/SEP25REF](https://bit.ly/SEP25REF) or by scanning the QR code

### Step 1

1 Secure your paper to a firm surface using masking tape. Draw an outline of the scene using a sharp 3B pencil. The far distance area should be placed off centre to the right.

2 Thoroughly wet the No. 2 brush. Starting at the top of your paper, dampen as far down as the tops of the cluster of trunks on the left, over the top of the trees on the right and down as far as the start of the road far distant. Try to keep the overhanging branches dry.

3 Working wet-in-wet, use a strong mix of cobalt blue to paint the sky. Work quickly before the paper starts to dry. Clean the brush.

### Step 2

1 Starting in the top right-hand corner, onto the now damp paper, apply a medium strength mix of alizarin crimson. Paint up to the blue area. Work your way across and down as far as the tops of the hedge on either side and the end of the road in the distance.

2 Stroke into the damp alizarin a medium strength cadmium lemon. Try not to mix the colours together on the paper. The colours will blend naturally as they dry but will dry fresh and clean.

### Step 3

1 Use a strong mix of cobalt blue with a touch of cadmium lemon and paint in the

far distant hedge. Keep a good line where the road ends.

2 Dry the loaded brush slightly and drag the blue-green into the damp area above the hedge on the right. The painting should now be allowed to dry under normal conditions. Try to refrain from adjusting any of the colours as this will not improve the result.

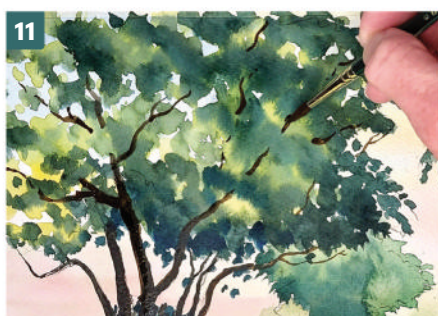
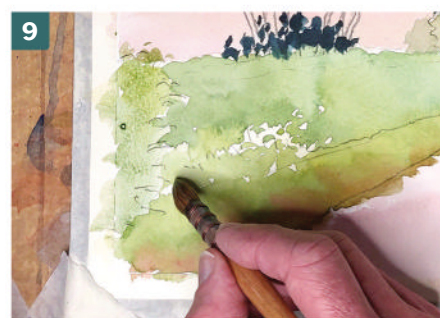
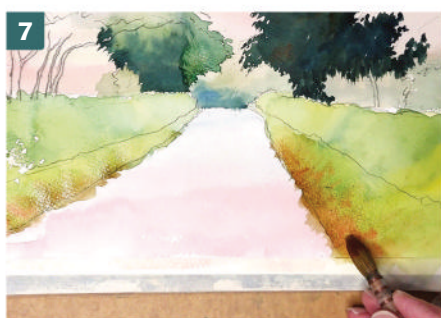
### Step 4

Continue using the mop brush and paint a weak wash of cadmium lemon over the hedge and grass verge on either side of the road. To give the illusion of depth in the road, starting in the distance, use a very weak cobalt blue. Work your way forward then add the slightest amount of alizarin crimson; increase the amount of alizarin as you work your way into the foreground. Use horizontal brushstrokes for the passage.

### Step 5

1 Paint the middle distant tree on the right. Mix cadmium lemon with Winsor blue (red shade). Cover the complete area. Add more Winsor blue and lemon to achieve a strong blue-green colour and apply to the lower part of the tree using the point of the mop





to suggest overhanging branches and the uneven top of the hedge. Paint this while the first wash is still wet.

**2** Clean the brush and take away some of the water onto a cloth. Use a damp brush to soften the top of the tree and allow to dry.

### Step 6

**1** Mix cadmium lemon, Winsor blue and burnt umber together until you achieve a dark blue-green; the Winsor blue needs to dominate the mix. Apply this colour to the right-hand tree that overhangs the far distance. Use the point of the mop brush to suggest the outer edges of the branches.

**2** Add more burnt umber to the Winsor blue and cadmium lemon to create a slightly brown-green colour. Paint the brown-green into the blue-green area while it's still damp. Work your way across and up, finishing at the point where the foreground branches overhang. Use the point of the brush to suggest the branches that have yet to be painted.

**3** The small shrub growing behind the hedge on the left can now be painted.

### Step 7

**1** Mix a sunlit green using cadmium yellow and a touch of Winsor blue. Start by painting the hedge and bank in the far distance. Paint colour to the right-hand side then add to the left. Work your way forward, alternating as you go. Increase the strength of the cadmium yellow as you work your way into the foreground hedge and bank. Leave some of the light underpainting showing in the left-hand corner.

**2** Before the grass verge is dry add a strong mix of burnt sienna to its edge. This will give an earthy look where the grass meets the road.

### Step 8

**1** After cleaning the mop, mix cadmium yellow with a small amount of Winsor blue. Use the point of the brush to paint the top of the foreground tree on the left. Allow some of the blue to show.

**2** While the first colour is still damp, add a little burnt umber and more Winsor blue. This will create a dark green. Apply this to the outside edge to suggest leaf shapes.

Paint back into the light green parts of the tree allowing some light colour to remain. Use bold brushstrokes.

**3** Complete the lower leaf shapes on the underside of the tree and the dark foliage under the tree. I used bolder brushstrokes in the foreground tree than the trees in the distance. This will help to achieve the illusion of depth.

### Step 9

After cleaning the brush apply a light green tone over the lower left-hand foliage. Use cadmium yellow with a touch of Winsor blue for this mix.

### Step 10

Use the mop brush and a mix of cadmium yellow and Winsor blue to paint the overhanging branches on the left foreground tree. Pick around the dark, middle distant tree with this lighter green mix then add burnt umber with more Winsor blue to darken the mix to paint the dark areas. Work your way down to the foreground hedge.

## Step 11

When all the leaf areas are dry, wet the No. 6 brush and mix burnt umber and Winsor blue together; the burnt umber should dominate the mix. This will give you a dark brown colour. Start at the point where the trunks meet with the hedge and work your way up. Push on the brush to achieve the thick trunks lifting off slightly to achieve the thin branches. Leave gaps at the point where you think the leaf would lay in front of the branches. Give the branches movement with a snaking effect.

## Step 12

Once all the colour is dry you can see the true tones. Wet colour always looks darker than dry colour. The next stage will be adding shadows over the hedges and road.

## Step 13 ►

## Step 14

**1** Clean the mop with water. Mix a strong green using Winsor blue, cadmium yellow and burnt umber. Use this dark green to paint small areas of overhanging branches to the right.

**2** Use the same mix to paint a small number of dark leaf areas on the left tree.

**3** Use a strong mix of burnt umber and alizarin crimson and the point of the No. 6 to darken the gravel at the edge of the road. Slightly dry the brush and draw the marks on the road.

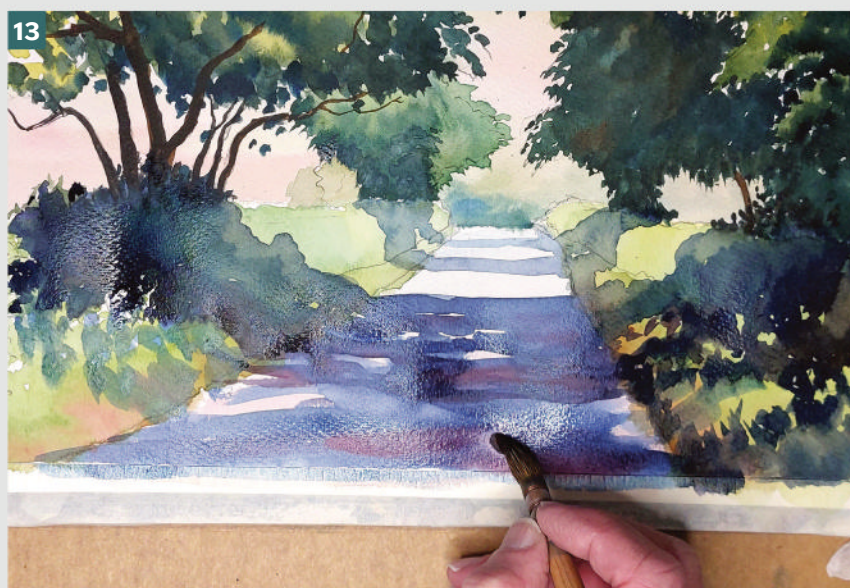
**4** Paint the figure and dog positioning them in a shaded area in the middle distance. The size of the figure will determine the scale of the trees; the smaller the figure the larger the trees will look.

## Step 13 The shadows

**1** Using the wet mop to mix Winsor blue with a little alizarin crimson. This should be a light-tone mix. Start by painting the shadows cast over the middle distant tree on the left. Work your way down the hedge, across the grass and road, and up the bank and hedge on the opposite side. This shadow should connect with the dark tree on the right. Paint the shadows to indicate the contours of the hedge and grass verge.

**2** Add more Winsor blue and alizarin before painting the foreground shadow. Use the point of the mop brush, starting under the left-hand tree, working down, across the road and up to the dark tree on the left. Leave some small areas unpainted. This gives a feeling of light casting on parts of the road and grasses. Paint the outer edge of this shadow using brushstrokes that suggest the light foliage on the far left and sunlit grasses on the right-hand bank.

**3** Work your way across the road and down into the foreground. Before the wash dries add alizarin crimson to the mix and stroke that into the shadow colour. This will give the shadow a warm glow.



**Colin Steed**

Colin is a professional artist working en plein air and from his studio in Essex. He has collectors of his work in the UK and worldwide. Visit Colin's website to see more of his work [colinsteedart.com](http://colinsteedart.com)

# Art clubs

Over to you for the latest news on club exhibitions and activities

## Exhibitions

### ■ Cheltenham Art Club

Autumn Exhibition at Gardens Gallery, Montpellier Gardens, Cheltenham, GL50 1SD. Wednesday 3rd September to Tuesday 9th September 2025. 10am to 5pm every day opening at 12pm on the 3rd. Visit [cheltenhamartclub.co.uk](http://cheltenhamartclub.co.uk)

### ■ Clevedon Art Club

67th Open Art Exhibition at The Science Atrium, Clevedon School, Clevedon, from 16th to 24th August. Open daily from 10.30am to 4pm. Visit [www.clevedonartclub.co.uk](http://www.clevedonartclub.co.uk)

### ■ East Kent Art Society

Open Exhibition, St Mary's Art Centre, Strand Street, Sandwich CT13 9HN, Saturday 23rd to Monday 25th August, 10am to 5pm. Visit [eastkentartsociety.co.uk](http://eastkentartsociety.co.uk)

### ■ Hempnall Art Club

Annual Art Exhibition, Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th October. Open daily 10.30am to 4.00pm at Hempnall Village Hall, Bungay Road, Hempnall, Norwich, Norfolk, NR15 2NG. Refreshments available. Search for Hempnall Art Club on Facebook

### ■ Mellor Art Society

25th Anniversary Exhibition at St Martins Church Hall, Brabyns Brow, Marple Bridge, Stockport, SK6 5DT. Saturday 18th (10am to 5pm) and Sunday 19th October (11am to 4pm). Refreshments available. Admission free. Search for Mellor Art Society on Facebook.

### ■ Norfolk and Norwich Art Circle

209th exhibition at Munnings Art Museum, Dedham, Essex, CO7 6AZ. Wednesday 10th to Sunday 21st September, 10am to 4pm. Admission free. Visit [nnartcircle.com](http://nnartcircle.com)

### ■ Royal Tunbridge Wells Art Society

Summer Exhibition and sale of work, Sussex House, 61 Lower Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5TE. Friday 15th August to Monday 25th August. Open daily 10am to 4pm. Admission free. Visit [rtwas.org](http://rtwas.org)

### ■ Sidmouth Society of Artists

Festival of Art. Kennaway House, from Saturday 23rd August to Monday 1st September. Visit [sidmouthsocietyofartists.com](http://sidmouthsocietyofartists.com)



Corrin Tulk's *'Shifting Sands'* can be seen at Norfolk and Norwich Art Circle 209th exhibition at Munnings Art Museum this September.

## Best in show



Bridget Vaughan, *Rye Harbour Nature Reserve*, acrylic and acrylic inks, 12x12in. (30.5x30.5cm) won the Leisure Painter & The Artist Award at East Sussex Arts Club.

## Don't forget

to invite visitors to your exhibitions to vote for their favourite painting in the show. Send us details and a high-resolution image of the winning painting and we will publish it in a future issue of *Leisure Painter*. For more information email [artclubs@painters-online.co.uk](mailto:artclubs@painters-online.co.uk) Thanks and congratulations, to this collection of 'Best in Show' artworks.



Caroline Webster's *'Two Friends'*, pastel, won best in show at Epsom and Ewell Art Group.

Best in show continues on page 58

## Best in show continued



Haltemprice Art Group's Annual Exhibition 'Best in Show' winner was a clear favourite Lucy Sewell, *Lion*, acrylic on a canvas, 16x20in (40.5x51cm).



At a recent art exhibition and sale held by Uckfield Art Group, Michael Raho won with his picture of a Seal and the clever title of 'Seal The Deal'!

## Art club challenge

We're delighted to share some of the entries to June's art club challenge of which the theme was '**Small things**'. Thank you to all of you who entered. We love seeing your work!



Jackie Grant, *Physalis*, watercolour, 9x12in (22.8x30.4cm)

Our next challenge is '**Inky adventures**'. Email your work to [artclubs@painter-online.co.uk](mailto:artclubs@painter-online.co.uk) for the chance to feature in the December edition.



Kath Kelly, *Mixed Nuts*, coloured pencil on hot pressed watercolour paper 5½x5½in. (13x13cm)



Gillian Heywood, *Omani seashells*, watercolour, 3¼x6in (8.5x15.5cm)

# From the Gallery

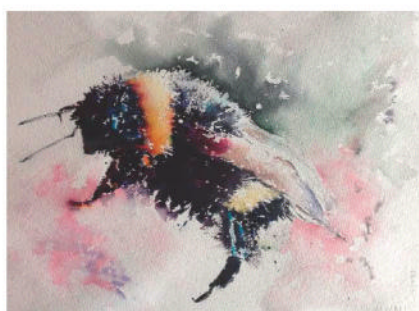
A tiny selection of over 800 fantastic artworks posted to the Painters Online gallery over the last month... go to [painters-online.co.uk/gallery](http://painters-online.co.uk/gallery) to see the ever growing collection and upload your own masterpieces



TOP RIGHT: *Bah Humbug*, oil sketch, 3½x2½in (9x6cm) - tiny still life oil sketch by Matthew Alton

BOTTOM RIGHT: *Tiny Visitor* by Karen Thomas

FAR RIGHT: *A splash of Cherry* by Carole Kelly, 10x12in (25.5x30.5cm)



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Highlights in your next issue

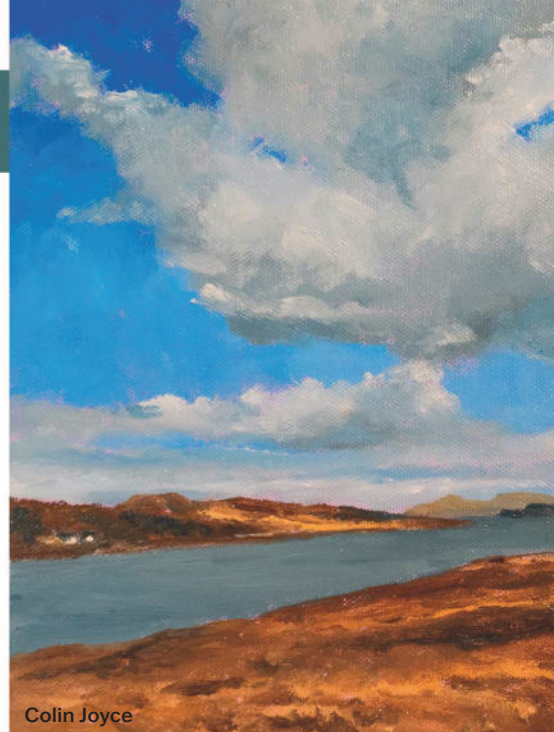
# Leisure Painter & the artist

Welcome to *Leisure Painter's* next edition with a special focus on seascapes and coastal inspiration.

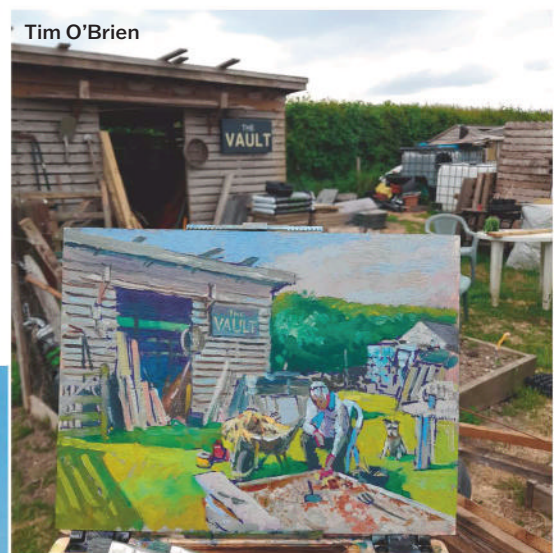
- Gemma Lessinger discuss the ways she creates **texture** in her seascapes.
- Paint along in an **exercise in aerial perspective** with Elena Parashko as she recreates the scenes of Queenstown as a sunny day.
- Jem Bowden introduces the second part of his series on composition looking at **assessing reference photos** and **compositional sketching** looking at Lady's Tower on the Scottish coast.



Gemma Lessinger



Colin Joyce



Tim O'Brien

Elena Parashko



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## Highlights in the October issue of *The Artist*



Linda Birch

### New next month

- New contributor Nicki Saunders shares her wealth of **knowledge on watercolour** and the pigments she recommends.
- Learn the **painting process of watercolour** artist and new contributor Daniel Fermor-Smith as he captures late afternoon at the Alhambra.

### You'll also find

- Colin Joyce completes his series of **dramatic skies**.
- Tim O'Brien shares his passion for painting **allotments and sheds**.
- John Mitchell shares his experience of **painting with impaired eyesight**.
- A season of **small things** with Linda Birch
- Tips on **travelling light** from Tony Underhill

- In our next issue, acclaimed marine artist **Robert Brindley** shares his deep knowledge and techniques for capturing boats and harbours in oil. From selecting the perfect viewpoint to mastering mood, light, and texture, Brindley walks us through the process—from quick sketches to finished paintings. Whether you're painting quiet fishing boats or bustling working harbours, this in-depth guide is packed with expert tips and inspiring examples to elevate your marine art.



Robert Brindley

- Join accomplished artist **Paul Weaver** as he explores the breathtaking beauty of the Scottish Highlands in a panoramic watercolour format. From Glencoe to Skye, Paul shares insights on capturing vast, dramatic landscapes, offering expert tips on composition, tonal planning, and working with light and atmosphere.
- Step inside the world of renowned artist **Ian Sidaway** as he shares an intimate look at his daily life, working practices, and decades-long career. From early morning sketching to studio sessions and gallery collaborations, Ian discusses his inspirations, routines, and reflections on sustaining a professional art practice.



Nicki Saunders

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# the artist

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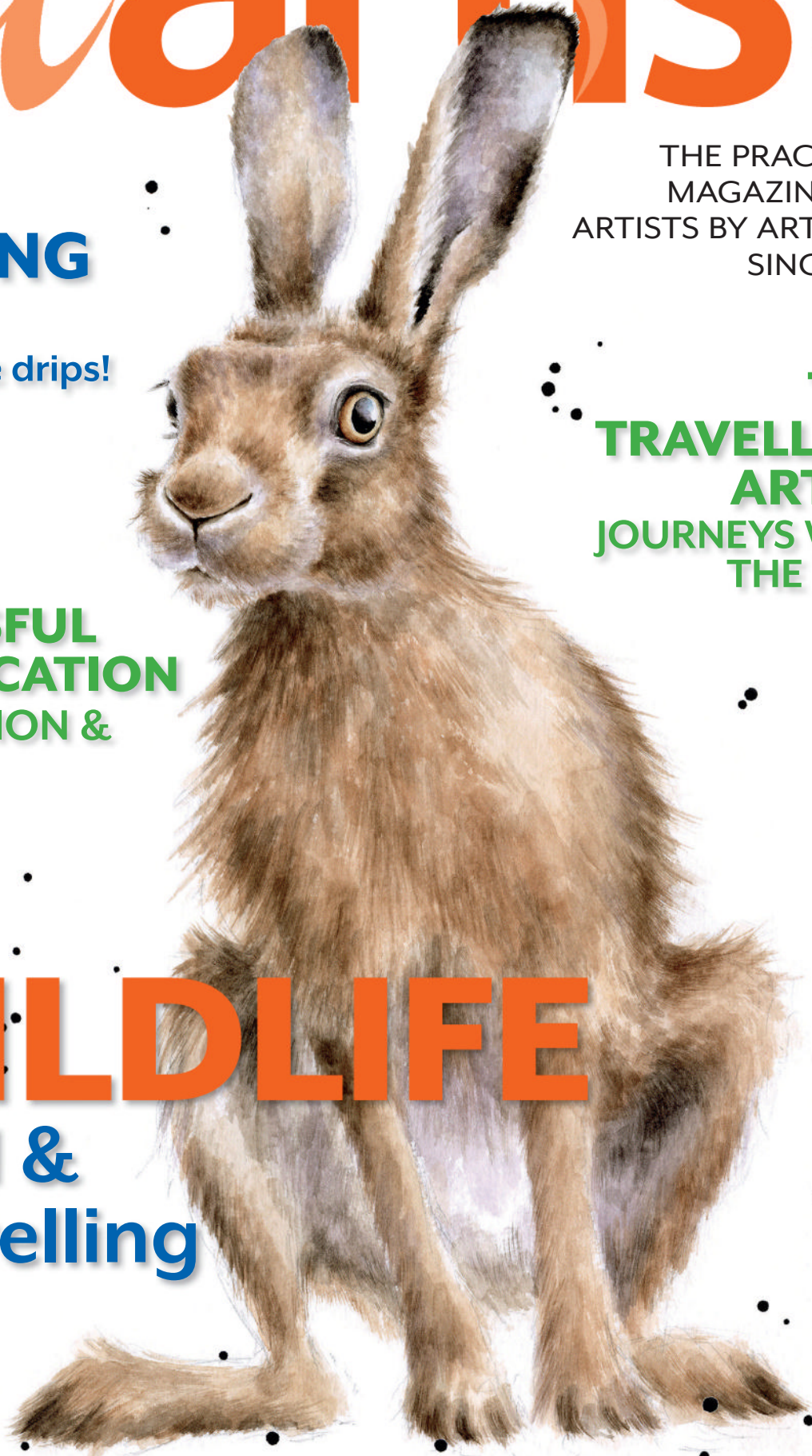
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# SHAPES THAT FLOW



"Meditaciones de un Moka vespertino", 50 x 70 cm, Nitram Charcoal on Gvarro 300 gsm paper

## WITH NITRAM CHARCOAL

"'Meditaciones de un Moka vespertino' is a work that captures the feeling of enjoying an afternoon coffee while those thoughts that often linger in our minds throughout the day seem to fade away for a moment, making way for tranquility.

I really enjoy the versatility of Nitram products, particularly the ability to use wet media to create stains and free-flowing shapes with Liquid Charcoal. Likewise, I appreciate using charcoal sticks to add structure and detail to my drawings."

~ *Betzalel Maida Galicia*

To watch a video of how Betzalel Maida Galicia created this drawing with Nitram Charcoal, please visit: <https://nitramcharcoal.com/Betzalel> or scan the QR code



Betzalel Maida Galicia, a Bolivian-Venezuelan figurative artist, began studying at an early age at the Art Academy of the Ateneo de Valencia, Venezuela, where he took drawing and painting classes from 2008 to 2010. He later pursued further education at the Universidad Nacional Experimental Rafael María Baralt in Zulia, Venezuela, graduating in 2015 while also participating in the university's Culture Coordination program. His work has been exhibited in the USA, Spain, Venezuela, and Bolivia. Currently, he is a founding member of the Roca Gravato Foundation and serves as the pro-tempore director of the Academy of Figurative Arts in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

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Printed by Warners Midlands plc



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Jane Stroud Editor

# WELCOME from the editor

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

There's something about the heat of summer that changes the way we see, and feel, everything. The sun sharpens shadows, saturates colour and stirs a certain restlessness in the soul. For artists, these long, golden days are both muse and challenge: the light is exquisite, the heat at once energising and exhausting. During these months, the world seems to hum a little louder, and we listen more intently, with brush or pencil in hand.

