

138 April /
May 2021

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international artist

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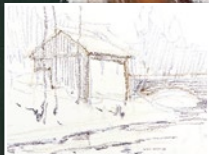
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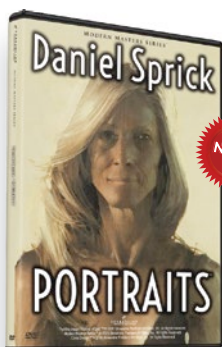


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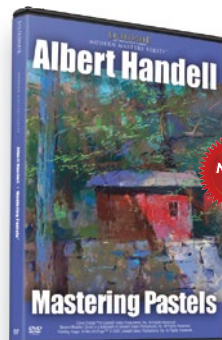
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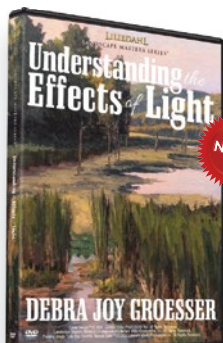
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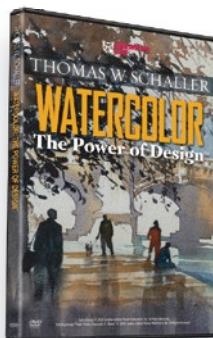
Mastering Pastels
Albert Handell



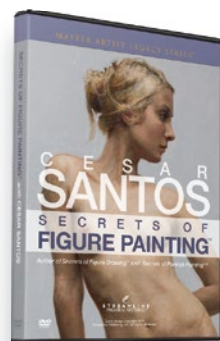
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Dave Santillanes



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Debra Joy Groesser



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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHERS



Artist Focus

Welcome to *International Artist's* April/May issue! We are happy to announce our new website will be launching in conjunction with this edition. The updated website will have many new features for you, including our Art Workshop Guide available in a new format with each entry having images, links and rotating information about upcoming classes. As a subscriber, you will be able to view articles on the website and they will be separated by genre. This allows you to search through the articles and find just what you're looking for. It is the print magazine with search capabilities.

Our Art Challenge competitions are continuing to be a big draw for artists, and on our new website we will be featuring the artwork from the three prize-winners as well as the finalists. Artists, please keep submitting your art to our competitions, now for the chance to also have your work featured on our website! The three winners also receive recognition in *American Art Collector*, with articles dedicated to their work—

Grand Prize receives a four-page article, Second Prize will have a two-page article and the Third Prize winner is included in a one-page feature. This challenge, dedicated to People & Figures, our Grand Prize winner is Pascal Piro of France.

This issue of *International Artist* we're pleased to introduce our newest feature, On Location, where you can step inside the studio of artists from around the world or visit them while they are out painting in plein air. These artists will share some of their favorite features of their setups, allowing you insight into some of the tools, inspirations and aspects of their spaces. *International Artist* continues to be devoted to our lifelong eternal artists, and we thank you for your input, advice and beautiful art. Please see our new executive editor letter page for more insights on this issue.

Always remember this sentiment from Edgar Degas: "Painting is easy when you don't know how, but very difficult when you do."

Sincerely,



Wendie Martin & Adolfo Castillo
Publishers

P.S. Our online store has also been upgraded. In addition to all our books and great back issues that we provide, we have added some inspirational items. This includes artist shirts, painters jackets, aprons, and unique artist gifts that you can order today: www.internationalartist.com. Enjoy this issue!



MAIN COVER ARTIST RACHEL ALTSCHULER

Ernie, acrylic on canvas panel, 24 x 18" (60 x 45 cm)

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New Beginnings

One of my favorite things about *International Artist* magazine is sharing artwork from talented artists worldwide. It shows that art has no boundaries, and people can connect because of beauty and shared passion. Those contributing are eager to provide knowledge, and those reading are open to learning new techniques or being inspired by how other artists approach their work. Moving to the position of executive editor, my goal is to continue to grow the magazine and expand on our long-established format.

I am excited to introduce Alyssa M. Tidwell as the editor of *International Artist*. Alyssa has been with International Artist Publishing for three years and has shown tremendous talent in working with artists and bringing their stories alive in the pages of all our publications. In her role, Alyssa will be writing new features, sourcing top-tier content and working with our esteemed group of contributors.

The heart of *International Artist* will continue to be our demonstration articles. Not only do we strive to feature artists from around the globe, but we also focus on variety in subjects, styles and mediums. In this issue are demonstrations in acrylic from Italian wildlife artist Marco Grasso and abstract artist Joyce Fournier of Canada; oil demos from Zufar Bikbov and Lori Putnam, who both reside in the U.S.; and a watercolor feature from Lyudmila Tomova. While you peruse their articles, and the others in the magazine, take the time to read about the techniques and materials used that could help enhance your art journey.

Happy painting!