This issue of *The Artist* is infused with the warmth and vibrancy of the season.

From Becky Thorley-Fox's evocative plein-air studies of coastal birds at one of her favourite summer haunts, to practical advice on limiting your palette, perfect for travelling light, you'll find insights and inspiration to help elevate your work in the studio or out in the field.

Caroline Saunders had the pleasure of speaking with the wonderfully talented Hannah Dale, whose charming and widely adored wildlife illustrations continue to delight audiences nationwide. Her ability to bring character and warmth to each creature is captivating.

Elsewhere, Grahame Booth offers a step-by-step demonstration on capturing an open summer landscape, complete with that elusive (and sometimes divisive!) heat haze. We also bring you the remarkable story of Alan Cotton's travels to exotic shores as a guest of King Charles III, in his role as Royal Tour Artist; what an extraordinary experience to share.

So, whether you're sketching in the dappled shade or rising early to greet the morning light, I hope this issue meets you wherever you are, creatively, emotionally, and geographically.

Here's to summer in all its brilliance, and to the art it continues to inspire.

Warmly,

Jane

Jane Stroud Editor



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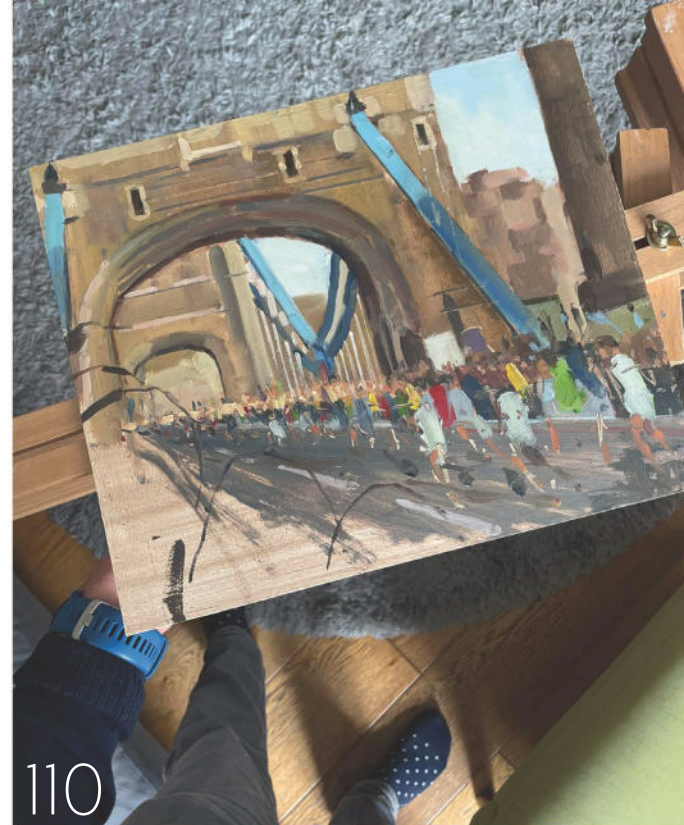
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# Contents

## FEATURES

### 72 A day in the life of Paul Weaver

**Sally Bulgin** meets the artist and discovers more about his life and art practice

### 76 A return to nature

IN CONVERSATION **Caroline Saunders** talks to **Hannah Dale** about her expressive and characterful illustrations

### 82 Journeys with The King

Patricia Crossley-Hayes talks to royal tour artist **Alan Cotton** about his experiences of travelling with King Charles III

### 106 Learn from the Masters

**Sarah Edmonds** shines a light on lesser-known artworks by artists we know and love. Part 9: Vanessa Bell

### 109 Book review

**Henry Malt** shares his views on the latest art book releases.

### 110 Turning professional

**Rodney Kingston** shares his experience of his first year as a full-time artist

### 112 Ask an Artist

**Kimberley Keegan**'s tips and advice for working artists

### 114 An overloaded palette

**Mike Barr** discusses the disadvantages of having too many colours on your palette.

## PRACTICALS

### 86 A summer landscape

**Grahame Booth** shares a project exclusively with readers of The Artist from his new book *Plein Air Painting with Watercolours*.

### 90 Drawing with paint

Classically trained artist, **Luca Indraccolo** paints a figure portrait and shares his method of drawing with paint.

### 94 In the footsteps of Tunnicliffe

**Becky Thorley-Fox** completes her series painting *plein-air* through the seasons, this time with a demonstration of summer coastal birds.

### 98 Simplification

Follow **Nicholas Poullis**'s advice on simplifying your landscape subject.

### 102 Watercolour freed!

In the third of six articles on unlocking the potential of watercolours, **Catherine Beale** encourages you to embrace the drips while exploring painting pouring





86



94



102



106

## PLUS THIS MONTH

- 65 Editor's welcome
- 68 Reader Letters
- 69 The Art World
- 109 Book reviews
- 115 **COMING NEXT MONTH:** highlights in *The Artist's* October 2025 issue

### THIS MONTH'S COVER



Hannah Dale, *Hare*, watercolour, 16l/2x113/4in (42x30cm)  
See pages 76 to 81.

### EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS



**David Curtis**  
ROI, RSMA

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



**Haidee-Jo Summers**  
ROI, RSMA

has won many awards for her *plein-air* and *alla-prima* oil paintings. She is an elected member of the ROI, the author of *Plein Air Painting with Oils* and *Vibrant Oils* and also has a DVD with the same title.

# YOUR VIEWS

## LETTERS, EMAILS AND COMMENTS

Email [theartistletters@tapc.co.uk](mailto:theartistletters@tapc.co.uk) or write to The Editor, *The Artist*,  
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## STAR LETTER

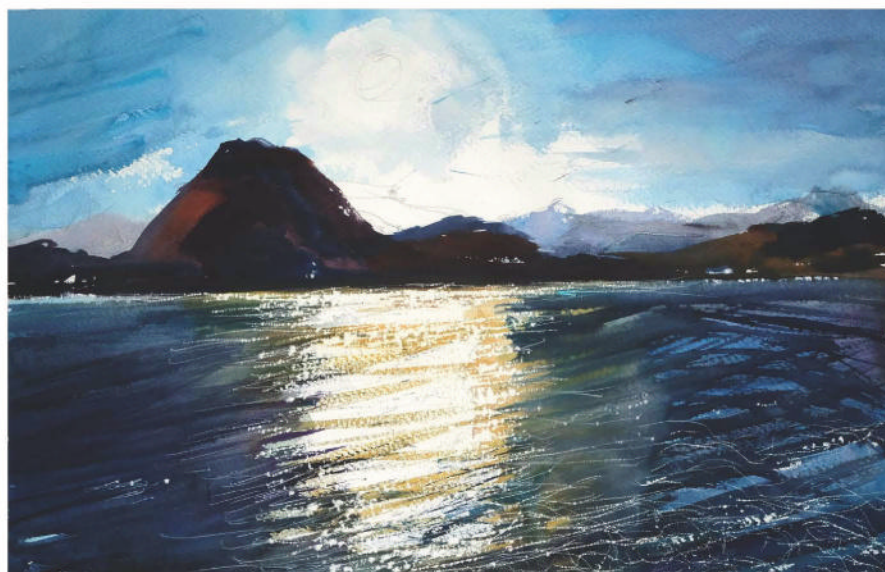
### More from the Impressionists

With reference to the Letters' page in *The Artist* June 2025, without doubt JMW Turner's influence on the French Impressionists cannot be understated. But nor can that of Corot, Courbet and even Delacroix – would we add those to the grouping itself? Monet himself took inspiration from Constable's expressive use of green during his time in Britain, should he be added too? The Impressionists earned and indeed owned their name, initially meant as an insult from the critic Louis Leroy. It was a term of its time, applicable to its contemporaries. Turner's influence is undoubted, but distinct. He is a British icon to be celebrated and revered in his own softly depicted and exquisite light. Turner is the Fighting Temeraire of 19th century art: resplendent, opulent, full of glory, but tugged into the future by his Impressionist descendants.

Owen Earwicker, by email



*This month's star letter will receive a Rosa Classic Watercolour Metal Case with an assortment of six colours. Rosa Watercolours are handmade in Ukraine in collaboration with professional artists with a high pigment concentration and organic gum Arabic. They offer a high ratio of single pigment colours, so you can create clear, bright colour mixes.*



### The open air

I'm just back from the Arctic (Hurtigruten Post ship round the North Cape and back to Bergen) with some *en plein air* impressions, a book of pencil sketches and not very good photos. Perhaps one of your excellent contributors can recommend a simple set up for a non-tech artist on the go and give me some tips on how to photograph the Polar Lights on a pitch black night and whales in freezing blizzards with it. Even a stubborn all weather artist like me has to admit that photos do have advantages when attempting to recall 'my essence' of such a 2500-mile 12-day-and-night journey. That said, only by working in the open,

however arduous the conditions, can Nature's energy power you up in a way no studio is able to compete with. Together they offer a winning combination. Just think, old Turner had himself lashed to a ship's mast for four hours to paint his snowstorm at sea impression. Now there's an idea!

John Owen, by email

### Thank you to *The Artist*

I must give a thousand 'thank-yous' to the judges who chose my painting, *Social Inclusion* to be shown at this year's TALP Open exhibition and for the Hahnemühle Award given at the Patchings preview. I often read comments from established

artists encouraging readers of *The Artist* to submit their work for exhibition, and I can now honestly agree it can be a life-changing step forward. I've been painting in oils – maybe three or four a year – for five years, having stopped with watercolour about 35 years ago when I turned my other hobby of guitar making into a full-time job. Working 12 to 15 hours a day seven days a week, it's been fun, from helping out the kid down the road to fixing instruments for the Arctic Monkeys' tours and recently restoring Paul McCartney's 'lost bass', but during all those years I've never stopped thinking about painting. Virtually every photograph I've taken has been for painting reference and I've absorbed books full of techniques, colour theory, effects, and so on that have been applied to imaginary canvases. It's felt like I had a jacket thrown over my shoulders with empty sleeves hanging around waiting for that other pair of arms. It won't be an easy change, but my workshop is about to become my studio. The encouraging words from your magazine and its contributors and now with the third painting I've had chosen for the TALP Open, it has to be done; and whatever the outcome I won't be living with the regret of not trying. I think there is a definite compulsion to make art that never goes away, whether you recognise it or not, and no matter how hard circumstances contrive to shove it to the back of your internal filing system, or how long it takes, it will eventually come out by some means.

Martin Harrison, by email



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# THE ART WORLD

NEWS, INFORMATION AND ONLINE EVENTS IN THE ART WORLD

compiled by Jane Stroud

## ANOTHER CHANCE ENCOUNTER

**Lubaina Himid with Magda Stawarska: Another Chance Encounter**  
12 July to 2 November 2025

Initially trained in theatre design, Himid is best known for her innovative approaches to painting and social engagement, playing a pivotal role in the British Black Arts movement since the 1980s. Over the last decade, she has earned international recognition for her figurative canvases, which explore overlooked and invisible aspects of history and contemporary daily life.

At Kettle's Yard, her new work will centre on what is missing from the telling of life stories, who is left out of narratives, what strategies are used to fill in the gaps and the objects we choose to leave behind as clues.

There will also be a new installation that builds on Himid and Stawarska's *Blue Grid Test* (2020), drawing on correspondence between writer and artist Sophie Brzeska and artist Nina Hamnett. Alongside smaller interventions, Himid will also show a new large-scale painting in the Kettle's Yard house.

Visit [kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk](http://kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk) for more information.

Lubaina Himid, *'Favours For Years To Come'*, from the series *'How May I Help You?'*, 2025, acrylic and charcoal on canvas.

Courtesy Hollybush Gardens, London and Greene Naftali, New York.

Photo: Gavin Renshaw.





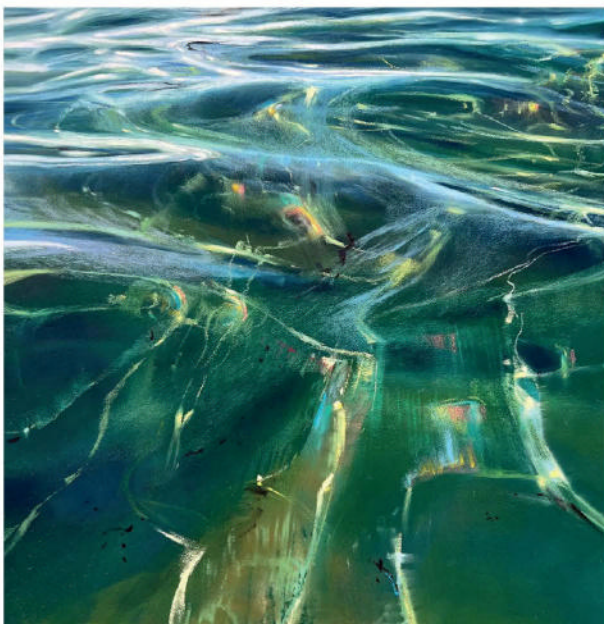
▲ Emily Kam Ngwarray, **Ntang Dreaming 1989**. NGA, Canberra. © Emily Kam Ngwarray Copyright Agency. Licensed by DACS 2025)

## EMILY KAM KNGWARRAY

10 July 2025 to 11 January 2026

Renowned Australian artist Emily Kam Ngwarray created compelling, powerful works reflecting her extraordinary life as a senior Anmatyerr woman from the Sandover region in the Northern Territory. One of the 20th century's most remarkable artists, Ngwarray translated her lived experience and spiritual engagement with her ancestral Country, Alhalker into vibrant batiks and later into monumental paintings on canvas. Running from 10th July 2025 to 11th January 2026 at Tate Modern, discover rich textiles, paintings, film and audio elements that embody the majestic scope of Ngwarray's Country and ancestral heritage. Created in collaboration with the National Gallery of Australia, this will be the first large-scale presentation of the artist's work ever held in Europe and a celebration of her astonishing career.

Visit [tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern](https://tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern) for more information.



## CEDRIC MORRIS: ARTIST, PLANTSMAN & TRAVELLER

7 June to 12 October 2025

Cedric Morris (1889 – 1982) was one of the most talented painters of the natural world in twentieth-century British art.

This new exhibition explores Morris' relationship with Lett-Haines and Benton End, his travels across Europe to find and paint new plant species and his lifelong affinity with the natural world.

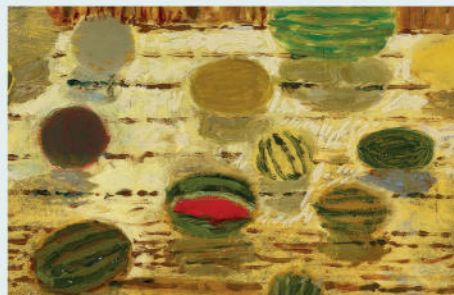
This is the first major presentation of Morris' work in the North of England and includes works on loan from Tate, National Portrait Gallery, Gainsborough's House, Philip Mould Gallery and a number of private collections.

Visit [maltingsberwick.co.uk](https://maltingsberwick.co.uk) to find out more.



▲ Cedric Morris **Iris Seedlings (1943)** Tate © The estate of Sir Cedric Morris)

## DREAMS OF THE EVERYDAY: PAINTINGS BY WINIFRED NICHOLSON & ANDREW CRANSTON



▲ Andrew Cranston **Melons and Heads 14x21.6cm**.

**The Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney Islands:**  
21 June to 13 September 2025

**The Holburne Museum, Bath:**  
3 October 2025 to 11 January 2026

**Dreams of the everyday**, is a new exhibition which brings together the paintings of **Winifred Nicholson** (1893–1981) and **Andrew Cranston** (b. 1969, Hawick, UK).

The exhibition explores the connections and contrasts in paintings by Nicholson and Cranston, many of which share a delight in ordinary, often domestic, realities – drawing on daily-life, memory and imagination, and incorporating figures, interiors and glimpses of nature. Both artists' practices are at once rooted in the real world, while going beyond conventionality and the commonplace to evoke a sense of non-physical, sometimes mystical, and occasionally visionary, realities.

Get your tickets at [pierartscentre.com](https://pierartscentre.com)

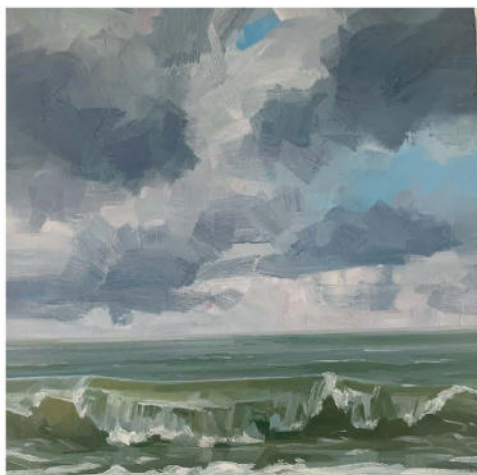
## RBSA SUMMER SHOW 2025

3 July to 2 August

As the largest open call of the year, the exhibition will take place over all three floors of the Gallery. There will be an enormous variety of work on display from a diverse collection of national and international artists.

Find out more at [rbsa.org.uk](https://rbsa.org.uk)

◀ Elena Degenhardt, **Meditation IX**



▲ **Late Quartets** by Tai-Shan Schierenberg

## SUMMER EXHIBITION; A PORTRAIT OF ALDEBURGH BEACH

Until 24th October by appointment

A selection of artists including Regine Bartsch, Peter Blake RA, Eileen Cooper RA, Jude Hardy, Aaron Kasmin, Tessa Newcomb, Tai-Shan Schierenberg, Alison Wilding RA and Claire Zakiewicz will be displaying their work at Aldeburgh Beach Lookout and Arthouse.

Visit [aldeburghbeachlookout.com](http://aldeburghbeachlookout.com) for more information.

## SCENTED VISIONS: SMELL IN ART 1850 -1915

15 May to 9 November 2025

Immerse yourself in the captivating world of Pre-Raphaelite art through the evocative power of scent.

Engage your sense of smell to gain a new appreciation for the cultural context behind Victorian paintings, and the artists' intentions. This exhibition includes three bespoke scents, created by Puig in collaboration with Artphilia, inspired by key elements within selected Pre-Raphaelite works.

Discover the works of renowned artists such as Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale, John Frederick Lewis, John Everett Millais, Evelyn De Morgan, G F Watts, Simeon Solomon, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Featuring loans from the Tate, the National Portrait Gallery, Birmingham Museums Trust, and Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, this exhibition offers a unique opportunity to explore the Pre-Raphaelite movement through a multi-sensory lens.

Visit [wattsgallery.org.uk](http://wattsgallery.org.uk) to find out more.

► John Everett Millais,  
**The Blind Girl, 1856, oil on  
canvas, 80.8×53.4cm.**

Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust,  
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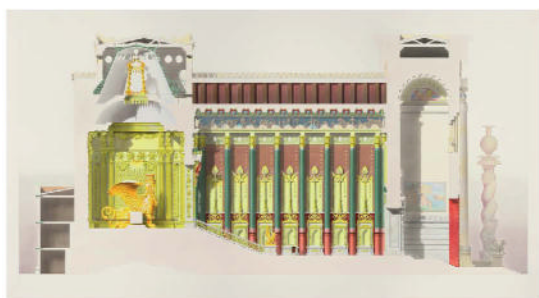
## PABLO BRONSTEIN THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON AND ITS CONTENTS

16 July to 2 November

**The Temple of Solomon and its Contents** features a new body of work by Bronstein, one of the leading artists working in Britain today, including cross-sections and aerial plans, façade and frieze details, visualisations of the Solomonic columns, the principal contents, and much more. It promises a thrilling walk through one of history's great fascinations, a building that exists as much in the imagination as it did in reality.

Alongside the exhibition will be a display of drawings and architectural books from Waddesdon's historic collection, specially selected by the artist. Encompassing designs for altars and candelabra, furniture and panelling, rooms and religious ritual objects, it will be the first time they are presented at Waddesdon.

Find out more at [waddesdon.org.uk](http://waddesdon.org.uk)



▲ Pablo Bronstein, **Temple of Solomon I, cross-section, 2024–25. Acrylic on paper, 105×200 cm.**

Courtesy: the artist and Herald Street

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# A day in the life of PAUL WEAVER

Paul Weaver talks to Sally Bulgin about his life and career as a professional artist

After studying and working in graphic design, illustration and the print industry for 25 years, Paul has been a self-taught, full-time professional artist for the past two decades. Based in the southwest, he makes his living by tutoring painting workshops, courses and holidays in the UK and overseas, demonstrating for St Cuthberts Mill (where I first met Paul many years ago) and Ken Bromley Art Supplies, and by exhibiting and selling his work widely.

Paul enjoys working in a variety of media including watercolour, water-soluble oils, acrylic and line and wash, inspired by the light and atmosphere of his favourite subject matter, including landscapes, townscape, markets, marine and coastal scenes. He is an elected member of the Pure Watercolour Society and a regular contributor to *The Artist* and has some useful tips to share based on his experiences as a professional artist.



Paul painting on site  
at Porthleven Harbour

## Can you describe a typical day as a professional working artist?

'My working day is often varied, depending on what the priority is at the time. Most of my income comes through teaching, be that demos and workshops for art groups, online tuition or tutoring painting holidays in the UK and abroad. I'm also a regular contributor to *The Artist* magazine and Bromley's Art Supplies catalogue and online blog, both of which demand considered planning and time to create step-by-step tutorials.

'When I'm not preparing lessons, teaching or writing, I paint. Any spare time is taken up with administration: answering emails, chasing new leads or updating my website and social media. I'm eternally grateful to my wife, who is not only hugely supportive and constructive with all my creative efforts, but also does my bookkeeping.'

## How do you divide your time between studio work and working en plein air?

'Plein-air studies are a vital part of my working practice, for gathering reference and keeping observational and painting skills fresh and sharp. I work in watercolour, water-soluble oil, acrylic and line and wash and the location, subject and weather will often dictate which medium I use. Some of these paintings might be suitable to frame or will provide invaluable reference for up-and-coming competitions and exhibitions. Commissioned work is usually completed in the studio.'

## Where is your studio and how do you organise its contents to suit your working practices?

'I'm lucky to have my studio in the house. It is a practical, well-lit room with everything I need to work, day or night. I have an A1 drawing board by the window for large work and lesson planning. I usually stand at a box easel to paint. A plan chest holds watercolour paper, drawing pads and finished studies on paper, and I have a wall of shelves for wet oil studies. Cupboards



with roll-out racks hold all my teaching references, drawing and painting materials, canvases, boards and treasured library of books. My computer/admin area is in a separate room.'

#### **How important is your membership of a professional society?**

'I've been an elected member of the Pure Watercolour Society since 2010, founded in 1999 by James Fletcher-Watson RI, RBA, to encourage and preserve the classical working methods of the medium. I tutor several courses at Windrush House (his former home) across the year, as well as paint and exhibit with the other members when possible and have made many good friends and business contacts as a result.'

#### **What is your relationship with galleries in terms of solo and/or joint exhibitions and sales of your work?**

'I've worked successfully with several galleries over the years, as well as having success with solo and joint exhibitions I've organised with other artists. It's important to keep pricing parallel across all events, to maintain the established value with customers and to ensure that one venue doesn't compete with another.'

### **'It's important to keep pricing parallel across all events, to maintain the established value with customers and to ensure that one venue doesn't compete with another.'**

#### **Do you have a direct relationship with the public via a website?**

'While a lot of my teaching work is face to face, my website is an important "shop window" for my business. All up-and-coming classes and painting holidays are detailed here, as well as my online shop carrying original paintings, cards and teaching films. New contacts can also message me here: [paulweaverart.co.uk](http://paulweaverart.co.uk)'

#### **Which social media channels are most useful to you?**

'I have a Facebook page linked to my website, where I post details of any current news, articles, events and recent work. This in turn drives interest and valuable contacts.'

▲ **Sunday Morning, watercolour, 13×18in (33×46cm).** 'This was my entry for the TALP Open 25 competition.'

It's so important to keep reminding your audience that you are still there and doing things.'

#### **How does teaching affect/benefit your own working practices?**

'As mentioned earlier, teaching forms an important part of my income and working life. It is something I greatly enjoy and find hugely rewarding. I welcome the variety of working disciplines. One day I could be sharing my experience and skills with a group, the next flying solo and deep in my own creative focus. Art for me is all about communication, be that passing on a painting technique to a student or capturing a moment on paper to help a wider audience appreciate the beauty of the world in a more visual way.'

#### **Who has had the greatest influence on your own practice, and how do you stay motivated?**

'I've been inspired by many artists, specifically the Impressionists both past





and present. John Singer Sargent, Joaquín Sorolla, Edward Wesson, Edward Seago, James Fletcher-Watson, Ken Howard, Peter Brown, Trevor Chamberlain and David Curtis are a constant inspiration. Their incredible drive and work ethic, flawless draughtsmanship and ability to capture light and atmosphere are second to none. When light is the subject and reason for painting, every day is exciting, new and different, so remaining motivated is never an issue.'

#### **Do you consider it important to continue to enter open competitions?**

'Competitions are well worth entering. Apart from the attraction of prizes, they can create opportunities for valuable publicity with the public and potential galleries, exhibitions and expanding the portfolio.'

#### **Finally, how do you price your work?**

'My pricing has been driven by the galleries I've worked with, helping me establish a realistic high street value. This also takes into consideration my creative time, travel, materials, scale of the work and framing costs.'

TA

### **PAUL'S FIVE TOP TIPS FOR ASPIRING PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS**

- 1** My best advice was from Ken Howard OBE, RA, who said an artist should make drawing and painting an incurable habit and work from life whenever possible. Practise your craft and find your own creative voice.
- 2** Exhibit and get your work seen at every opportunity.
- 3** Network with as many potential markets as possible – suppliers, galleries and art societies, face to face and online through web and social media.
- 4** Visit exhibitions and study the work of past and current artists that inspire you.
- 5** Consider other sources of making a living in case painting sales go quiet.

◀ **Crab Fishing, Bosham, water-soluble oil, 8x10in (20x25cm)**

# A return to **NATURE**

Caroline Saunders talks to artist, **Hannah Dale** of Wrendale Designs, about her widely recognised, characterful illustrations that accompany her new book, *A Wilding Year*



▲ **Bullfinch on Beech, watercolour, 16½×11¼in (42×30cm)**

'The main focus of this painting is the bright coral colour and strong contrast in the bullfinch. I used pyrrol scarlet, a warm fiery red as the base and softened it with quinacridone rose to add a cooler, pinkish tone. A touch of burnt sienna created a slightly earthy tone, to make the colour more natural. I used touches of these tones throughout the leaves to ensure the painting felt cohesive. The white space is important in this painting and the leaves are positioned to allow it to frame the bullfinch.'



### Hannah Dale

studied zoology at Cambridge University followed by five years as a stockbroker in London, before meeting her husband, a Lincolnshire farmer, and a return to the passion she always had for nature and painting. She established Wrendale Designs in 2012 'on a crowded kitchen table in Melton Ross, Lincolnshire', and since that time has won many prestigious awards including the NatWest Everywoman Award in 2021, given to the most inspirational woman running a business trading from six to nine years; five Henriettes (the Oscars of the greeting card industry) and in 2024 the King's Award for excellence in international trade. Her new book, *A Wilding Year*, is a deeply personal journey – part journal, part sketchbook – celebrating the beauty to be found in untidy landscapes, as she and her husband transformed unproductive ex-arable land into a thriving, self-sustaining landscape. Find out more at [wildwrendale.co.uk](http://wildwrendale.co.uk)

**W**ith a detailed, expressive, and character-driven illustrative style, Hannah Dale is heavily inspired by nature and wildlife. Combining aesthetic appeal with quirky, cute, nostalgic illustration, Hannah uplifts us all – not only with her formidable style, but her wise advice, that encourages wilding and wildlife, of which we should all take notice.

Hannah has always admired illustrators who bring warmth and personality to their work. Beatrix Potter has been a huge influence. The world of *Brambly Hedge* by Jill Barklem has also been a big inspiration: 'The intricate details and rich storytelling in those illustrations are wonderful.' For as long as she can remember Hannah has found peace in nature and had a passion to draw. As a child she spent hours alone in a small garden. When she wasn't outside looking at nature, she was inside drawing it!

Watercolour illustrations of wildlife, printed on beautiful quality, sustainably sourced greeting cards were, for Hannah,

where it all started. The charm and personality of each of her animal paintings, captured through soft watercolour washes, are then worked into with finer detail and depth of shading. This blend allows for the creation of life-like textures while maintaining a warm, whimsical feel. Within a few years of hard work Hannah's Wrendale collection grew and her giftware now sells worldwide. When Hannah first started the business, she visited shops with her small collection of cards and asked if they would be interested in stocking them. It helped her to learn what sold well and what did not. Soon she was approached by agents and had a sales team covering the UK.

'The name Wrendale came about as I grew up in a house called Wrenwood and my husband Jack grew up at Pepperdale Farm, so it's a mixture of the two. I could never have imagined where Wrendale would be today and I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunities that it has given me.'

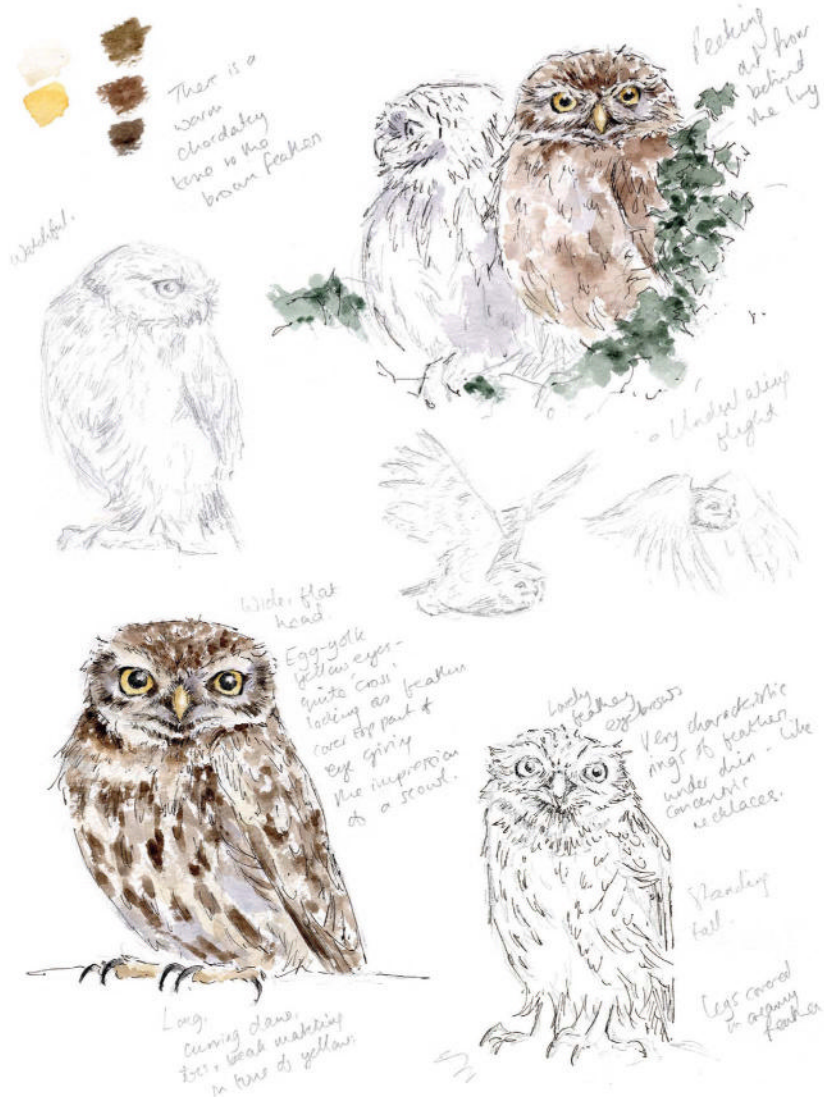


### ▲ Hare, watercolour, 16½×11¼in (42×30cm)

'The simplicity of this painting, with the hare taken out of any landscape context, allows the watchful gaze and alert pose to take centre stage. With the pared back composition, there is nowhere to hide and the detail has to be meticulous. The hare's fur takes in every shade from white to black. The mid-tones are created from burnt sienna, raw sienna, and quinacridone gold to add a glowing warmth, and burnt umber to create deeper shading. I contrasted the yellows in the fur with a mauve shadow that helps to add depth. Fine brushwork and dry-brush techniques replicate the texture of fur.'

### Close observation

Developing her style involved sketching from life and observing animals closely; their postures, expressions, and interactions. Hannah experimented with different media but found watercolour to be the perfect choice for achieving soft edges and natural tones. Adding expressive splashes and loose brushwork helped her to strike a balance between realism and playful energy, which has become a signature element of her work. Hannah usually starts with the eyes. 'If the eyes feel expressive and engaging, the rest of the illustration naturally falls into place. From there, I build up the face and body, paying close attention to posture, movement, and small details that reflect the animal's personality.' Before Hannah starts drawing, she likes to observe the animal's behaviour if possible: how it holds itself, whether it's shy, playful, or confident. Capturing these traits brings the subject to life on the page.



▲ Sketchbook extract – little owls, pencil, archival ink and watercolour, 10½x6in (27x15cm)

'These are working sketches of a pair of little owls living on the farm. The sketches attempt to capture a sense of movement and form while also recording some detail and colour references for use in finished artwork at a later date.'

► Charm of Goldfinches, watercolour and archival ink, 16½x23¼in (42x59cm)

'For me this painting is so symbolic of my book's message: embrace the untidiness and it will yield treasure. I used pen and ink to create the sharp, angular thistles and combined it with a fairly monotone colour palette so that the bright colour of the goldfinches maintain the focus.'

**'One valuable tip I've picked up is to embrace imperfections; those little unexpected details often add character and make the piece feel more natural and alive.'**



Striking a balance between appealing to both children and adults can be challenging for Hannah, but she finds the answer lies in creating illustrations that feel warm, expressive, and full of character. 'For children, I focus on playful details — perhaps a curious tilt of the head, a fluffy texture, or a splash of paint that adds energy. These elements invite imagination and make the animals feel approachable. For adults, I aim to include more subtle details — delicate brushwork, naturalistic poses, or hints of personalities, that reflect familiar wildlife behaviours. This adds depth and realism while still feeling charming. Ultimately, I think people of all ages connect with illustrations that tell a story — whether that's a thoughtful fox, a curious hare or a cheeky duckling — so I always try to capture those little moments that feel relatable to the viewer and heartwarming.'

White space brings a sense of lightness and freshness, displaying the virtues of watercolour, essential for the natural feel of Hannah's illustrations. By leaving the background clear and enhancing the softness and delicacy of the artwork, the focus remains entirely on the subject, allowing the fine details and expressive brushwork to stand out. 'In some cases, the white background becomes part of the composition itself, creating breathing

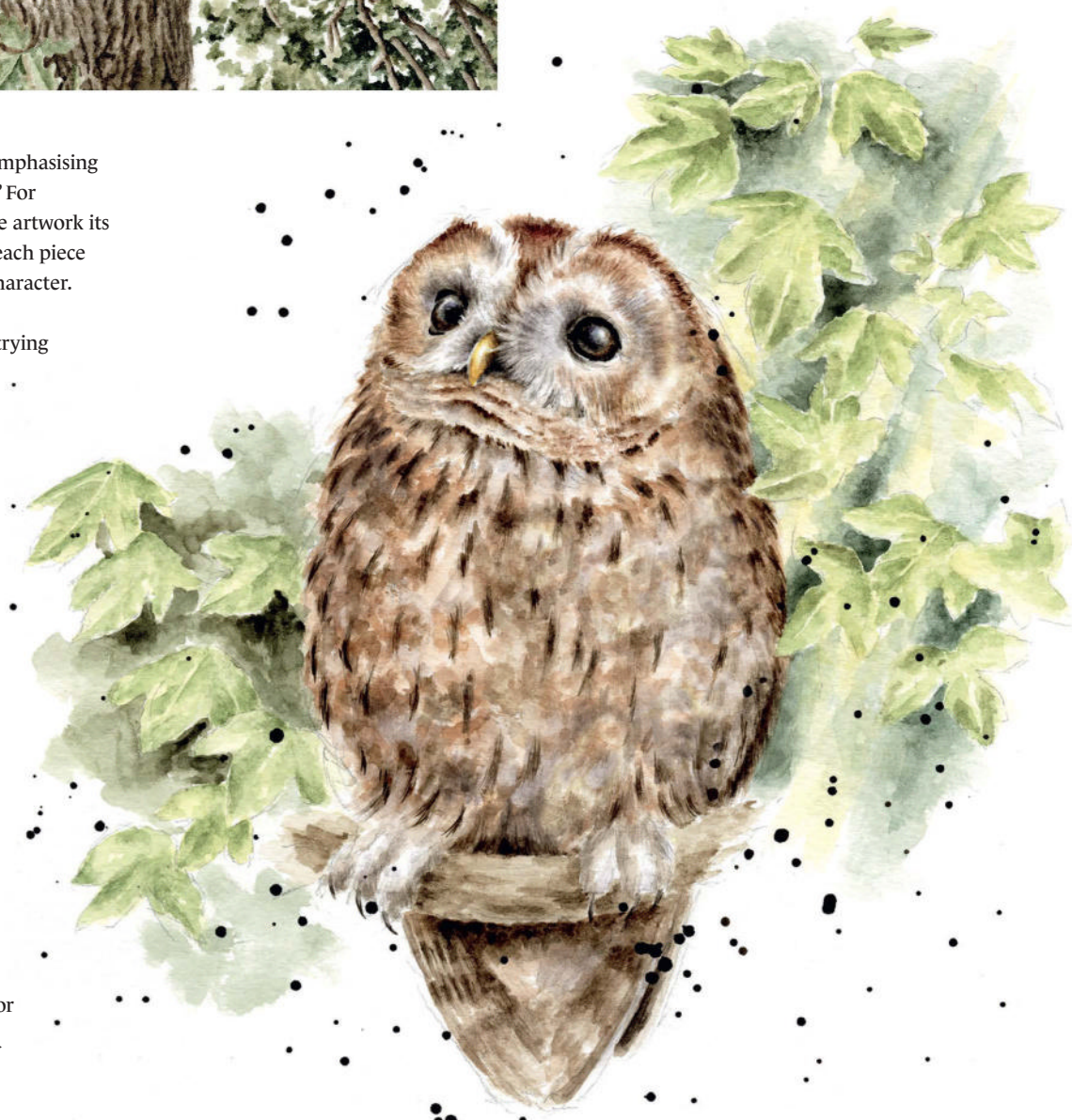


◀ **Oak Tree, watercolour, 16½×11¼in (42×30cm)**

'This piece is quite different from my usual style. I chose to allow the oak tree to bleed to the edges of the paper, rather than cropping it, to help convey its enormity. There are lots of stark contrasts within the painting – it is a study of light and how it falls across the tree trunk and branches, weaving between the leaves.'

▼ **Tawny Owl in Field Maple, watercolour, 16½×11¼in (42×30cm)**

'The positioning of the leaves frame the owl, hinting at the larger mass of leaves in the tree, but stopping short of surrounding the owl altogether. This allows the focus to remain on the detail depicted in the face. The fresh summer leaves have a limey hue produced with hansa yellow medium and phthalo green. This was balanced with undersea green and raw sienna which I used for warmth in the owl and to create harmony within the painting.'



room around the subject and emphasising movement or splashes of paint.' For Hannah this simplicity gives the artwork its distinctive charm and ensures each piece feels bright, lively, and full of character.

'So many of my paintings are unsuccessful; I can spend days trying to get the sketch just right and sometimes I either need a break and to revisit it later or sometimes it just never comes together.' Hannah does not work directly from photographs so there is a huge amount of artistic licence in her work.

'I'm definitely my own harshest critic and it can be mentally draining. I'm never fully satisfied and always strive for the work to be better. Sometimes a fresh pair of eyes and a different perspective can be very helpful. I am lucky to have a fantastic team at Wrendale with lots of creatives so they are a brilliant sounding board for new illustrations or for opinions.'





▲ **Fieldfares, watercolour, 11¼×16½in (30×42cm)**

'The white space is important in the composition of this painting. The fieldfares are all looking in the same direction with momentum created by the angles of the branches, the birds' backs and their beaks. The viewer can speculate about what their gazes are landing on from hints of the context of the wider landscape.'

Hannah loves her small Moleskine sketchbooks that she uses all the time. For her finished pieces she uses cold-pressed watercolour paper. Stretching the paper is not really necessary as her work is not overly wet. 'I love Daniel Smith watercolours; they are so vibrant and rich. I use synthetic brushes in a variety of sizes and a rigger brush for fine lines and whiskers. When working in pen and ink, I prefer a Micron

fineliner for its precise lines and archival-quality ink, which doesn't bleed or smudge when layered with watercolour.'

In recent years Hannah has spent much of her energy and time on a wildness project, where, together with her husband, she has created an undisturbed haven for wildlife on their farmland in Lincolnshire. She has witnessed the return of skylarks, meadow pipits, hobbies, hedgehogs and many more species and written a book documenting the process. 'The opportunity to return to nature felt like it was a chance to give back to the animals and birds that had always inspired me and my artwork. The project has provided an unlimited source of inspiration for new paintings.' Hannah's camera is absolutely full of nature pictures; she is constantly distracted on walks by lichens, fungi, insects or plants she does not recognise. She loves recording interesting textures or colours and finds it a great

resource to come back to time and again when thinking about a new piece of art.

Hannah deserves to be applauded for bringing re-wilding to the forefront. 'It took two years to write, illustrate and compile the book and was mostly written in real time throughout the year, with extracts taken from my sketchbooks.' Having studied zoology at Cambridge University, Hannah has always had a passion for natural history so this was her perfect project.

Hannah calls upon us to see beauty in the wilder environment and cease our relentless obsession with tidiness while embracing a bit more 'wild' in our lives. We are encouraged to discover the amazing effect of a field of thistles or an untidy verge. With a deep appreciation for nature and its restoration, Hannah celebrates wildlife and gives out a hopeful message as nature re-colonises her own rural farm.

'There are definitely times that I find

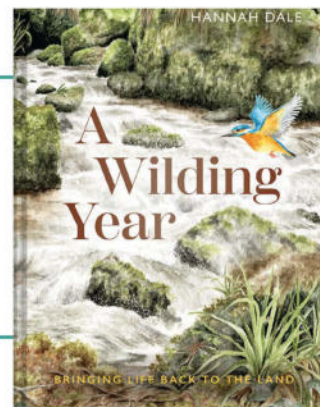
it difficult to stay positive with so much negative and worrying news related to climate change and wildlife loss, both here in Britain and globally. One of the worst feelings is one of helplessness in the face of such a monumental challenge, but we have seen such positive change on the farm in a very short space of time and I think that all we can do is focus on what we can control. If we all made small changes then it could make a huge difference to wildlife on a large scale.

'Pesticides do so much harm and there is no need to use them in gardens or public spaces. I'd love to see people asking their local councils to let verges grow longer and be more tolerant of the little plants that cling to life between paving stones and in cracks. As a society we need to understand that ultra-tidy landscapes are devoid of life. We need to reject this as an ideal. Wilding is for everyone. It doesn't matter if you have a window box or acres of land. Encouraging native species, even if it's just in certain areas of your garden, can make all the difference to wildlife.'

In the future Hannah would like to use her farm for education to bring nature to communities with little access to wild spaces. One of Hannah's favourite paintings in her book is of the goldfinches feeding on thistles, which, she thinks, helps to remind people why these unloved plants are so important. Hannah would definitely like to use her art to drive home this message even more in the future.



Look out for Hannah's beautifully written and awe-inspiring book laced with her delicate watercolour illustrations. *A Wilding Year: Bringing Life Back to the Land*, is published in hardback by Batsford, £14.99.



**Fox Cub, watercolour, 16½×11¼in (42×30cm)**

'This painting focuses entirely on the fox cub, with no distractions from a background. The fur is built up with layers of burnt sienna, raw sienna and quinacridone gold and darkened with burnt umber and sepia. The surrounding grass helps to ground the cub in its environment without overpowering the composition. The direct gaze of the cub, meeting the eye of the viewer creates an immediate connection, drawing the observer in and adding a sense of intimacy.'



# Journeys with The King



**Alan Cotton**

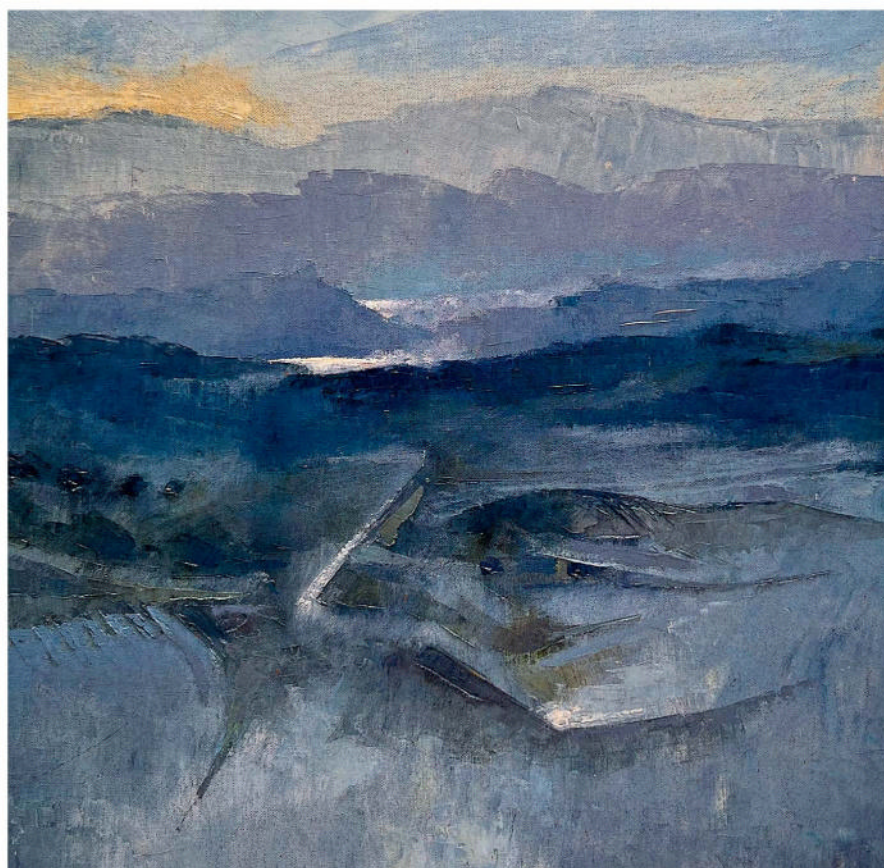
lives in Devon, where the Hartland coastline has been a recurring feature of his work, much of which is held in the collections of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery at Exeter, Plymouth City Art Gallery and the University of Exeter. In 2000 Alan was a founding member of the South West Academy of Fine and Applied Arts and its president for the first six years. He has done much to support and promote the arts in the South West, particularly working with children, earning him an MBE in 2022. Art historian, Jenny Pery, has written three books on Alan's life and work, published by Halsgrove, and there have been a number of television programmes and radio broadcasts made about his work. Alan has been represented by Messum's Fine Art for over 30 years. Find out more at [alancotton.co.uk](http://alancotton.co.uk)

To coincide with the exhibition *The Art of Royal Travel: Journeys with The King* at Buckingham Palace, **Patricia Crossley-Hayes** talks to royal tour artist, **Alan Cotton** about his experiences of travelling with King Charles III

**D**evon-based artist Alan Cotton is always looking for new locations to inspire his work. He has travelled to Provence, Tuscany, Morocco, Ireland, Piemonte, Venice and, with Sir David Hempleman-Adams, as expedition artist to Mount Everest in Tibet on two occasions. He had never, however, visited the southern Hemisphere. So, when an invitation came from St James's Palace asking him if he would like to join the, then Prince of Wales, (now King Charles III), as his tour artist to Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, it took Alan no time at

all to accept the invitation. Preparations were made and they flew from RAF Brize Norton, first to Colombo, capital of Sri Lanka, following the devastating tsunami the previous December.

Alan remembers: 'We flew low across the landscape, as dawn was breaking, where hills appeared through the mist and rivers glistened in the early morning light.' He was able to make a number of drawings and written notes, from which he made the paintings of



▲ **Dawn Flight Through the Valleys, Sri Lanka, oil, 20×20in (51×51cm)**

'Although I had little time to draw as we came into land, the hazy scenes below, combined with the drowsiness of a long flight, left an impression of a mystical landscape, which I feel these paintings have captured.'

## ALAN RECORDS IN HIS DIARY

'It was midnight in the UK when we touched down in Colombo, but over there it was 6am the following morning. Helicopters were waiting on the runway for the one-hour journey to Batticaloa, and as we flew low over the town, we could see the trail of destruction caused by the tsunami. The temple – a magnificent ornate structure – was split in half. For me it was a humbling experience. The fabric will be repaired, and donations for the appeal have been the largest ever, but the pain will be always in the peoples' hearts; many have lost whole families, and none remains unscarred. I spoke to many people, including one man who had lost three of his children. The Prince's visit gave everyone there an "uplift". He has the ability to put people at their ease and communicates easily – a great skill.'

► **Seaweed Caught in the Swell at Taiaroa Head, New Zealand, oil, 35¼×28in (91×71cm)**

'Along the rocks at the cliff-face, long tentacles of flailing seaweed moved with the motion of the water, like pulsating musical notes. The high energy of surging waves generated a variety of marks, allowing me to use rich areas of *impasto* pigment. This series of seascapes were a joy to work on.'

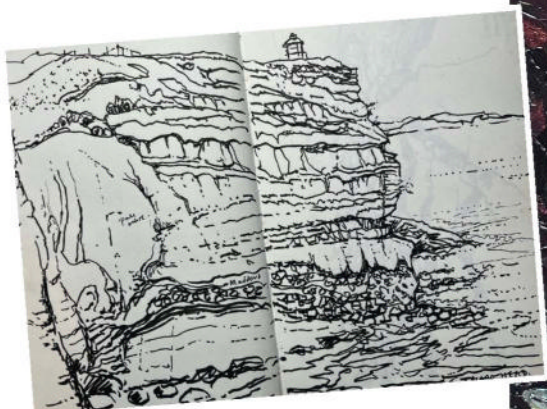
Sri Lanka back in his studio in Devon.

In Australia, the Royal party visited five places: Perth, Alice Springs, Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra, with short stays in each. Nevertheless, Alan was able to do a series of drawings as they travelled around. He was particularly impressed with the botanical gardens in Melbourne.

As part of a group of six, Alan travelled to all the events with His Royal Highness, which was a great learning experience for him. The highlight of the royal visit to Melbourne for Alan, was the reception at Timbertops, where, as a young student, the Prince of Wales spent two terms in the '60s. Alan said, 'A number of Prince Charles' old school chums were there, and His Royal Highness gave an informal and very amusing account of his time there.'

In Sydney they travelled by river to a new housing development, passing the Sydney Opera House and gliding under Sydney Harbour Bridge. Here, and again, when they visited the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Cancer Unit, HRH received an enthusiastic welcome from the crowds.

In late afternoon they arrived at the capital, Canberra and stayed at Government

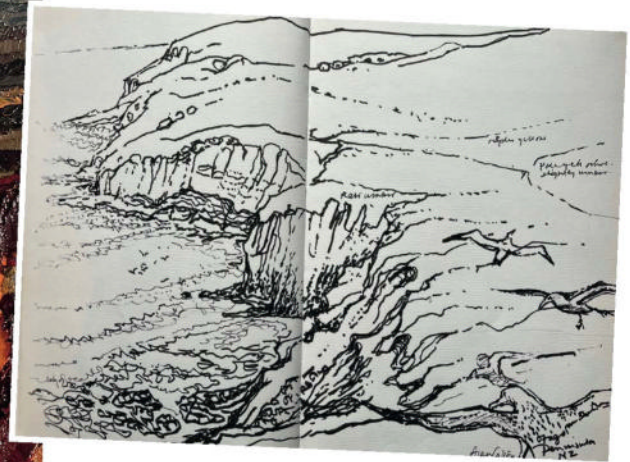
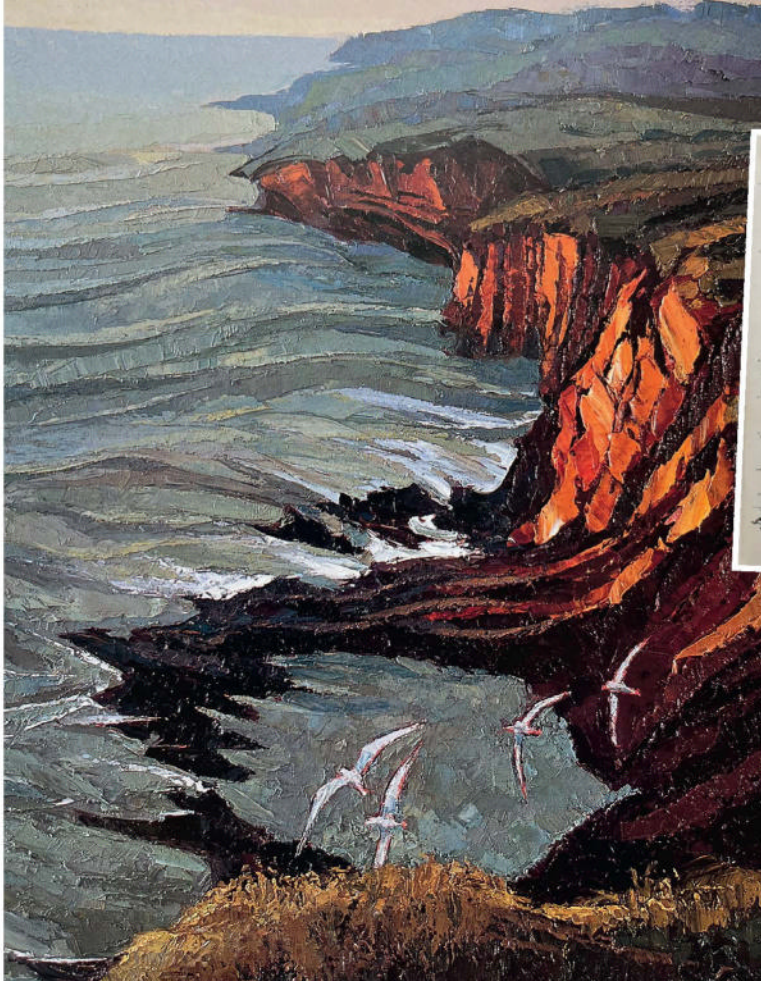


▲ **Taiaroa Head and Lighthouse, pen sketch**

'The drawing for this small painting was done looking along the coast in the opposite direction towards Taiaroa Head and the Lighthouse. The dark outline of the cliffs and rocks, contrast with the soft evening light on the horizon.'



▲ **Rocky Outcrops at Taiaroa Head, New Zealand, oil, 24×24in (61×61cm)**



▲ **Albatrosses at Taiaroa Head, pen sketch**

◀ **Soaring Albatrosses Near Taiaroa Head, New Zealand, oil, 35¼×28in (91×71cm)**

'As in many of my Hartland paintings, I love to use a vertical format, so that I am looking down to the rocky outcrops, with the sea crashing around them and then along the cliff tops to the distant horizon. The magnificent albatrosses were soaring above me and below me as I sat drawing at the cliff edge.'

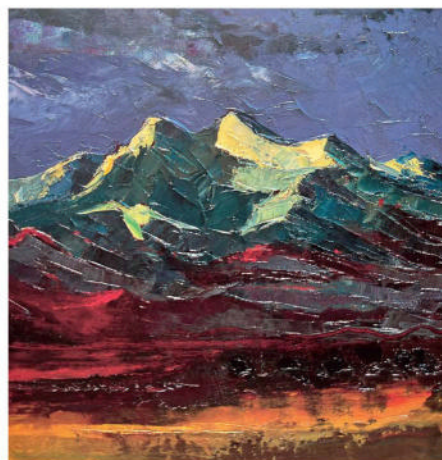
House. One of the high spots was the visit to the Australian War Memorial, a long building open to the sky with the aisles listing every Australian whose life was taken by war. Alan remembers that: 'Touchingly, thousands of families and friends had attached poppies to the names of their loved ones creating a peppered design of red against the marble columns. We were told that this is the most visited monument in Australia.'

Their next stop was Dunedin, and here, on New Zealand's South Island, Alan at last found the wild landscape that he longed for, to inspire him. At Taiaroa Head, what excited him most, were the albatrosses, soaring above the cliff edge, riding the thermals and then sweeping down to sea level. When the Royal party moved on, Alan was asked if he would like to stay and work there. The Royal Albatross Colony was not accessible to the public at that time, as the birds were breeding, but under the watchful eye of a warden, Alan spent several hours observing these magnificent birds and making many drawings. 'To see these graceful birds, with a wingspan of three metres, gliding along the cliff tops and being lifted by the thermals, was a joyful experience.' The swirling waters below, also inspired Alan to draw and paint them.

He then re-joined the others for a flight to a sheep farm, where shearing was in

progress. Alan recalls, 'Prince Charles was offered the shears and despite his formal attire of suit and tie, he valiantly "had a go", much to the delight of the ever-present photographers and TV cameramen.'

The welcome in Wellington, New Zealand's capital, was spectacular. Navy, Army and Air Force troops lined the runway, bands were playing, and a group of Māori warriors performed a ceremony for greeting strangers.



The final stay in New Zealand was in Auckland where the royal party attended a reception at the New Zealand branch of The Prince's Trust. 'I was moved to hear two young people describe how, after being heavily into drugs and attempts at suicide, they had been rescued by the Prince's Trust and their lives saved and transformed,' explains Alan. 'Listening to these articulate young people brought the work of the trust strongly into focus for me.'

The landscape of Fiji was particularly inspiring for Alan and provided a rich source of material. The party's arrival was heralded by a colourful tribal display, followed by a vibrant village ceremony of welcome, where thousands lined the route, cheering and waving flags. 'No-where on this tour had we been greeted with such exuberance and enthusiasm,' Alan tells us. 'It was obvious that they have tremendous affection for our Royal Family. We then entered a sacred

◀ **Sunlit Peaks After the Storm, Fiji, oil, 14¼×14¼in (36×36cm)**

'Squally storms broke out as we dove up into the hills, then just as suddenly, the sun would break through and flood the mountain tops with brilliant light. The contrasts of light and shade always excites me, and I love the juxtapositions of close-up foreground and distant horizons. I always work on different colour canvas, never on white, and for a number of the Fiji paintings, I decided to use a red background, which I feel gave a luminous glow to the work.'

area, His Royal Highness was offered a drink of cava made from water and the juice of squeezed yaqona roots, and he was expected to empty the bowl. As we left the ceremony, hundreds of school children lined the road and despite a sudden monsoon thunderstorm they remained standing, waving and cheering along the entire route.'

For his work as tour artist, Alan was given a driver, who took him into the mountains and to his own village, where the artist was warmly welcomed. Here he did many drawings including the driver's tethered ox. He said, 'The weather was stormy, but there were brilliant passages of sun, when the landscape came to life and from my watercolours and drawings, I made a great number of paintings back in my studio in Colaton Raleigh, in Devon.'

'I would love to have spent more time in Fiji, but all too soon, it was time to leave and take the long 27-hour flight back to England. Travelling as a tour artist, was a great privilege and a unique experience and gave me a tremendous insight into just how much time and energy King Charles expends on these strenuous Royal Tours.'

TA



▲ **Blown Grasses Against Mountain Landscape, Fiji, oil, 8×8in (20×20cm)**



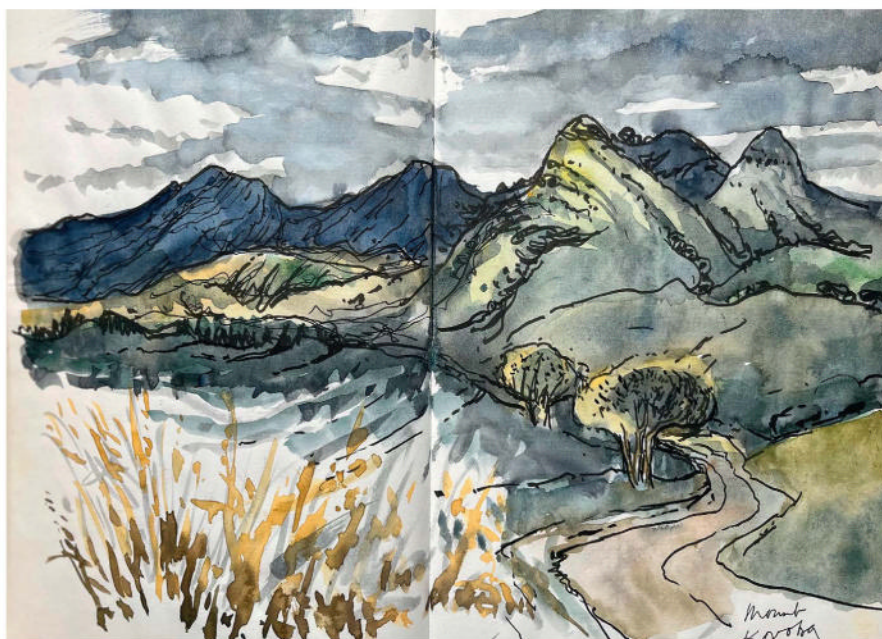
▲ **Storm Heading for the Nausori Highland, Fiji, oil, 9¼×11¼in (25×30cm)**



● Despite the hectic schedule, of Alan's tour with King Charles, he managed to gather a wealth of material and the following autumn, all the paintings from the tour were exhibited at David Messum Fine Art, in their Cork Street Gallery. All currently available paintings by Alan Cotton can be found by visiting the website [messums.com](http://messums.com) or viewed at the gallery, David Messum Fine Art, 12 Bury Street St James, London SW1Y 6AB; telephone 020 7287 4448.

## CELEBRATION EXHIBITION

This year it is 40 years, since His Majesty, the King, when Prince of Wales, first took a tour artist with him to record impressions of the trip. The King has paintings from the tour artists in his personal collection and to mark this anniversary, a selection of work from these will be exhibited in the ballroom at Buckingham Palace. *The Art of Royal Travel: Journeys with The King* will form part of the tour of the state rooms, when the palace opens to the public, from July 10 to September 28, 2025. Tickets can be booked online at [rct.uk/visit/buckingham-palace](http://rct.uk/visit/buckingham-palace)



▲ **Mount Kovoba, Fiji, watercolour sketch**



▲ **Summer Landscape, watercolour, 11×15in (28×38cm)**

# A summer landscape

In this abridged extract from his new book, *Plein Air Painting with Watercolours*, **Grahame Booth** shows you how to select, simplify and paint an open landscape scene on a hot summer's day

**T**his is a fairly typical open landscape and it was a very hot (in British terms) summer's day. These landscapes do not present much of a challenge to draw, but be warned: I usually find that the subjects that are easiest to draw are the most difficult to paint!



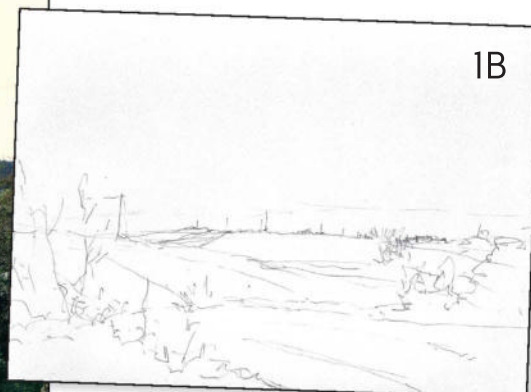
**Location insight**  
This was one of those really warm summer days, not too hot, but just perfect for *plein-air*. I was also able to set my board up so that it was shaded from the sun – much easier on the eyes.

*Plein Air Painting with Watercolours* by Grahame Booth is a practical and inspirational guide to painting outdoors, including invaluable advice on the materials you will need, choosing a subject, composition, sketching, pen and wash, perspective and essential watercolour techniques. Grahame then puts all these ideas into practice with demonstrations in all four seasons of the year. *Plein Air Painting with Watercolours* is published by Search Press on July 15 and available to order now.





1A



1B

## ▲ 1 THE INITIAL SKETCH

The drawing is not really much more than a few squiggles. I only ever indicate the trees very simply. Putting in too much detail can risk a painting-by-numbers approach and I try to avoid any pencil work in the extreme distance, especially today with a very obvious heat haze. Any pencil lines remaining in this area after the painting was finished would be very obvious to the eye. Such lines can sometimes be erased afterwards, even after being washed over, but there is no guarantee.

If you refer to the photograph (1A), you can see which parts of the original scene I chose to omit or change or accentuate in the final sketch (1B).

### MATERIALS

- **Support** Millford cold-pressed 140lb (300gsm) watercolour paper, 11X15in (28X38cm)
- **Watercolours** Ultramarine; cobalt blue; burnt sienna; cool yellow; and warm yellow
- **Brushes** Mop or other large soft brush, squirrel or synthetic; size 12 round, squirrel or synthetic; size 12 and 8 round, sable or synthetic; ¼in (5mm) swordliner, sable, squirrel or synthetic; and an old size 8 sable for softening and lifting out

## ▶ 2 THE FIRST WASH

Use a large soft mop for the first wash, using cobalt blue for the sky and a weak burnt sienna to suggest clouds. (Leaving the clouds as pure white paper can make them appear very cold.) Blend everything together, leaving no hard edges.

Add a little cool yellow to hint at the greens in the distance (2A). In the foreground, drop in some pure ultramarine and burnt sienna (2B). I'm not entirely sure why I did this, but it seemed like a good idea at the time. Summer landscapes tend to be dominated by green so I was trying to avoid too much in the early stages.



2A



2B

**On a hot day the washes will dry very fast and it is vital to paint very wet to help slow down the drying process.**



## ▲ 3 THE HEAT HAZE

Before the first wash dries, paint some pure cobalt blue into the distance to simply suggest the heat haze. I found that the edge wasn't quite soft enough, so I used an almost dry Chinese brush to gently scrub the edge. (Using a damp brush to soften the edge would have risked creating a cauliflower.)



## ▲ 4 THE DISTANT FIELDS

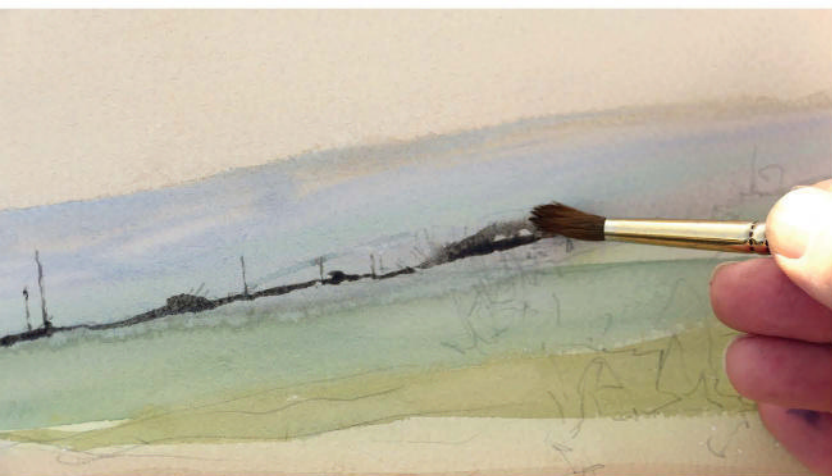
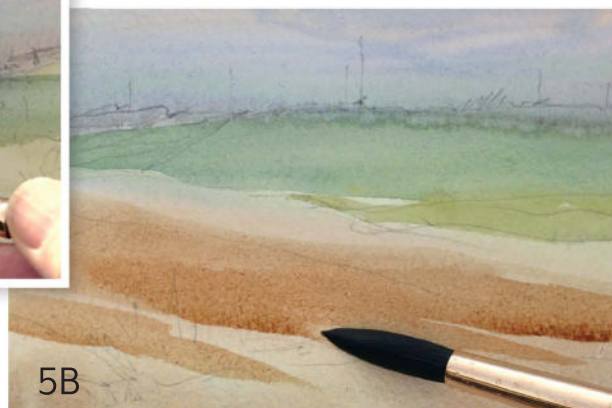
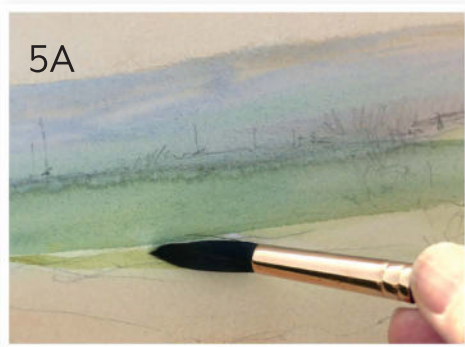
Continue with a size 12 brush and loosely indicate the distant fields using cobalt blue. You want the previous wash to be just damp enough to soften the marks a little but not wet enough to let them disappear.

Use almost pure cobalt blue with just a touch of cool yellow here and there.

## ► 5 THE FIELDS

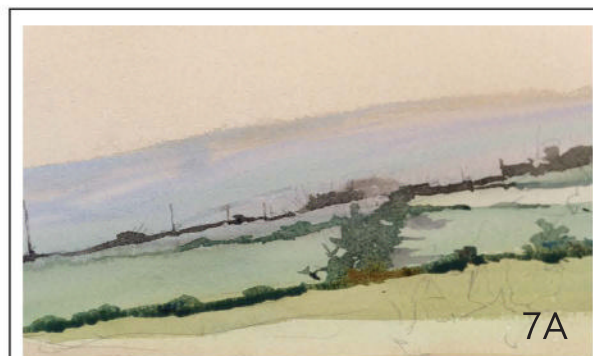
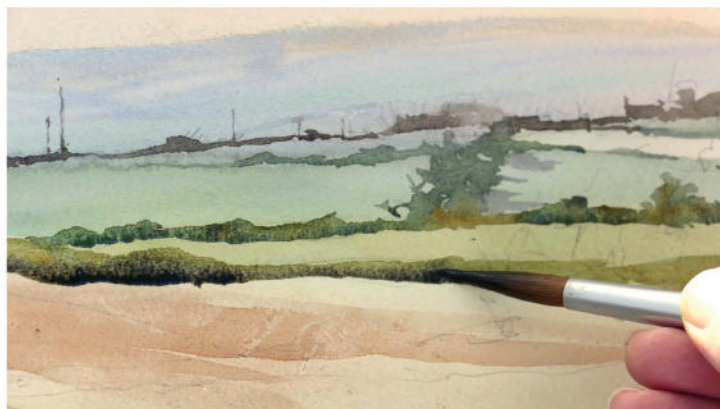
Continue down into the far field with a little more cool yellow in the mix. Continue to add more cool yellow as you create further distinct bands of paint for the fields (5A).

Use some stronger burnt sienna for the nearer golden field (5B), stroking in the paint to indicate the slope of the ground.



## ▲ 6 DISTANT FEATURES

Wait for the wet paint to dry, then simply suggest some of the more distant features with a mix of ultramarine and burnt sienna, making a broken, irregular line along the far field line. Here and there, soften the edge using a damp softening brush to suggest distance.



## 7 THE HEDGELINES

Use a dark green mix of ultramarine with both cool and warm yellow to paint in the hedgelines (7A). Make irregular marks that hint at the shapes in front of you and resist any temptation to add detail (7B).

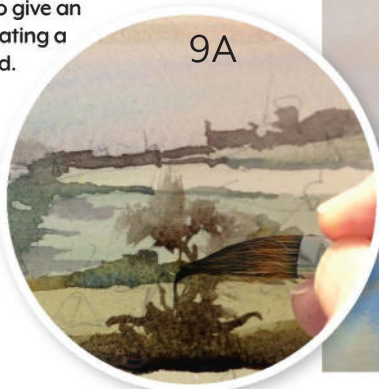


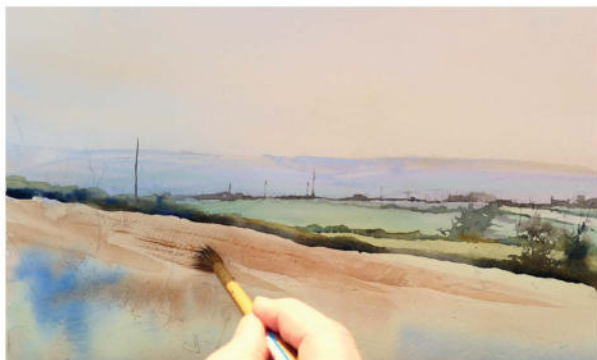
## ▲ 8 HEDGELINE SHADOWS

Drop in a strong mix of ultramarine and burnt sienna to the base of the closer hedges – this helps to give an impression of three dimensions as well as creating a strong dark/light counterchange with the field.

## ► 9 SIMPLE TREES

With a little more burnt sienna in the mix, create two simple trees to the right-hand side, allowing the marks and colours to soften into the surrounding fields a little, and then allow everything to dry (9A). The painting so far (9B).





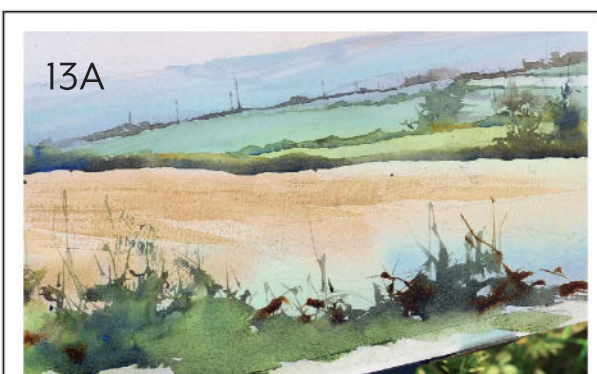
## ▲ 10 THE FIELD

To add a little more subtle definition in the golden field, create a few dry-brushed strokes, following the contours of the ground using the Chinese brush.



## ▲ 12 THE FOREGROUND

For the foreground, use a paler green mix, allowing it to soften into the base of the tree. Work it down to the bottom of the painting and then towards the right.



## 13 FOREGROUND GRASSES

Using those same varied mixes as in steps 11 and 12, continue along the bottom of the paper, suggesting grasses and little twigs as you go (13A). Use the dry Chinese brush to create some grassy shapes (13B).

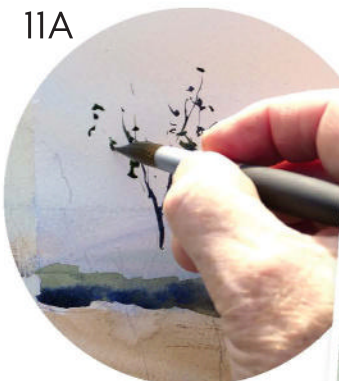


## 11 THE LEFT-HAND TREE

Start at the top of the tree: this may seem counterintuitive but beginning at the bottom and working up results in your fresh application of paint running down into the previously applied wash. Starting at the top and working down allows much more control.

Aim to produce lots of simple, varied brushstrokes and avoid any straight or rounded edges. Use a size 12 brush and various mixes of ultramarine and both warm and cool yellows to create the variety of greens needed (11A). Use ultramarine and burnt sienna to create the darkest areas. With trees it is very important to keep the edges as convoluted as possible. In reality, the bottom of the tree merged in with the grasses so I did exactly the same thing (11B).

11A



11B



**'I kept all the elements in front of me, but shifted hedgerows and trees slightly to make for the most pleasing composition'**



## ▲ 14 FINAL DETAILS

**Summer Landscape, watercolour, 11×15in (28×38cm)**

If you want to add a few finishing touches, lift out a few light branches with a damp softening brush. Scrape out some light twigs from the wet wash with a palette knife and then add some darker marks to the field and hedgerow. Finish off with a few flying birds. It is important to vary the marks for the flying birds so that no two are the same.

I was happy enough with the final result, and what's not to like about a couple of hours in the countryside on a beautiful summer's day?

# Drawing with paint

Classically trained artist, **Luca Indraccolo**, paints a figure portrait using a photo from the reference image collection provided by Raw Umber Studios and demonstrates his method of drawing directly onto the canvas with paint

I am a classically trained painter and have worked professionally as an artist for nearly two decades. My preferred medium is oil paint, and I approach any subject matter in a direct painting manner. This practice stems from my early training in life drawing, where we, as students, were asked to observe and render the human figure from sustained poses lasting days or even weeks. That rigorous training instilled in me a lasting confidence in my drawing abilities – abilities that I see as the essential foundation for any successful painting.

The ideal environment offered by such traditional schools or ateliers is, however, not accessible to everyone. For this reason, working from photographic reference becomes a necessary and useful tool, particularly when one cannot work from life. In this demonstration, I will be working from a photo, and I'd like to highlight one of my favourite resources for such material: the reference image collection provided by Raw Umber Studios. The studio behind this collection is run by fellow artists, which contributes to the thoughtful curation of its resources; tailored specifically with students and professionals in mind. Beyond the extensive online image archive, the studio also hosts in-person workshops in a beautifully appointed space located in Stroud, Gloucestershire. Moreover, they offer an expansive video library where regular instructors, including myself, present one-hour drawing and painting demonstrations.

## Working from photos

After selecting a suitable reference image, the first thing I do is consider the composition. In this case, I felt the space



### ▲ Original photographic reference from Raw Umber Studios

around the figure, particularly above the model's head, was a bit too tight. To address this, I experimented with different cropping options using small thumbnail sketches (above right). This step is crucial in determining how the figure will sit within the frame. It's important that the final composition maintains the same proportions as the canvas I will eventually paint on. A simple way to ensure this is to measure the dimensions of the thumbnail sketch and multiply them proportionally – for example, by a factor of ten. It's also worth considering whether the image



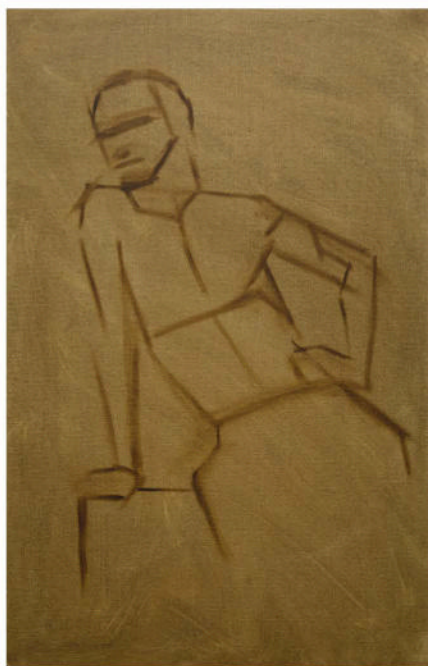
### ▲ Creative adjustments to the reference

When working with a photo reference, it's helpful to plan adjustments to elements such as the background and lighting in order to enhance contrast and add interpretive strength to the image

might benefit from alterations in the final painting. For this piece, I decided to introduce a cooler (bluer) background to heighten the contrast with the model's warm skin tones. That decision, in turn, inspired me to increase the sense of illumination on the figure by pushing the highlights further than they appeared in the reference. These choices are part of the interpretive freedom that painting allows and should be embraced to create a more compelling image.

Once the reference was finalised, I began my process by applying a thin, transparent

# THE PAINTING



## MATERIALS

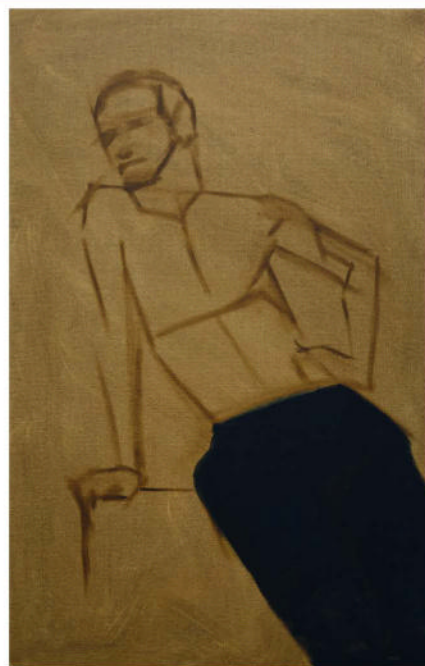
- **Old Holland oils** Titanium white; ivory black; raw sienna deep; vermilion; alizarin crimson; cobalt blue; and raw umber
- **Brushes** A variety of brushes from different brands – mainly hog bristles for covering large areas and synthetic ones for finer details
- **Medium** cold-pressed linseed oil
- **Solvent** Winsor & Newton Sansodor

## ◀ Blocking in the drawing

Basic lines in raw umber established the figure's placement using straight, simplified marks

## ▶ Establishing the darkest darks

Laying down the darkest values early provided a tonal anchor for the rest of the painting

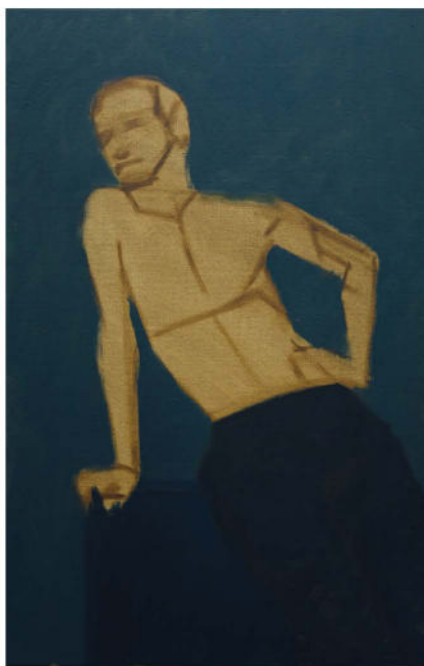


layer of raw umber oil paint mixed with an odourless solvent. This underlayer, or *imprimatura*, neutralises the stark whiteness of the canvas, making it easier to judge tonal values in the subsequent layers. I allowed this layer to dry overnight before proceeding.

As mentioned earlier, I generally don't begin a painting with a detailed drawing. Instead, I establish the foundational lines of the composition directly on the canvas using raw umber (above). My goal at this stage was not to create a finished contour but to place the figure accurately within the frame. I began by identifying the outermost points of the torso, referencing my initial thumbnail sketch to judge the distance between the figure and the canvas edges. The lines I laid down were straight and simple, deliberately avoiding the distraction of the body's subtle and often confusing curves.

Once I was satisfied with the placement of the figure, I began to block in large areas of flat colour (top right). Typically, I start with the darkest value I observe in the image. Dark tones, especially those approaching black, are easier to assess accurately than lighter ones, which can be misleading if not viewed in context. Establishing the darkest darks first provides a tonal anchor for everything that follows.

Next I applied a flat layer of paint to the background, keeping the colour consistent and intentionally omitting the minor tonal shifts that may exist in the photo (above left). I treated this background as

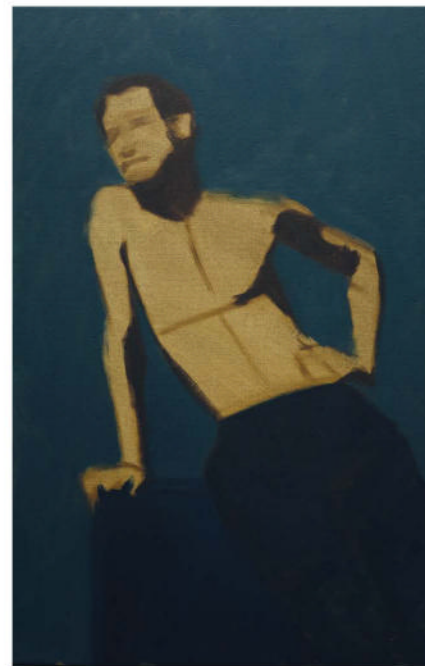


## ▲ Background underpainting

A flat background layer refined the silhouette and acted as a base for future adjustments

an underpainting, a foundation on which I would later build more nuanced colour and value. Since my initial drawing was relatively loose, I used the edges of these painted shapes to refine the figure's outline gradually. The act of adjusting these edges became, in effect, a drawing process.

With the background fully covered, I moved on to the next darkest area: the



## ▲ Painting the shadows

Cast shadows were mapped in to define form and support future layering of mid-tones and highlights

cast shadows on the figure. Again, I aimed for accuracy in the design of these shapes, knowing I would continue to tweak and refine them as the painting evolved. At this stage, the painting was still quite schematic, but it provided a clear framework for the next layer (above right).

Once the shadows were in place, I introduced an average skin tone over the



### ▲ Introducing base skin tone

A mid-range flesh tone covered the *imprimatura* and prepared the surface for modelling form



### ▲ Adding dark mid-tones

These values deepened form, built variety, and helped refine the figure's contour



### ▲ Placing the light planes

Lighter values clarified form and expanded the painting's value structure without reaching full highlights

## LUCA'S TOP TIPS

### Start with strong composition

Use thumbnail sketches to refine cropping and ensure proportions match your canvas before painting.

### Adapt the reference

Don't copy the photo; adjust elements like background colour and lighting to enhance contrast and mood.

### Build tonal structure carefully

Begin with an *imprimatura*, block in darks first, and gradually establish a clear value range to ground your painting.

### Refine with edges and colour shifts

Use blended edges and subtle warm/cool skin tones to suggest form, anatomy, and bring the figure to life.



needed adjusting. The transition from one tonal area to another becomes a powerful drawing tool in itself. At this point, I paid close attention to the negative space – the background – as it helped me sculpt the figure more accurately. By having the background colour already in place, I could 'cut' into the figure where necessary, refining the profile and silhouette with greater ease and precision.

Once the mid-tones were in, I began to introduce lighter values (top right); but not the brightest highlights just yet. Instead, I targeted the lighter planes that caught a moderate amount of light. These areas helped expand the value range of the figure and prepared the surface for the final highlights that would come later. Establishing this value structure was critical; it gave the painting its visual coherence and depth. With this structural groundwork in place, I then focused on creating smooth, believable transitions between the different tonal regions (above left). This process was achieved by working carefully at the edges of each painted area. These soft and sharp transitions not only improved the realism of the painting but also enhanced the sense of three-dimensionality. The edge handling, whether sharp, soft, or lost, is a major contributor to the illusion of volume and space in a figure.

Once the transitions were well established, I began introducing subtle variations in colour, particularly in the skin. Human

rest of the figure. This colour isn't intended to be exact; rather, it served as a mid-range value that covered the *imprimatura* and created a base upon which lighter and darker notes could be layered. For this foundational skin tone, I typically use a mix of titanium white, vermilion, raw sienna deep, and a small amount of black. I prefer to keep this base tone slightly darker than the final intended colour. It's easier to add highlights to the central forms later than to darken the edges effectively to create depth (top left).

Having established the average flesh tone, I proceeded by adding darker mid-tones

### ▲ Colour variance and edge softening

Warm and cool colour shifts across the figure suggested anatomy and brought vitality to it. Edges between masses of paint of different tones were blended to enhance volume and the illusion of three-dimensionality.

(top middle). These intermediate values served multiple purposes: they began to articulate the form more clearly, added variety to the painting, and helped me assess whether the contours I originally placed

skin is rarely a uniform tone; it reflects the complexities of our anatomy and the environment around us. Some areas, such as the ears or hands, often appear warmer, showing more red or orange tones, while others may take on cooler hues, like blues or greens. These temperature shifts help to suggest underlying structures such as bones, veins, or blood vessels, and they lend life to the painting.

This stage – refining the colour variations – might appear to be only a subtle change from the previous one, but it was one of the most time-consuming and meticulous parts of the painting process. Here, I paid particular attention to the features of the portrait, the rendering of the hands, and any area that still looked unresolved. Additionally, I revisited the background to ensure it held up compositionally and tonally. I might introduce more variety here – soft gradations, colour shifts, or textural contrasts – to enhance the interplay between figure and setting.

As the painting neared completion, the adjustments became more delicate and intuitive. I stepped back frequently to assess the overall balance, checking that all the components – form, colour, value, and composition – were working together harmoniously. Final highlights and accent colours were placed with care, always in service of the whole (right). Throughout this process, my aim was not simply to replicate the reference image, but to use it as a springboard for interpretation and expression. The photo provided information, but the painting must go beyond that – to capture a sense of life, mood, and structure that transcended the static image.

The approach I've shared in this demonstration reflects my working method: direct, layered, and deeply rooted in drawing. Whether working from life or from a photograph, the principles remain the same. With careful observation, structured value organisation and a commitment to refining the drawing throughout, even a simple image can become a compelling painting.



### ▲ Finished painting

**Figure Study, oil on canvas, 28×18in (71×46cm)**

Final adjustments focused on precision in key features such as the portrait and hands, as well as achieving balance between the figure and background



● To see a video of Luca painting this life study, scan the QR code or go to [bit.ly/DRAW-WITH-PAINT](https://bit.ly/DRAW-WITH-PAINT)

● Find out more about Raw Umber Studios at [rawumberstudios.com](https://rawumberstudios.com) or by emailing [info@rawumberstudios.com](mailto:info@rawumberstudios.com)

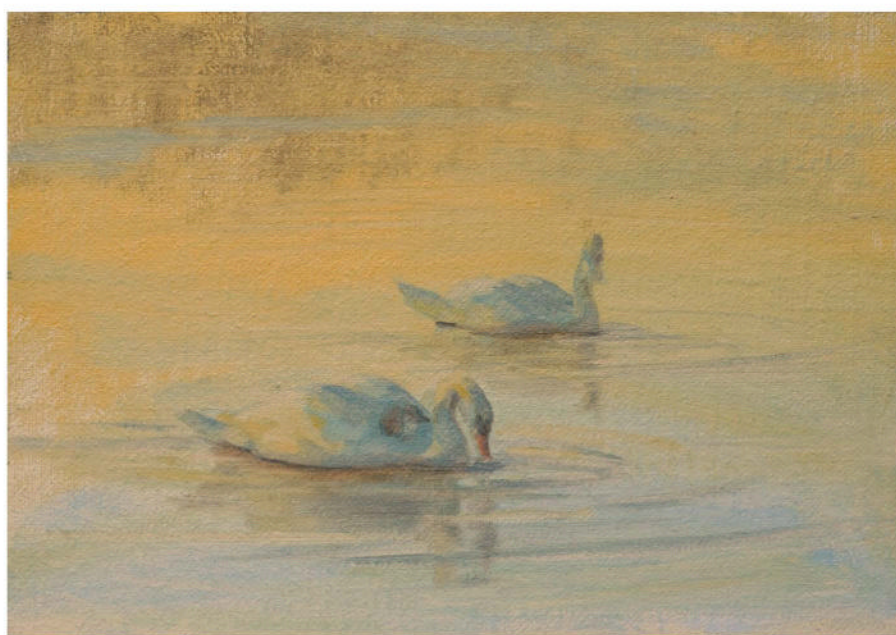
#### Luca Indraccolo

is an Italian-born artist celebrated for his skilful, realistic oil paintings, with a focus on figurative and narrative art. After a 15-year career as an art director for major advertising agencies across several countries, he transitioned fully into fine art. His journey began with a year studying artistic anatomy in New York, followed by classical training in drawing and painting at the Florence Academy of Art, and later, advanced studies in London. His work has been exhibited internationally in galleries and art fairs across the UK, the US, and beyond.



# In the footsteps of Tunnickliffe

In her final article in her series painting *plein-air* through the seasons inspired by the artist and illustrator, Charles Tunnickliffe, **Becky Thorley-Fox** paints summer coastal birds



▲ **Precious Cargo on Cemlyn Lake**, oil on linen, 5×9in (13×23cm)



## **Becky Thorley-Fox SWLA**

is a landscape and wildlife painter working *en plein air*, capturing the light, atmosphere and essence of her subject through direct observation. She is based in mid Wales near the coast where she finds an endless source of inspiration. Becky is a member of the Society of Wildlife Artists, and her work can be seen in the annual exhibition *The Natural Eye* at the Mall Galleries in London each autumn. Her online gallery showcases her latest work

**[beckythorley-fox.co.uk](http://beckythorley-fox.co.uk)**

**I**slands have long held a particular draw for me. I love exploring that wild edge where two worlds collide and create a dynamic environment that supports a rich biodiversity. Being able to follow the light around the water's edge over the course of a day offers endless painting opportunities. It is often an advantage to paint with the sun to one side of you or to paint into the light *contre jour*. Both light situations create stronger tonal contrast and greater colour variation. Over the winter and spring, I spent long days out along the south of Anglesey where I would start at dawn along the east side of the Menai, working my way westwards and ending the day at Malltraeth, which was Tunnickliffe's home area along the Cefni estuary.

It has been interesting to explore Anglesey through the eyes of a great artist. Tunnickliffe's summer and winter diaries,

amongst many of his books, have served as a guide for finding Anglesey's numerous wildlife hotspots. Cemlyn Bay, on the North of Anglesey, has become a favourite summer and autumn haunt as it is now a wildlife haven that has kept me occupied with painting from dawn until dusk. Cemlyn has an unusual topography with a long sweeping shingle ridge that separates the sea bay from the lagoon. The lagoon, with its small islands, now hosts one of the largest Tern colonies in the UK during the summer breeding season, making it a wildlife spectacle.

Cemlyn Bay has been a conservation success story that began with just a handful of birds compared with numbers found today. The development of its sea defences prevents the lagoon from flooding during the high tides in spring and summer, enabling the Terns and other bird species to

nest successfully on the lagoon islands each year.

## **Capturing the moment**

*Ringed Plover Chicks at Sunset* (right) was painted on the beach one evening at a distance looking through the fieldscope. The small chicks ventured out towards the tideline as the sun lowered. I painted in their small fuzzy forms, adding a few extra textural details later to describe their soft fluffy plumage. Whilst Tunnickliffe had his own wonderful personal library of field sketches and measured drawings of deceased specimens, today search engines can provide a whole library of imagery which can be useful for checking my work against after a new or brief encounter!

*Ringed Plover Family at Cemlyn* (above right) was painted in the soft late afternoon light. The chicks were darting back and forth



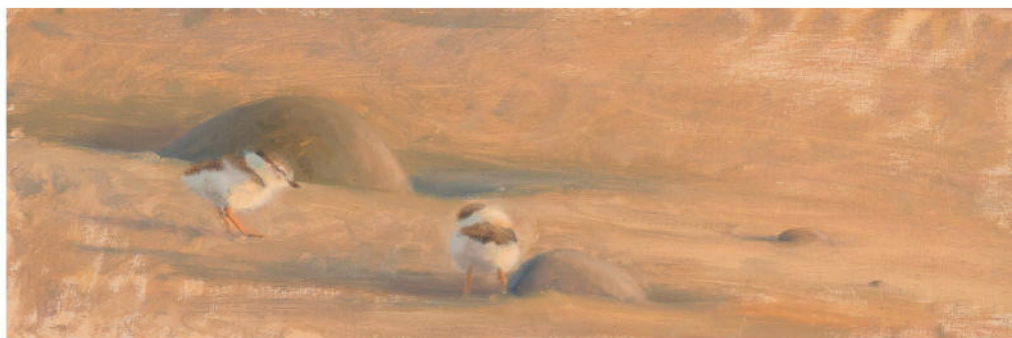
▲ **Ringed Plover Family at Cemlyn, oil on linen, 12×18in (30.5×46cm)**



▲ Ringed Plover chick sketches in one of Charles Tunnicliffe's sketchbooks in the archives at Oriel Ynys Mon. Charles Tunnicliffe produced vast volumes of sketchbooks filled with carefully rendered studies and observations that served as reference material for his paintings.



▲ Sketch of a Ringed Plover chick



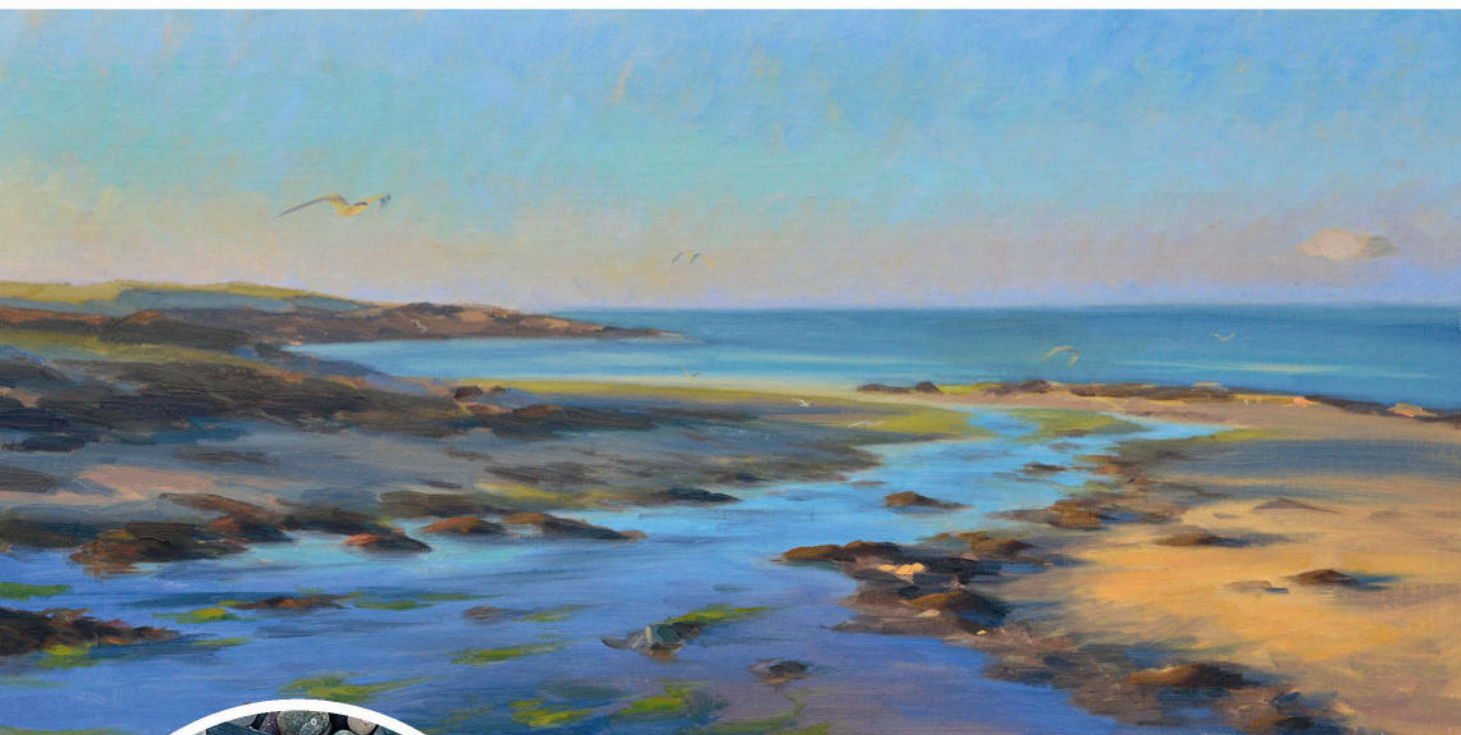
▲ **Ringed Plover Chicks at Sunset, oil on board, 6×18in (15×45.5cm)**

as they emerged from the foliage and slowly made their way to the beach. The parent stood still watching for predators as the young chicks explored. I enjoyed painting the textures and colour nuances in the dried summer foliage and the brilliant yellow lichen covered pebbles. Working through a scope gives a wonderful opportunity to observe a bird's world up close without disturbing them.

These *Black Headed Gulls* (right) were painted on a late summer evening as the sun was sinking into the horizon. Their plumage glowed a cool blue-white against the yellow glowing lagoon reflecting the hazy sky. Reflections in the water can be confusing to paint: the values are compressed to the mid tones, dark colours appear to reflect lighter and light colours appear darker in the water. The tone of the water itself will effect the tone of the reflection too. The ripples of the water break up the reflection and details and edges are softened.



▲ **Black Headed Gulls at Dusk on the Lagoon, oil on linen, 7×9in (18×23cm)**



▲ ***Terns Flying Back and Forth, Cemlyn*, oil on linen, 12×24in (30.5×61cm)**

Late evening provides that magical golden hour in summer. Though the light effects are speeding by, birds are winding down for the night, providing serene moments that allow for a longer period of study under a warm light with cool shadows.

In Tunncliffe's instructional book, *Bird Portraiture*, he writes, 'I am sure that, sooner or later, you will become engrossed in the study of the flying bird, and be filled with wonder at the beauty of its shape as it soars, glides, swoops or speeds by on its way. And once again you will note how very individual each kind of bird is, no two

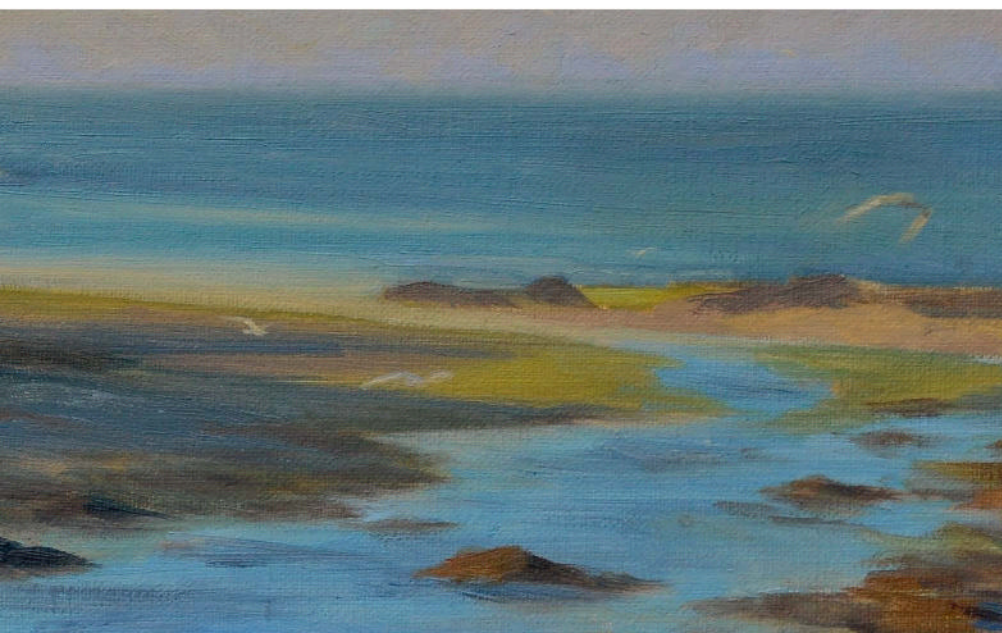
specimens being quite identical in their manner of movement'. Tunncliffe takes the reader by the hand and guides them to view nature through his eyes, sharing his sense of wonder, knowledge and careful observations.

This larger piece, *Terns Flying Back and Forth, Cemlyn* (above) was painted over the course of the afternoon/evening, whereupon I attacked the painting with the long shadows and warm highlights, enjoying the dramatic effects of the late evening light. There were a constant stream of Terns flying back and forth that provided an opportunity for continuous study as I painted them into my scene. In those last rays of sunshine, they appeared bright yellow-orange! TA



▲ Warm-up sketch before painting

▼ Close-up of Terns in flight



● ***Plein Air Through the Seasons – in the Footsteps of Tunncliffe*** is a solo exhibition of work by Becky Thorley-Fox, comprising four collections of paintings representing spring, summer, autumn and winter. The exhibition is inspired by the Ladybird *What to Look For* series, illustrated by C. Tunncliffe, and can be seen at Oriol Ynys Mon, Anglesey until October 12. For more information visit **[orielmon.org](http://orielmon.org)**

## DEMONSTRATION *Gull in the Petrified Forest*



### ▲ STAGE ONE

I had seen this Gull poised amongst the petrified forest in the lowering sunlight. There was a striking contrast between the round white glowing bird against the angular dark tree stumps. I began with the area most likely to move first – the Gull itself! I worked fast to sketch in the shape and key features before it moved or flew away. I then worked in the form, colour and light effects. I continued to sketch in the surrounding area, trying to balance my composition with variety and rhythm of line and shape. The stump behind the Gull served to block the eye from leaving the canvas.



### ▲ STAGE TWO

At this stage I worked quickly to paint the value and colour relationships cast by the evening light. When working *plein-air*, the best approach is to simplify shapes and values first. I sketched in the darkest darks and blocked in the ground plains as they receded into the background. I lowered the tone and chroma with titanium white and a touch of ultramarine blue and alizarin claret to cool the colour temperature as it receded. If I got something down for each area I would have a road map for completing my painting even if the light changed.

### Becky's top tips

- Spring and summer are wonderful times to study birds as conditions are usually more favourable and coastal birds in particular are numerous in their breeding colonies, allowing for repeat observations.
- Be patient when studying a new subject; with every study, you will gradually build up your knowledge of a species and get quicker at capturing it.

### MATERIALS

- **Support** Belle Arti and Claessens oil primed linen cut and glued to 3.6mm ply board
- **Michael Harding oil paint:** Cadmium yellow light; cadmium yellow; cadmium yellow deep; cadmium orange; naphthol red; alizarin claret; ultramarine blue; phthalo blue; raw umber; transparent oxide red; yellow ochre; and titanium white

I recently expanded my yellows palette in order to increase my mixing range and capabilities for capturing light effects and I haven't looked back!

- **Brushes** Mainly synthetic ivory brushes for drawing and detailed work and hog filberts for larger areas as they are more robust

### ► FINISHED PAINTING

***Gull in the Petrified Forest*, oil on linen, 7×9in (18×23cm)**

I worked in the colour and form that was bathed in the soft golden light coming from the rear left. I built up the colour saturation and brightness as I worked forwards, increasing my use of yellow, orange and naphthol red. Although there were a lot of horizontal lines, their angles varied slightly and were broken up by the tree stumps. I enjoyed capturing the reflected colour in the Gull's plumage, the bright cool blue from the sky and the warm reflected sand colours on the underside of the Gull. The backlit edge of the Gull was my focal point – it was the brightest area capturing the light before it turned around the form. On the terminator line (the area that separates light and dark) I could see the yellow light colouring the Gull. Gulls, with their white plumage, make for great subjects for studying the behaviour of colour and light.



# Simplification

Take the easy route by following **Nicholas Poullis's** advice on simplifying your landscape subject



**S**implifying makes a chosen subject more digestible and allows you to capture it in a form that communicates something about it. But it's a profound challenge when painting in an impressionist way and not easy to simplify your chosen view while simultaneously describing and retaining the character of the various elements. When simplifying we often say much more about the subject in terms of atmosphere, depth and light than a more arbitrary approach to details can ever achieve.

How we go about simplification depends on the objectives and there is no simple formula for how to achieve this. Whereas each element and each painting has to be considered carefully, by and large, simplification can be achieved by considering a number of factors. Through editing and detail selection we can begin to keep things simple. Observation can also allow us to use pattern when describing a larger area, such as with a tree or reflections in water.

The choice and application of a technique will help us to simplify an area and concentrate on volumes. Using techniques including wet-in-wet, wet against wet, and broad areas of flat wash can also help us achieve this.

## Observation and editing

Observation is important and so exploring

a subject through drawing helps to identify the key content of a scene. It may seem obvious, but most of the time spent on a painting is not the act of putting brush to paper, but rather a culmination of decisions. What we see in a painting is the execution of those choices.

The process of simplification really begins with the choice of subject and our view of it. While it's important to identify features that are interesting and defining, it's even more important to disregard content that will distract. What we include should ideally contribute to the painting in some way and so even at an early stage these decisions are important but highly subjective.

## Simplifying and scale

Another important factor when assessing how much to simplify relates to the scale at which we are working. Small paintings can be much simpler, yet still 'work' and have enough content. Content, picture size and subject are all aspects that work hand in hand. An obvious example is a subject that looks 'empty' at 15×22in (38×56cm) but works well at a much smaller size. An effective way of exploring this aspect is by varying the scale at which we work. This will help us evaluate content with regards to scale which is crucial to simplification.

Another aspect of how to simplify is where to simplify. Different areas of a painting have different roles to play in

▲ **Margon, watercolour on Saunders Waterford 140lb (300gsm) rough paper, 3×7in (7.5×28cm)**

Here is an example of where working on a small scale suits the level of content provided by the subject and the level of simplification allows a simplistic approach to work without seeming empty. Because of the way simplification works, I could concentrate on volumes and lighting. The background landscape and sky were simplified using a wet-in-wet graduated wash.

creating a picture. Sometimes an area is used to provide depth, contrast or volume. A background is often best treated with a broad wet-in-wet approach as we want that area to recede and create depth. This can be seen in the background of the painting of Margon (above). We should be aware, when assessing a painting, that details will draw the eye and can reduce depth. A way of drawing attention to one area of a painting can be to simplify surrounding areas drastically. This can be a very effective method of pushing the eye to the desired place on the paper but carries the risk of 'floating' objects or elements.

Using the silhouette of an object to describe it is another useful simplifying method. Typical examples might be the outline of a tree or a figure. This method can be used for other objects too providing



▲ **Caux Looking into the Sunlight**, watercolour on Saunders Waterford 140lb (300gsm) rough paper, 3½×5½in (9×14cm)

The simple theme of the painting and the lighting enabled me to simplify to the max while retaining forms and, crucially, the lighting that is the objective of the painting. While simplifying is important, we must balance this with the need to include interesting elements.

all that is needed in the description is in the outline.

For simplification to work best we must use it as a means of description. Once we have decided what to paint, the choice of technique to apply to the subject is very important. This is where many difficulties begin. The most effective ways are not arbitrary but require a little thought so what we do corresponds with what we wish to achieve. Simplification is partly down to what role an area of paint or an object has in the picture. Using this demonstration painting of the *Mill at Bessan* (over the page), for example, the faraway trees form the background and as such I wanted them to recede while providing contrast. By using wet-in-wet and wet against wet I was able to express general form and depth.

The buildings of the mill and other structures required a little more definition and less simplification as they needed interest and so I used a range of wet-on-dry washes. Working light to dark, I allowed the first layer to dry completely before adding the second so that the edges were crisp. Details were chosen to help add interest and define the subject.

The water needed to be simple as all the interest was in the buildings and structures but it had to convince and be descriptive in simplistic terms. To do this I used a simple



▲ **Nezignan L'Évêque**, watercolour on Hahnemühle Andaluçia 230lb (500gsm) rough paper, 6¼×9¾in (16×25cm)

I used a few key shapes painted in silhouette to create the form of the church tower which helped me simplify the scene. Simple washes in the first stage, the underpainting, allowed me to simplify and establish the volumes and depth of the various elements.

graduated wash then added reflections to capture the nature of the water once the wash was dry. The reflections were added with smaller areas of washes, with areas of stronger tones put in wet-in-wet that helped with depth and interest and very much formed part of the design.

### Avoid overworking

The volumes are all established with the first washes, but as a painting progresses, we paint more details, and so the choice and selection of elements in the scene before us become a crucial aspect that works hand in hand with observation. Identifying these key features is important and it is also at this later stage where the risk of overworking increases. With every addition it is important to ask ourselves whether it will help or

distract. Another aspect of overworking is that it will potentially muddy what we have done and the painting will get worse. It's often the case that the time to stop was one stage ago! A difficult aspect of watercolour is that the late, but crucial decisions, are made when we are too 'close' to the painting and tired for that reason. It is always better to stop than risk overworking. ▷



▲ **Weymouth**, watercolour on Saunders Waterford 140lb (300gsm) rough paper, 6×8½in (15×22cm)

In this large watercolour I could include a little more detail or content while still keeping to a broad impressionistic approach to capture atmosphere. I edited the scene to include defining details and contrasts.

## DEMONSTRATION *The Mill at Bessan*

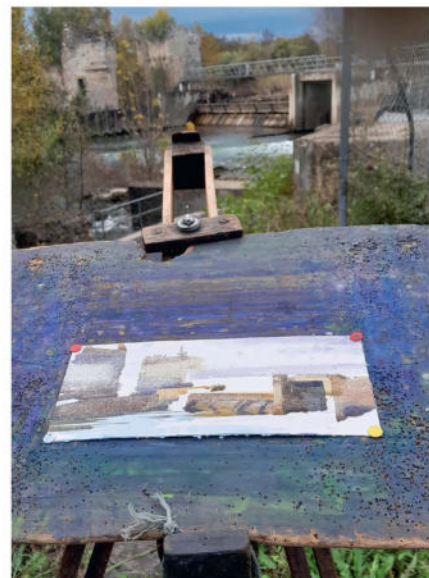
This subject has a combination of contrasting elements of sky, water, buildings and trees that worked well within a natural design and suited a wide landscape format of paper.

I positioned myself where I could see, with an unobstructed view, all the elements I wished to include.

While exploring any subject matter I find it best to work in sessions of about four hours and on the spot is always preferable as you can make observations that are impossible from a photo. It's very important that we try to capture the subject in its setting and

so lighting is crucial, particularly light direction – and this is best observed from life.

Only a small part of painting is the act of putting brush to paper; by far the larger amount of time is spent on observation and mixing paint. I never, or very rarely, carry out prep work. It can help, but too much can lead to a stale painting, which is often a potential problem with studio work. Work done from life has the advantage; although sometimes it can be a little crude or raw, it has what I would describe as authenticity and connection with the subject.



Set up for *The Mill*



### MATERIALS

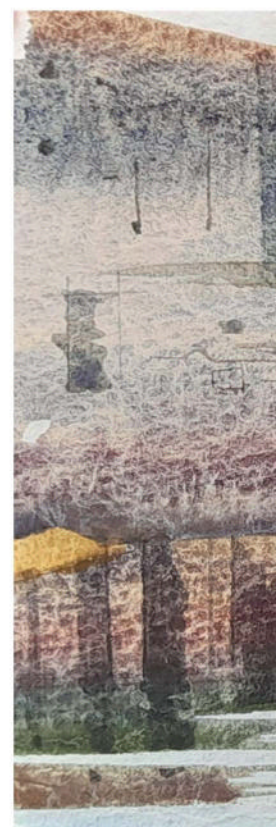
- **Support** Hahnemühle Andalucia 230lb (500gsm) rough paper, 4¼X9½in (11X24cm)
- **Watercolours** Potter's pink; cadmium red and yellow; light red; raw sienna; brown madder; Naples yellow; cobalt blue deep; French ultramarine blue; ivory black; and manganese blue
- **Brushes** A large round brush, plus a Size 8 round and a size 6 round; and a size 4 rigger
- **Miscellaneous** Pencil and soft rubber

### ▲ STAGE ONE

I kept the drawing very simple but accurate. I used a 2B pencil to position the various elements. I placed the mill first, drawing it to a size where the structure on the right would be in the right place too. For the first painting stage I worked light to dark, large areas to small. I began with the sky and lighter shades in the water, which I applied as washes with a large round brush and wet-in-wet for the clouds in the sky. Once dry I started to place in the other lights that I wanted to preserve and eventually paint around. For this stage I used the large round brush for the larger areas of wash and a number 8 round for the medium-sized areas, such as the mill.

### ▼ STAGE TWO

To avoid bleeding, I made sure that the first layer was dry, before adding the buildings and structures with graduated washes of differing shades and colour. Washes were used to paint objects and their reflections in one go. Wet-in-wet was applied for the shadows and their reflections with attention paid to the form of the reflections on the water. The lighter shade of the foot bridge was also added.





### ▲ STAGE THREE

I started to add form to the structures with darker washes on the shaded sides and painted some of the features, such as the shaded sides of windows. The form of the bridge was created using the stronger tones of the background trees, and I picked out little shapes defining the bridge with a small round size six brush.

### ▼ FINISHED PAINTING

**The Mill at Bessan, watercolour on Hahnemühle Andaluca 230lb (500gsm) rough paper 4¼×9½in (11×24cm)**

In the final stage I added some of the branches using a size four rigger. I continued to add in details that helped to define the subject, and created interest and balance using a size six round.

I stopped when I felt I had expressed what I wanted to about the subject. Once complete I removed some of the pencil marks with a very soft rubber.



#### Nicholas Poullis

is an award-winning watercolourist and author of *Atmospheric Buildings in Watercolour* published by Search Press available from our bookshop at [painters-online.co.uk/ArtSupplies](http://painters-online.co.uk/ArtSupplies)

Nicholas runs an exciting range of painting holidays in the south of France. For more information visit [vineyardpaintingexperience.com](http://vineyardpaintingexperience.com) or email him directly [poullisnicholas@yahoo.fr](mailto:poullisnicholas@yahoo.fr)



● Read Sally Bulgin's interview with Nicholas in the April 2025 issue of *Leisure Painter & The Artist*. Studio members have access to all back issues of the magazine. Go to [painters-online.co.uk](http://painters-online.co.uk) to find out more.



# Watercolour freed!

This landscape series encourages painters to think differently about the medium and 'supercharge' their watercolours by embracing abstract behaviours. Step away from your brush! Abandon your hair dryer! Be brave. Trust the movement of water and use the power of suggestion to force viewers to 'lean in' closer.

In the third of six articles on unlocking the potential of watercolour, **Catherine Beale** encourages you to embrace the drips as she explores the technique of pouring paint



**Catherine Beale**

specialises in watercolour techniques across a number of surfaces and paints landscapes and portrait commissions from her hillside studio on the edge of Bath. Her first book *Capturing Light – Creating Radiant Landscapes in Watercolour* was published in May 2023 by Search Press as part of their Innovative Artists series. Catherine is a member of the Society of Women Artists and teaches at the Royal West of England Drawing School, Cornwall School of Art, Chapel Cottage Studios and art societies across England and Wales. Her next solo exhibition is in October in Bath. Keep in touch @catherinebealeart via Instagram and Facebook or view her paintings on her website [catherinebeale.com](http://catherinebeale.com)

## DEMONSTRATION *Passing Through the Dales*

### DRIPPING PAINT TECHNIQUE

Pre-wetting a tilted surface enables a painter to drop in diluted pigment and run it loosely within the water across a painting to create complex elongated shapes. This technique can also be done on top of dried pigment that has already been applied. Cradling a wet, flat wash brush (for example with hairs of equal length) helps to stroke on clean water lightly without moving existing dried pigment. Further diluted colour can then be dropped into this water layer. Turning the surface diagonally can create drips that resemble rain, waves, crops and similar scenarios.



### ▲ REFERENCE PHOTO

My photo shows a small hamlet nestling in the Yorkshire Dales in England. My inspiration was the sun catching on the stonework and slopes, contrasting with the dark storm cloud above. I chose a portrait orientation to emphasise the height of the sky above. I had all the information I needed from two photos – one landscape and one portrait, fitting the cottages

### MATERIALS

- **Support** Daler-Rowney A4 watercolour Aquafine artboard
- **Professional watercolours in tubes** (I use Winsor & Newton and Daler-Rowney): Phthalo turquoise; permanent mauve; transparent yellow; indigo; permanent sap green; raw sienna; alizarin crimson; burnt umber; and cadmium yellow. I prepare my palette with a pea-sized blob of tubed colour in each well. I then pull the edge of each blob with my large, flat wet brush, pressing down to release water and form concentrated lakes of colour around the thick paint to access two very different tones
- **Brushes** Three watercolour brushes: one inch flat; a smaller flat; and a rigger
- **Miscellaneous** Drawing board support and prop (such as a block or tin); soft 2B pencil and acrylic eraser; kitchen roll; table and rock salt; palettes with deep wells; and a large water jar

into a narrower shape. The camera distorts the buildings' perspective and I kept their dramatic lean to suggest they were reaching up towards the sky. I raised them up from the bottom and increased the height of the dales for dramatic effect. I removed the property signs, lead flashing and pile of stones in the foreground as I felt that they detracted from the main subject.

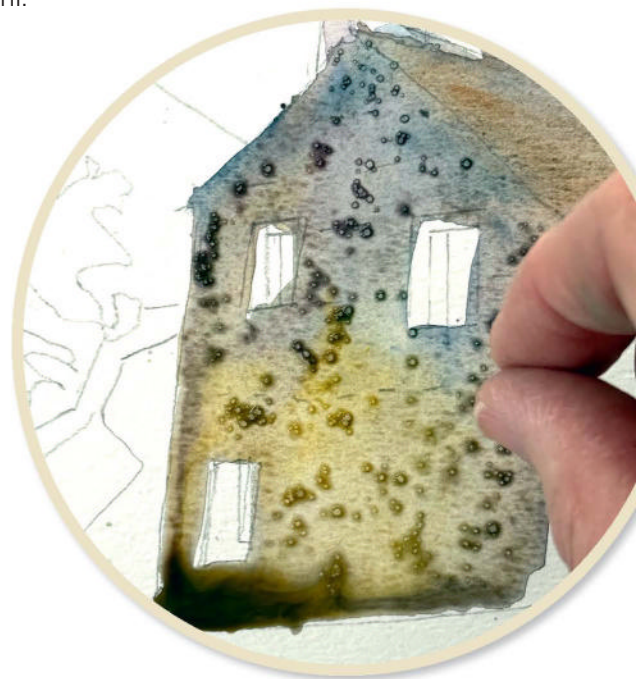


## COLOUR SCHEME

I loved the pairing of the deep purple, brown and black storm clouds against the sunlit green-gold uplands – a beautifully complementary colour pairing. I mixed these complementary colours for the buildings to form greys and neutral shades and to unify the colour scheme.

## STAGE TWO

Each house was formed from soft, semi-abstract colour mixes placed by the turned brush, and bounded by crisp edges against the dry paper. I scattered table salt crystals in to the mix to soak up the paint creating interesting holes of lighter tone to suggest a stippled stone wall. I then left the salt to dry.



## STAGE THREE

I wetted the dales above and puddle in a light mix of permanent sap green and raw sienna, using a little alizarin crimson on the left. I pulled the mix down the houses on the right-hand side to create a verge, then painted in the foreground grass triangle.

## STAGE FOUR

I used similar colours for the house in the background but this time added raw sienna to merge it with the hillside. I left its front wall dry and 'white' for now. Adding more indigo darkened the shadowed gable end, and burnt umber, which is opaque, deepened the tone. I scattered larger rock salt to suggest large structural stones and spread excess colour on the ground to create its shadow.



## ▼ STAGE FIVE

My workshop participants usually feel comfortable creating detail. But, for detail to appear sharp, the line must be applied on dry paint, so I waited here for the walls and roofs to dry. I filled the rigger brush with thick indigo and then burnt umber and drew in the window openings and chimney details. Next, I drew in the shadow beneath the overhanging roofs, taking care to trace the bumpy shape of the tile edge to suggest the roof material. These features added 'finish'. Pressing down on the brush to widen it, I included the stone steps and panes of glass and ran raw sienna around the windows and door to create the stone surrounds.



▲ I dampened my smaller flat brush and washed paint from the rear roof in horizontal lines to match the tiles, then added a little cadmium yellow to suggest lichen or moss. I added individual stones to the white façade and ran a thin wash of raw sienna across it.

## ► STAGE SIX

All the details were now in except for the trees which were darker so could be placed on top of the rain clouds once dry.



## ▲ STAGE SEVEN

I dusted off the dried salt and rubbed out any visible pencil lines except for those in the sky. Changing the water in my jar I made my one-inch flat brush dripping wet, then, cradling it on the horizontal (to take its weight), I lightly stroked water across the whole sky leaving dry gaps where I didn't want the paint to run. The dry turquoise sky remained undisturbed beneath. I turned the painting diagonally and propped it at an even higher angle to encourage individual, linear drips to form within the first wash of indigo.



◀ I next added streaks of diluted permanent mauve, transparent yellow and burnt umber to the indigo layer. They flowed and mixed in varying amounts to resemble falling precipitation. Most paint dropped to the bottom, darkening the sky to contrast against the hills below.



◀ Edges appearing in the sky were softened and reduced with the damp one-inch flat brush.

## ▲ STAGE EIGHT

Here you can see how I mopped up unwanted paint, using kitchen towel to soak up the wash.

## ► FINISHED PAINTING

***Passing Through the Dales,***  
watercolour on Aquafine  
artboard, 11¼×8¼in  
(30×21cm)

I stepped back to take a 'helicopter' view of my painting. I added a flash of transparent yellow to the top of the dales and to one of the windows. I also lifted a little paint out of the sky above the left-hand house with the corner of my small flat brush and painted in a forgotten chimney. I included the fir tree but decided not to include the winter tree in the centre of the picture as I felt it interrupted the clean shape of the buildings.



Next edition, Catherine will be looking at whip lines and showing you how these strong and fluid lines can be used to suggest movement within your watercolour paintings.



# LEARN FROM THE MASTERS: 9TH OF 12



## Sarah Edmonds

is a painter, art historian and lecturer. She studied Italian and History of Art at UCL and a short course at the Slade School of Fine Art. She works as a communications consultant and as a history of art lecturer in the Cotswolds; [sarah-middleton.co.uk](http://sarah-middleton.co.uk)

In her history of art series, Sarah Edmonds shines a light on lesser-known artworks by artists we know and love. This month she explores work by the Bloomsbury Group artist, **Vanessa Bell**

# Henrietta by Vanessa Bell

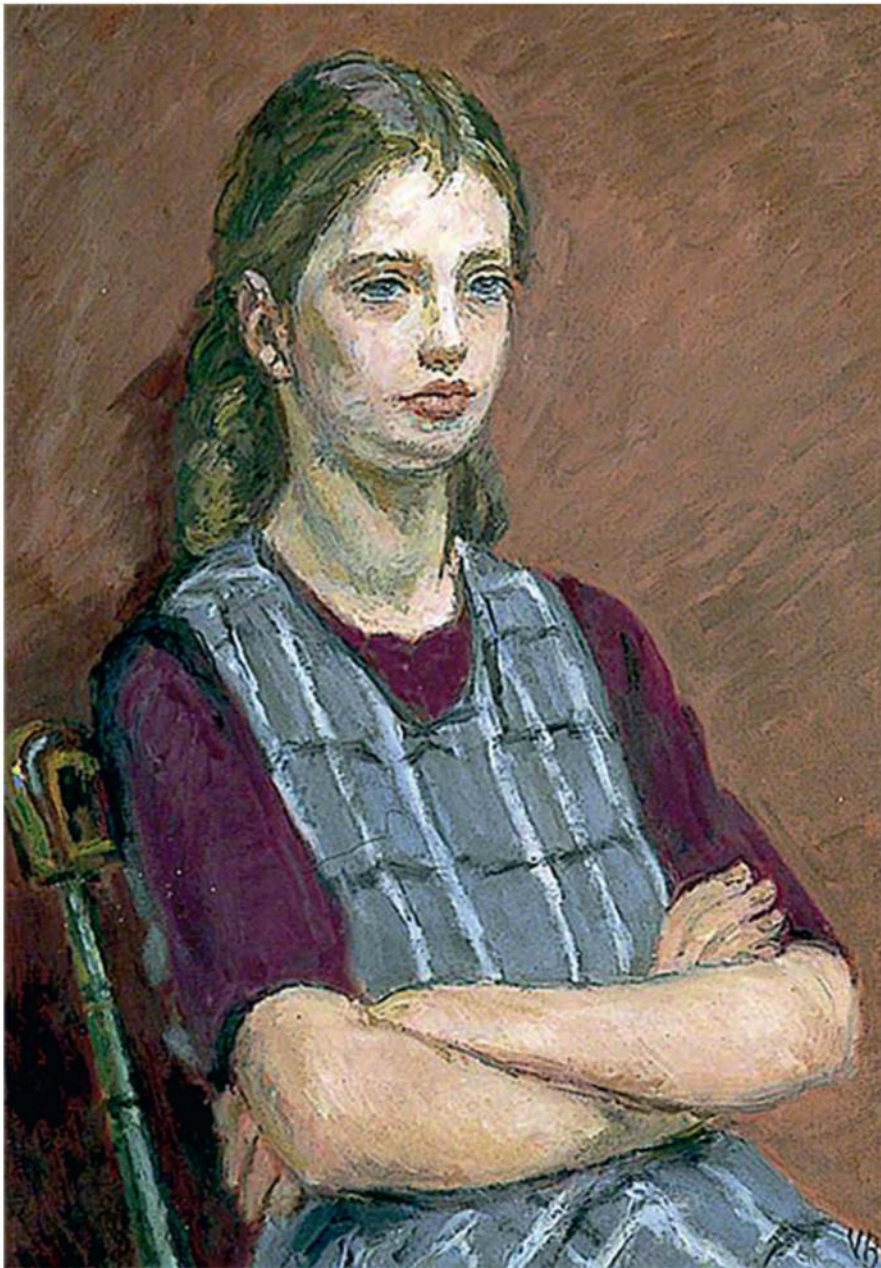


The collection at the Royal West of England Academy in Bristol is home to some incredible artworks, including a handful of works by one of our most notable British painters, **Vanessa Bell**.

**H**enrietta was acquired in 1961 from the private collection of Henrietta Garnett, the granddaughter of Vanessa Bell. Vanessa would have been 76 when she painted the ten-year-old girl at Charleston farmhouse, her home in West Sussex. Henrietta is a beauty with her bee-stung lips and symmetrical features, right on the cusp of womanhood. The innocent gaze and prim yellow dress hide the many complications of her unconventional family upbringing, with the added pathos of knowing the somewhat tragic life that followed. Shockingly, within seven years of this painting, Henrietta would be a teenage widow with a tiny baby to care for.

The life of Vanessa Bell and her sister Virginia Woolf is well documented in their novels, artworks, biographies, films and at her family home of Charleston. But less is known about the generations that followed the famous Bloomsbury Group – those who

◀ Vanessa Bell **Henrietta, 1955, oil on canvas, 26½×20½in (67.5×52.5cm).** RWA (Royal West of England Academy) permanent collection



◀ Vanessa Bell **Henrietta Garnett, 1955, oil on canvas, 21½×15¼in (54.5×39cm).**  
Charleston – estate of Vanessa Bell

▼ Duncan Grant **Vanessa Bell, Painting at La Souco, 1960, oil on canvas, 18×15in (46×38cm).**  
Charleston – estate of Vanessa Bell



were brought up in the shadows of these trailblazers found it hard to carve out their own identity.

### Who is Henrietta?

Henrietta was no exception. She was born in 1945, one of two daughters of Angelica and David Garnett, the former lover of Duncan Grant. Grant lived with Vanessa at Charleston for over 40 years and fathered Angelica illegitimately. It was only at the age of 18 that Angelica learnt of her true parentage, always believing her father to be Clive Bell. Despite their 20-year age

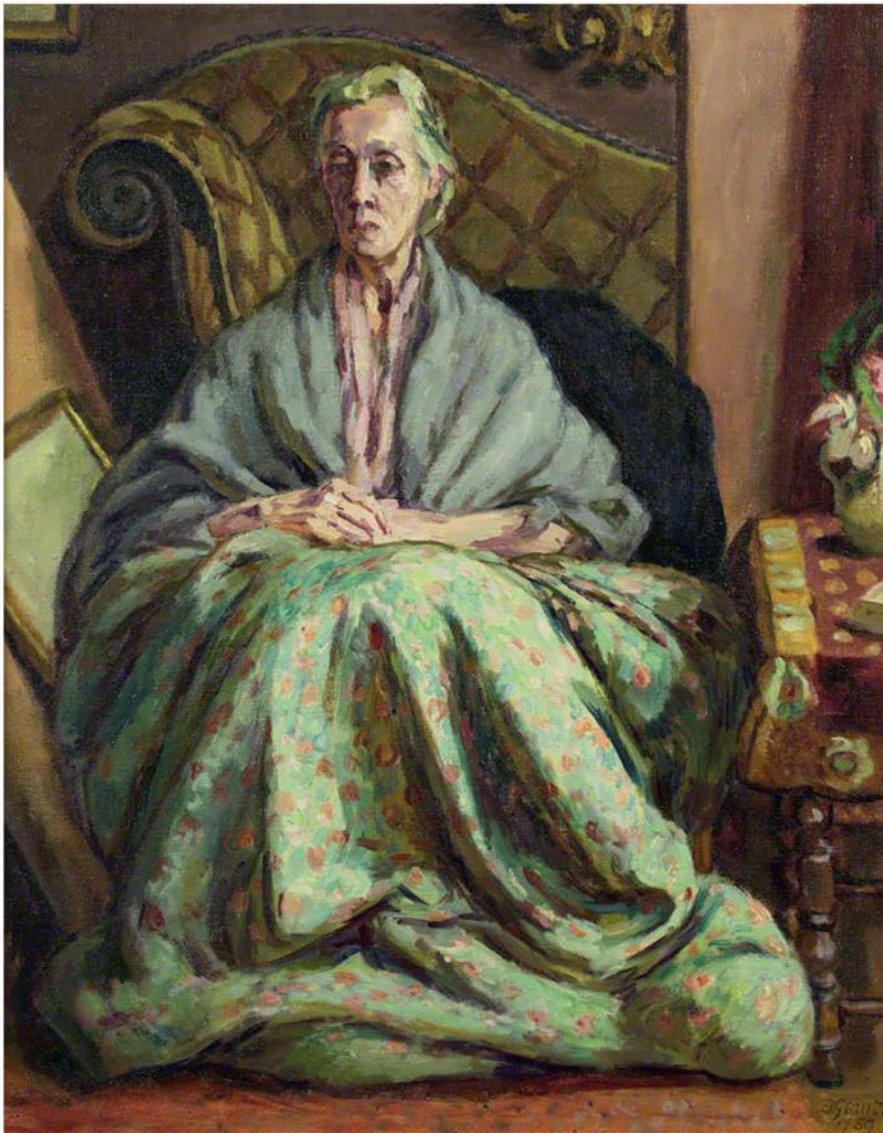
gap, and Garnett having once been in love with Grant, Angelica and Garnett parented Henrietta and Amaryllis. It was amid these complex affairs that life began and continued throughout her adult life. It is no exaggeration to say that suicide, early death, homosexuality, open marriages and extra marital affairs touched the lives of every member of this family.

Although brought up at Hilton Hall, a cold Jacobean house, Henrietta spent many holidays at colourful Charleston where she sat for several portraits. This one shows her in more formal dress than

in others, but often in the same interior setting. Bell experimented with complete abstraction in 1914/15 but continued to paint with a figurative element after moving to Charleston in 1916. She often drew inspiration from her domestic life, and family members, which particularly suited her in old age as she rarely left Charleston.

Henrietta was 'the apple of her grandmother's eye,' and described being painted by Bell with incredible detail: 'Mixing the colours on the palette, glancing first at me and then at the portrait, gently stabbing the canvas...the glances she sent across

**The composition of this painting is simple and the colours bold. Even though she has flattened the pictorial space, there is definitely a feeling of movement as if Henrietta might stand up and walk away at any moment.**



◀ Duncan Grant **Portrait of a Lady, 1959, oil on canvas, 29¼×23½in (74.5×59.5cm).** RWA (Royal West of England Academy) permanent collection

mother, *Deceived with Kindness* (1984) just as she herself was about to get married. At only 17 years old Henrietta married Bruno Partridge, the son of Ralph and Frances (the sister of David Garnett's first wife, Ray Marshall) ten years her senior and family friends of her parents. A year later, their daughter Sophie was born and in the same year Bruno suffered an aortic aneurysm and died instantaneously.

The shock of his death led to a decade of debauchery and hedonism in the swinging '60s. Henrietta led a nightclub life in Marbella and then drifted around Cumbria and Ireland in a gypsy caravan convoy in search of peace and love. Her life took many twists and turns, sadly resulting in an attempted suicide which left her in persistent pain. She married again, twice, before finally settling down with Mark Divall who had once been a gardener at Charleston. In the '80s she lived in France, Normandy and Provence, and then discovered her creative oeuvre with the successful romance novel *Family Skeletons* (1996) – not unaware of the title's resonance. It had taken until middle age to become a success in her own right.

### Quiet courage

She died in 2019 aged 74 years old, whilst living in Sussex, closer than ever to her literary and artistic lineage. When I look at her portrait now, I see a stoic and feisty girl. Her grandmother had a 'lifelong reputation for defying social conventions,' and it seems Henrietta did too. James Beechey, journalist for *The Guardian* writes in her obituary, 'None of life's vicissitudes could dent Henrietta's bewitching beauty. She was droll, mischievous and uninhibited. She could be exasperating, a menace even, but she was also deeply affectionate and deeply loyal. Quiet courage was perhaps her most impressive quality, a stoical refusal to succumb to self-pity which she maintained till the end.'

TA

the room were extraordinarily intimate and reassuring: an observant nod, an amused smile.' (Taken from an excerpt written by Virginia Nicholson on the Charleston website [charleston.org.uk](http://charleston.org.uk))

### Influences of the Post-Impressionists

The composition of this painting is simple and the colours bold. Even though she has flattened the pictorial space, there is definitely a feeling of movement as if Henrietta might stand up and walk away at any moment. One can certainly see the influence of the Post-Impressionists such as Cézanne and Gauguin in her colour choices and expressive brushstrokes. Bell had travelled in Europe visiting Picasso's studio before spending time in Paris. She was present at the groundbreaking Post-Impressionist show curated by Roger Fry in 1910 and it influenced her work every day beyond.

Bells began using colour in a grey, post-war Britain (1916) which was totally unique

at the time and continued to explore a bold palette throughout her career. Some say this love of colour was a reaction to an early encounter with John Singer Sargent, her tutor at The Royal Academy who didn't agree with her 'overuse of grey'.

She took his advice literally and consequently painted objects, furniture, lampshades and textiles with colour. Her home was an eclectic mix of Indian textiles, books, sculptures; Matisse and Picasso's hung on the walls – even her gardens were planted with clashing borders. If you visit Charleston today, you will see the nude figures painted across the fireplace, walls, doors – colour and pattern on every surface. This is the bohemian world of Charleston that Henrietta would have experienced; 'It was an extraordinary treasure chest overflowing with familiar curiosities, beauty, ideas, people and jokes. It reeked of turpentine and toast, of apples, damp walls and garden flowers. The atmosphere was one of liberty and order.'

Henrietta only learnt of her complicated inheritance in a memoir written by her



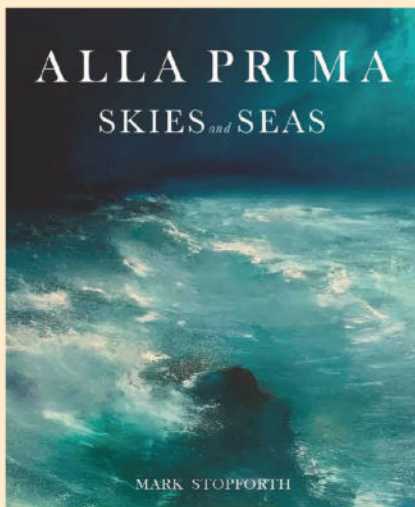
● Subscribers can watch an exclusive bonus video by Sarah to accompany this feature within their Studio Video area on [painters-online.co.uk](http://painters-online.co.uk)

The video includes information about the art materials used by the Masters, filmed at Pegasus Art Shop.

**Next issue Sarah explores the work of Salvador Dali. Make sure you don't miss an issue and subscribe today – go to [painters-online.co.uk](http://painters-online.co.uk)**

# ART BOOKS

Reviewed by Henry Malt



## Alla Prima Skies and Seas

By Mark Stopforth

This is a difficult book to categorise. On the face of it, it's about painting seas in oils, but they are very specific seas – and definitely not seascapes. Skies are mostly devoid of character and foregrounds effectively non-existent. Foam-flecked waves swell and crash dramatically and one's thoughts are inevitably drawn to a particular sort of film genre, or to Romantic poetry. Wordsworth would be in his element, though I think Turner might have felt things had gone too far.

"Not for me", you're probably thinking, but I can also guarantee that you would have trouble putting this down. No, I don't think most artists would want to paint exactly like this, but the images are so strong and well-composed that they draw you in and you start to examine and admire the way Mark Stopforth deals with the sea's peculiar solidarity. You'll find there's a lot to be learned here.

Crowood Press, RRP £20, 144 pages (p/b), ISBN 9780719845123

**Buy it!**

For more insights than you were expecting

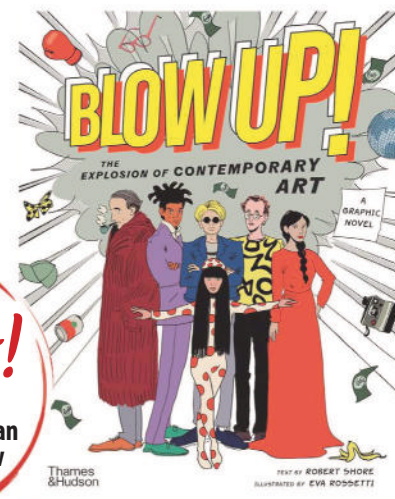
## Blow Up! – the explosion of contemporary art

By Robert Shore and Eva Rossetti

You would be forgiven for thinking that you don't need a graphic novel about contemporary art because the fact is, you don't. However, if you want to have some fun watching mildly pretentious people talking about Art (note the capital), this is where your boots can be filled to overflowing. Questions of pure historical accuracy aside and the possibility that there is more than a little fiction here, this is just the most enormous fun.

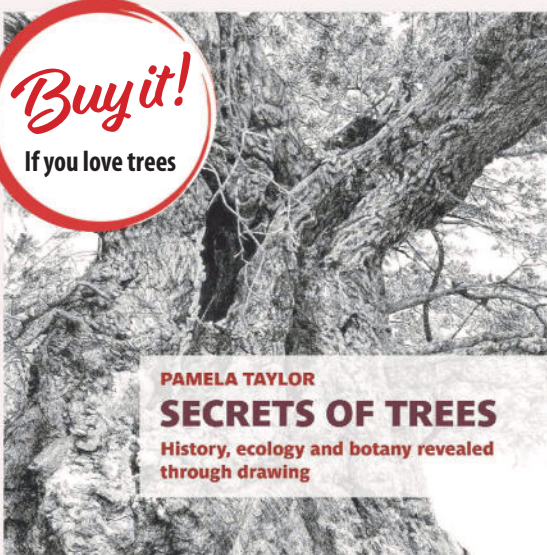
We should say that "contemporary" here refers to everything from about Marcel Duchamp onwards, taking in Dada, Warhol, Kusama, Street Art, globalisation and commercialism. And that's before Digital elbows its way in – if this wasn't such a hasty romp, it would be exhausting, but that's also the point. There are plenty of academic tomes available if you want them, some drier than others, but nothing else that gives you quite such a thrilling quadcopter overview.

Thames & Hudson, RRP £18.99, 232 pages (h/b), ISBN 9780500027981



**Buy it!**

For a lot of fun and an excellent overview



**Buy it!**

If you love trees

## Secrets of Trees; History, ecology and botany revealed through drawing

By Pamela Taylor

This is not so much a book about trees as a book about the majesty of trees. Pamela Taylor is a botanical ecologist as well as an artist of no little skill; her love of trees extends from the distant prospect to the inner heartwood.

This is not, however, an academic discourse, but rather a reflection on and love letter to these major landscape features. Pamela's approach is to consider how varieties and specimens have become part of her life and to do this by analysing them by means of drawing. Although this is not an obviously instructional book, there is plenty of information on approaches and ways of looking and understanding – a chapter subtitled 'Conveying character in the details' will give you the idea.

This is a delight for any artist who is also a lover of landscape in general, and trees in particular, and conveys Pamela's infectious enthusiasm.

Two Rivers Press, RRP £17.99, 112 pages, ISBN 9781915048264

For a huge range of inspiring practical art books that can be purchased at discount prices by our Studio Members from our online bookshop visit [www.painters-online.co.uk/ArtSupplies](http://www.painters-online.co.uk/ArtSupplies)

# Turning PROFESSIONAL

MONTH  
NINE

**Rodney Kingston shares his experiences of his first year as a full-time artist**

It is a relatively recent revelation to me that what I like to paint is the 'everyday'. For many years I happily pushed paint around a palette and onto a canvas without a huge amount of consideration as to why I was painting what I was. I've always explored a variety of subjects including people, places and inanimate objects. The way in which light falls on a subject and creates a pleasing composition, often in an abstract way, is what drew me to paint it. That is still true but what I now also realise is that 'everyday' is a common denominator throughout my work.

A scroll through recent work on my Instagram feed is testament to that. Scenes of London life are followed by a portrait demo piece, a suburban high street and then a jar of Marmite. Someone recently commented on a display of my work which contained a similar variety of subjects: 'Your paintings are incredibly contemporary even though you're using such a traditional

medium in oils'. I don't think her observation was based on the application of paint but rather the themes of the work.

It is perhaps obvious now that I think about it but before I realised I was interested in the 'everyday' I often wondered if I should commit to one subject matter: portraits, landscapes or still-life work. Becoming switched on to what inspires me has enabled me to lean into the 'everyday' as a subject and not concern myself with defining my work in other ways.

## Painting the 'everyday'

A recent visit to an art club to give a demonstration kickstarted a new series of still-life paintings of kitchen cupboard essentials. The club requested 'one of your Marmite' paintings in oils. I have painted Marmite jars a few times over the years and find it to be a good subject for demonstrations because of the challenging shape of the jar and the opportunity to reduce the detail in the label while maintaining a recognisable subject. The nature of art club demonstrations means there is always a race against the clock to finish the work. I enjoyed painting the Marmite jar while talking through my process so much that on the drive home I decided to spend some studio time painting another one but without the pressure of finishing in under two hours! The next day I did just that and the day after that I felt inspired to paint a jar of jam. Posting

For me and many others, going for a run is also an 'everyday' activity if not an every day activity! Last year I was fortunate enough to run the London Marathon. Watching the event on TV when I was in my teens is what inspired me to take up running in the first place and last year's race was the fourth time I'd had the opportunity to take part. It is a truly special day with crowds lining the streets from start to finish; the feeling of crossing the line is hard to beat. I felt compelled to be involved this year even though I wouldn't be lacing up my trainers this time. Instead, I got up early and headed to the capital with my painting box and a plan to capture something of the day.

It made sense to try to include a London landmark in my painting so I walked from Waterloo to Tower Bridge. Experience told me that wherever I set up there would be crowds of people, race stewards and police – meaning I might get moved on after starting a painting because of the trip hazard I could become. I decided to go for it and see what happened. I arrived at the barriers on the side of the road leading up to Tower Bridge early enough to secure a good spot. I immediately engaged in friendly chat with one of the Met police officers and shared my plan. I set up my painting box next to her and joked she may be in the painting, which didn't seem to cause concern so I was good to go.

*Plein-air* painting doesn't make me nervous anymore unlike the first few times

I did it years ago but I was definitely feeling a little anxious as I began this one because of the close proximity of lots

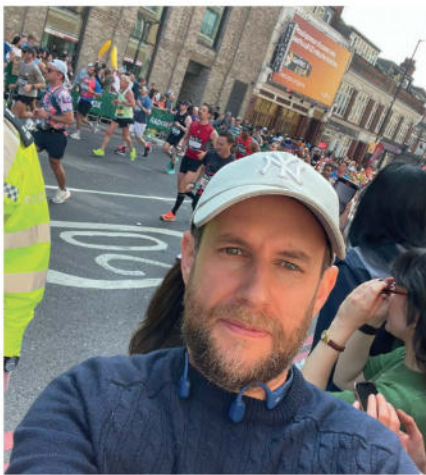
of people. It wasn't long before crowds of supporters filtered into the spaces on the pavement and we all got to applaud and cheer as the leading wheelchair racers

**'They are simple subjects that form a connection to everyday life.'**

both paintings on social media triggered suggestions from followers of other kitchen cupboard essentials that I might like to paint and so it has continued.



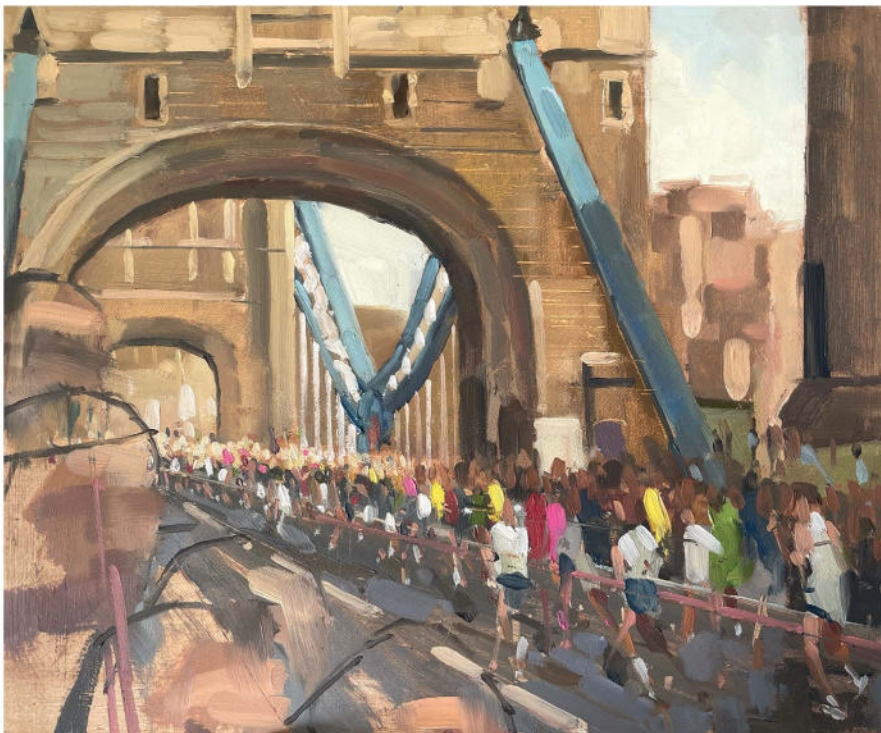
▲ Working on a Marmite jar still life in the studio



▲ Selfie as the number of supporters and runners grew



▲ Set up at Tower Bridge while it was still quiet



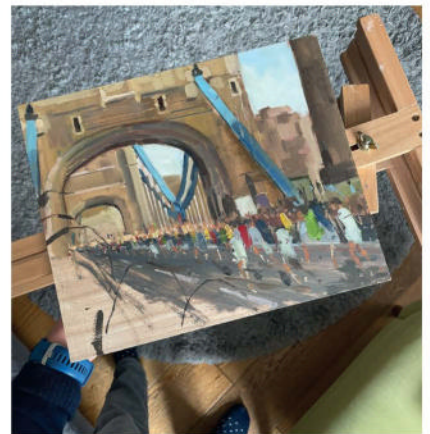
▲ Finished Tower Bridge London Marathon painting

sped by followed by the elite women and frontrunners from the men's race. I was making steady progress with my painting but also finding it more and more challenging as the crowds around me grew and people vied for positions at the barriers. Having my brushes knocked over onto the pavement and then been on the receiving end of a backpack repeatedly shoving me towards my painting box, I decided to pack up and finish the work in the studio. It was about 80-per-cent complete and I felt that supporters trying to spot their loved ones taking part in the marathon was a better use of the space I was currently occupying. I had a good couple of hours soaking up the atmosphere and attempting to capture something of the day but it was time to relinquish my prime location and head home.

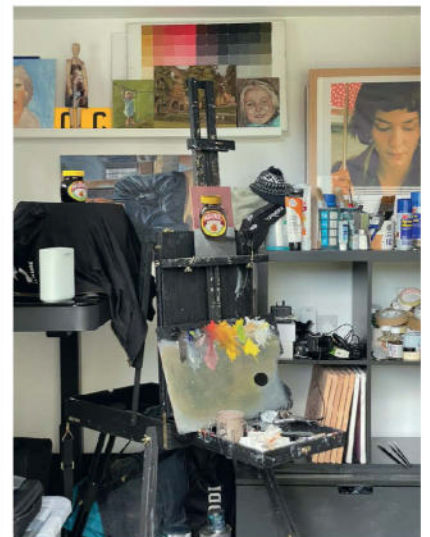
Jumping from painting some kitchen

cupboard essentials in the comfort of my studio one day to taking on one of the most challenging *plein-air* paintings I've ever attempted is what inspires me to paint. At times in the past it felt wrong to work on such different subjects but now I'm aware of the link to the 'everyday' I feel empowered to embrace the variety of subject matter and celebrate it. In a couple of days, I'll be painting at a life-drawing session; the day after that perhaps I'll be painting a view of the Thames close to home. The world around me offers so much that I'm excited about what might grab my attention to be painted next.

One subject I know I return to time and again is anything to do with football and in the coming weeks I'll be embracing that passion full on with a weekend of painting scheduled in the city of Liverpool. At the time of writing, it's close to the end of the



▲ The stage that my London Marathon *plein-air* painting got to before I escaped the crowds



▲ Recent still-life series on the drying shelf in studio

Premier League season and Everton are about to play their final game at their Goodison Park ground. Three artist buddies and I are going to paint outside the stadium on the day of the final game as supporters arrive for the last time at the ground to cheer on The Toffees. We're making a weekend of it so will also paint Liverpool's Anfield and the new Everton stadium while we're there. I'll no doubt write about that experience in my next article. TA

Until next time, *thanks for reading!*



● To find out more about Rodney, his work, exhibitions and courses go to [rodneymkingston.com](http://rodneymkingston.com)



Ask an Artist podcast was devised by working artists **Laura Boswell** (printmaker) and **Peter Keegan** (oil painter) in 2019. Laura left the podcast at the end of 2021 to explore pastures new and **Tom Shepherd** (watercolour painter) joined Peter as the new co-host. The podcast is designed for working artists and makers, who are looking for tips and advice, ideas and strategies not only for making, but selling their art too.

## KIMBERLEY KEEGAN SHARES TIPS AND ADVICE FOR WORKING ARTISTS



### KIMBERLEY KEEGAN

The **Ask an Artist** podcast has been releasing episodes for over five years, with total downloads now exceeding 450,000. The podcast aims to assist and support working artists and makers with the administrative and business side of being an artist. This year, podcast producer Kimberley Keegan has been writing this exclusive Q&A feature for *The Artist* magazine, sharing advice from the podcast and her own wealth of experience. Kimberley, who has a Fine Art degree and is a qualified teacher, is also the co-director of Art Profile, an agency representing over 150 UK artists who teach workshops and deliver demonstrations for art clubs, groups, and societies. You can listen to the podcast on any of the usual podcast platforms such as Apple Podcasts or Spotify as well as via the dedicated podcast website, [askanartistpodcast.com](http://askanartistpodcast.com)

If you are a member of an art club or society, contact Kimberley on [info@artprofile.co.uk](mailto:info@artprofile.co.uk) or take a look at the Art Profile website for more information: [artprofile.co.uk](http://artprofile.co.uk)

**Q I am running my first solo art exhibition next month and wondering who would you recommend I invite to the private view? I'm working towards becoming a full-time artist and with this in mind, strategically, who should I be thinking of inviting?**

**A** Firstly, congratulations on your first solo exhibition and all the best of luck with it! Whilst it can be really tempting to turn the private view into a party and invite all your friends and family, let's remember that the aim of this event, and the exhibition itself, is to get some red dots on the wall! A big consideration is who your contacts are. If you have previous buyers, invite them. If you have a mailing list, invite them (or some of them). These are the people who have already invested in you if not monetarily yet, at least with their time. These are the customers, or potential customers, who already trust you, so you are halfway towards a sale already.

It is really about asking yourself what the private view is about for you. Sometimes it can be about honouring people who have previously bought from you, as above. Other times it could be about networking, in which case you could consider asking other local artists, local business owners or charities, as it can be a nice way to integrate yourself into the community

and to meet people. You could also invite prominent figures from your community, like the local MP, the mayor or local councillors; part of the remit of their job is to be aware of what is happening locally and show their support. With personal invites such as these, do not underestimate the power of a physical, named invitation, handwritten if possible. This will hold so much more weight than an email and really shows how much you value their attendance.

A good rule of thumb is that if over half the people you invite, attend, you'll be doing very well! So have this in mind and do not be afraid to over-invite; much better for the room to be packed to standing room only, than have just a few awkward, lingering people in the room and lots of un-drunk glasses still on the table. You want to create a real buzz and a sense of 'Wow, look how fantastic, successful and popular this artist is!'. In our experience, what also happens in that situation is that once one or two people start buying, it becomes a bit like a feeding-frenzy and everyone wants a piece of the action. I think that's the kind of thing you're trying to conjure up at a private view, so consider who you can invite to help nurture and facilitate that.

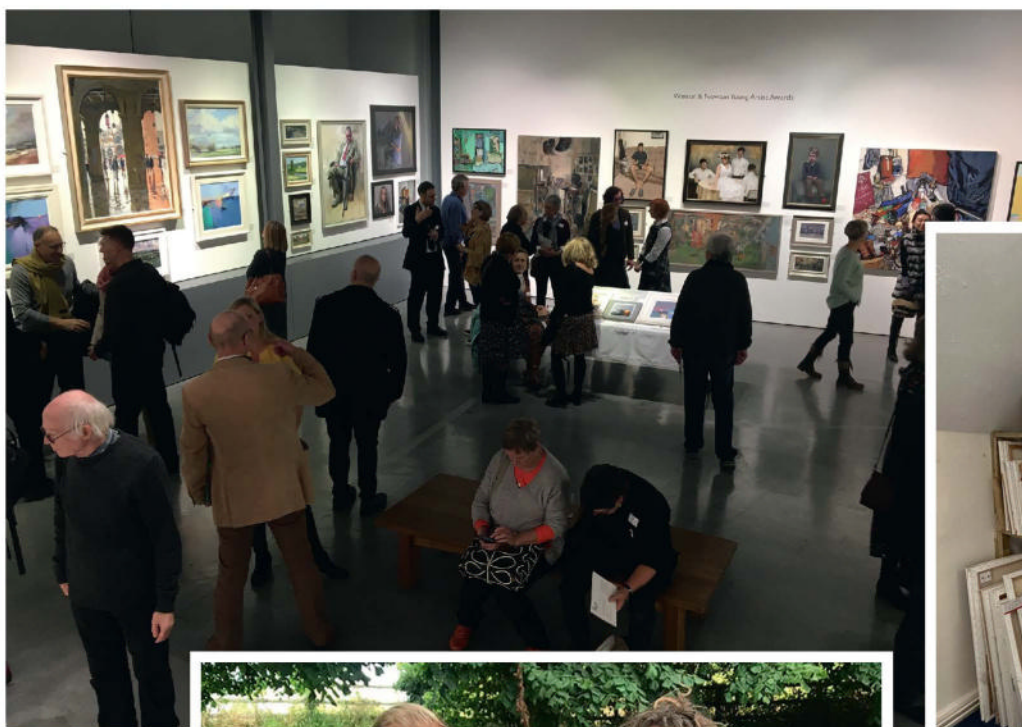
In terms of inviting family and friends, absolutely do invite them but think about the quantity and proportion; you don't want

the exhibition just to be filled with family and friends.

For an event like this to really take off, you need to make a little bit of noise in as many places as possible and it is as much about the build-up as the evening and the exhibition itself; people may not be able to make your private view for a variety of reasons but that doesn't mean to say they don't want to visit the exhibition, so how are they going to know about it? You have done 50-per-cent of the work by creating the art and hanging the exhibition; the other 50-per-cent of the work is yet to be done – marketing and getting people through the door. Have it on your website, have it on your social channels, write a press release for the local papers and magazines, advertise to your local art groups and put up posters, in addition to inviting your previous customers and your mailing list.

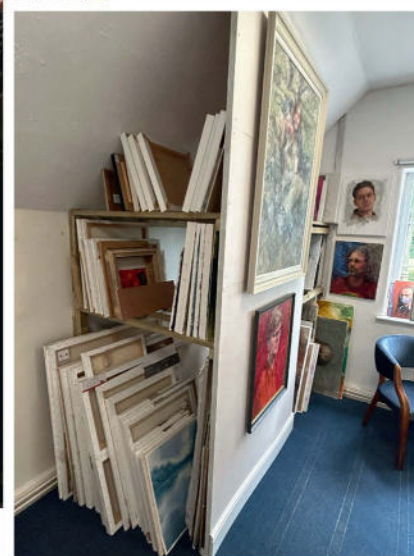
There's absolutely no harm in the private view being an event with a blend of all the different groups mentioned; with a little thought, you can get a really nice mix of people together and create an enjoyable and successful evening.

**Q I have just had a successful exhibition during which I sold several works. However, it did make me think, what do I do with all the unsold paintings?**



▲ A private view at the Mall Galleries in London

► Peter and Tom



▲ Work in storage

**They are new to the public but not to me, as they were made over the past three years, and my work is developing and moving on. I know some people paint over work but that seems a little bit brutal! Are there any other options I could consider?**

**A** This is a familiar problem that I know many artists face. There are always going to be paintings that take a little longer to find a home. There is a famous saying that there is a buyer for every single painting, or print, or work of art out there – the challenge is just trying to find where that buyer lives!

If the work really starts to build up, you may want to consider some sort of studio sale. Peter and Tom have both recently done a similar thing with a collection of unframed works. This could be online or perhaps in-person, particularly suited to something like an open-studio event or similar. However you do this, in order for it

not to affect your overall pricing structure, it's important to set limits – perhaps the sale only runs for a set period of time and is only on selected pieces, which all have something in common; for example maybe they are all works on paper, all created over two years ago, all initial sketches, unframed, and so on.

Following on from this, gifting work is always an option. Ask family and friends if they would like to take any off your hands. If they feel uncomfortable not paying you, perhaps say they are on 'long term loan' instead. Original art can also make great gifts – we often take our creativity for granted but an original piece of art that's been taking up space in your studio, might actually make the perfect, thoughtful gift for that wedding you have coming up!

If space is an issue, then you could consider having a cull and throwing some work away, as brutal as that might sound. Every so often, take the time to really look

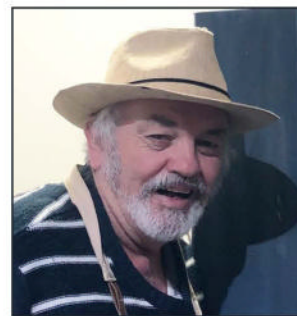
at your work and ask yourself, truthfully and honestly, is that piece subpar? Would I be doing someone a disservice selling them that, based on my current work? Think of it a bit like weeding your garden. Do not be scared to get rid of old paintings or paint over them but do be sensitive and considerate at the same time. This is not something to rush into just because a piece doesn't sell straight away. It may be that a certain piece just takes a little longer to find a buyer – sometimes years. It may come with you to several exhibitions and just as you think it's time for it to be painted over, low and behold, someone will buy it.

If you have the space to do so, there is something to be said for archiving your work. Peter has pieces that he did at university and in the early stages of his career – some that he would be somewhat embarrassed to show now – but nevertheless, it can be quite important from a personal perspective for him to keep them and look back at his own artistic development; he is building up a history and a timeline. It doesn't mean you have to keep everything but keeping some key pieces should be considered.

A final suggestion for those artists who are framing work: work to standard sizes. Have two or three pieces of work that you get framed and then if they don't sell, you can take the piece out of the frame and reuse the frame for something else.

TA

**These questions are all taken from episodes of the podcast. To listen to the answers in full, check out the following episodes: Listener Questions 26 and Listener Questions 14. If you have any questions relating to your painting practice that you would like answered please email [theartistletters@tapc.co.uk](mailto:theartistletters@tapc.co.uk)**



**Mike Barr**

is a Fellow of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. He has won over 80 awards, including 17 first prizes. You can find more of Mike's work at [mikebarrfineart.com](http://mikebarrfineart.com)

◀ **Home-time Rain, oil on canvas, 23½×23½in (60×60cm)**

A limited palette doesn't mean limited drama

artist at all. Many artists tend to have overloaded palettes of 20 colours or more. It may look impressive but it's never the key to painting impressive paintings. Having a limited core palette of about eight or so colours and a group of colours mainly for highlights is a good way to go. It will allow you to learn to mix any colour you need and having such a limited palette will tend to unify the whole painting; it really does work. Also, while colour charts are interesting things and good fillers in art books, if you find yourself referring to them continually, it will ruin your painting flow completely. Learn to mix colours and it will become intuitive and a part of you as an artist – always having to refer to charts will stunt your growth and enjoyment.

It pays to have different palettes for different subjects. My rainy-day painting palette, for example, consists of black, white, yellow ochre or burnt sienna, ultramarine and alizarin with highlight colours of viridian, cadmium orange, and cadmium yellow. In contrast a seascape palette may consist of white, cobalt blue, viridian, yellow ochre, and red with some highlight colours.

There are always questions about brands of paint. The answer is simple: use the best you can afford. Most of the more expensive brands are good and over time you will choose a favourite. Try comparing the cheaper and the dearer makes and you will see the difference for yourself. Colour is a wonderful thing, but it's not the pinnacle of the painting process; that belongs to tone. Once we get tone right, we can paint wonderful things in just one colour! ITA

# Is your palette overloaded?

**Having too many colours on your palette can limit your success, warns Mike Barr**

**E**very artist I can think of has their own style, even though they may not recognise it themselves. If we have been around the local art scene for several years, then artists' work is often very recognisable to us; their style becomes a signature. As well as signature styles, there is also a signature use of colour that many seem to have. It's all a part of how we develop over time. Some artists regard themselves as colourists and tend to use lots of colours, whereas others limit colour; using it more as an accent than it being the main focus.

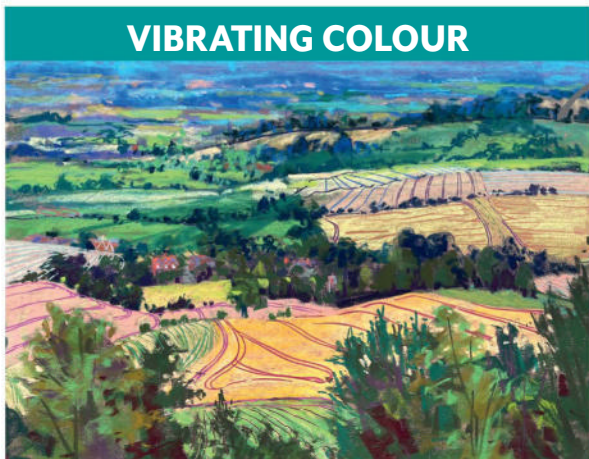
There is no doubt that there are colours that have certain effects on us: some colours or combinations thereof will not allow you to rest; they demand attention. A good, red-based painting will draw attention every time at a show of mixed works but may be difficult to live with once we get it home. On the other hand, a calming almost, monotone work may be easy to ignore in a gallery, but will calm your living area.

Of course, paint manufacturers would love us to purchase all 100 colours in their extensive ranges, but it doesn't help the

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► Sally Bulgin talks to regular The Artist contributor Ian Sideaway

# the artist

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## FEATURES

◀ Caroline Saunders talks to pastel artist Cathy Pearce about her fascination for saturated and vibrating colour

◀ Robert Brindley discusses the attraction of painting boats and harbour scenes and how to paint them using oils

► With answers to all the questions you want to ask!

▼ Whip lines: perfect your lines to suggest movement

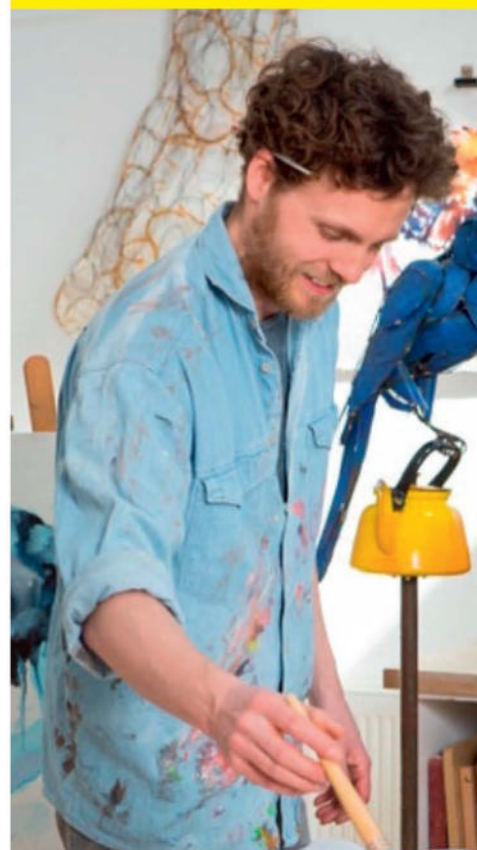
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● **The Art World** – find out what exhibition might be coming to a gallery near you

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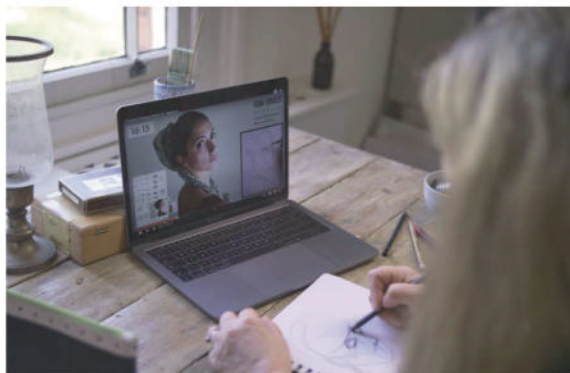
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