Rochelle Belsito
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International Artist Magazine

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Bon mots appearing throughout this magazine are from the varied, exciting and weird life of Tucson-based artist Harley Brown



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WATCH THE VIDEOS IN THIS ISSUE



Station Points



All the Prize Winners in our *International Artist Magazine Challenge No. 122*

PEOPLE & FIGURES



Pascal Piro Sanary-sur-Mer, France *emulsion du saho, oil, 2½ x 21"* (65 x 54 cm)

Grand Prize is a four-page editorial feature in *American Art Collector* magazine

Infinite Complexity

Born in 1963, French artist Pascal Piro's artistic vocation began not soon afterward, winning a drawing award at the age of 6 and taking lessons until 1983. The self-described academic post surrealist says that his "style is a trait of my personality at a given moment. Each of its periods can be translated into an experience; my work has developed over time and through various encounters. The unique story of everyone. Your experience feeds the need to express yourself, painting being only a great vector."

The term "post," he says, refers to the idea of distinguishing between what one wants to freeze in the past, and what is already happening in the future. He adds, "It is very oriented toward the academic term for a set of multidisciplinary rules, following learning the conventions of a conformist art, and surrealist for the nature of a current, or the often unbridled spirit of escape [and] poses questions regarding the infinite complexity and richness of the conscious and the unconscious."

Piro paints by feeling, and the essence of his inspiration is centered on a certain lyricism—of poetry, to feel, to live or to express something within himself. "In a deliberate desire to communicate through my works, a recurring theme of the order of the mind or the soul often comes up," he says. "My works are structured according to their specific theme. In the unique sense of the word and in relation to a theme, I develop a thoughtful or imagined story. The documentation and the photos will make the link for the staging, the accessories...All the components fit together in a classic format, where fine art painting, if

I may say so, takes over."

At times his work leans into the realm of the mythological, and other times it reflects some aspect of human culture or a specific way of life. He explains that a recent painting of his evokes "The Sirven Affair, which took place in Mazamet in 1760," a combat in which Voltaire was involved.

The key to a truly exceptional painting is one in which the piece moves beyond beauty for beauty's sake, the artist explains. Instead, he strives to create works that bewitch the mind, tell a story "to die for" and evoke real sensations and emotions within the viewer.

My Inspiration

I am inspired by Renaissance, Baroque, neoclassical and surrealism. My first experiences relate to traditional work in a very ordinary way (drawing and painting lessons). Artists sometimes keep in the traces of their first touches, their first works, their first drawings, a style without knowing it. Others seek it all their lives. When it is felt, a style is the proof of an openness, of a certain innocence of the instinct which can give birth to a formal and very personal universe. Obviously subject to variations based on feelings, I consider the story to be just as important in a performance. Painting is a vector that can transport you to a state of consciousness independent of the circumstances.

My Design Strategy

The main objective of a strategy might, in terms of a plan, be to envision organization on one way of doing things more than another—a theme to be addressed according

to a specific technical process for example. In the DNA of a story, for me there is an approach to the order of feelings. Often very different depending on the theme to be approached, its composition, its sketch, photograph or not, are all alternative avenues to the choices (medium tools) to use. Combining traditional and digital, I quickly make the choice in order to preserve the freedom of leisure by stimulating my creativity through pictorial history. I document current events, societal or other, and quickly make the choice in my conception of the appropriate strategy!

My Working Process

Traditional and current. I graduated in computer graphics at the National Center of Graphic Arts in Paris, I design according to inspiration, an atmosphere, a scene, a specific theme sought. 3D modeling and post-production capture help me a lot in arranging the shadows and reflections related to the background. Color in different modes gives the appearance of surprisingly rich variations. The rest takes place in a fairly fluid and naturally complementary way. I like this process of organizing the composition in stages. This has the advantage of presenting a successful project by determining the conditions of use of traditional oil art painting. Retouching the image also means mastering its creative aspect!

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2020.09

Tanya Achilleos Lock

Wiltshire, UK *The Recovery*, oil,
23½ x 29½" (60 x 75 cm)

Second Prize is a two-page editorial feature in *American Art Collector* magazine

Second
Prize



My Inspiration

My daughter took a gap year before University and then COVID hit us all. She got a job as a caregiver in a local elderly peoples' home during the first wave and then contracted the virus and had high temperatures. Her little dog would not leave her side and every time we took her out, she managed to sneak back in. I was so happy when the fever broke, and I could see she was on the way to recovery—this inspired me to paint this piece, and the joy of her being well, the happiness as the fear was passing, has inspired me to paint similar works. I love to paint the shadows on the white sheets, all the warm blues.

My Design Strategy

I usually start with an idea and draw that out in pencil, and I also add blocks of color.

I try to think of how this will make the person look good as well as the feeling the viewer will have of the final painting. For *The Recovery*, I wanted to have the happy feeling but also to have the look from the dog guarding over her. I wanted the dog's eyes to follow you around the room and to look like she might growl if you came near her patient. I like to have an animal in my paintings and dogs are always nice to show loyalty or fear. I enjoy painting all subjects and like to mix them up.

My Working Process

My process is very simple, I usually need to start with a very good photo and will often take my own. I also like a bit of reference for the painting especially if there is detail missing from the photo.

I then draw this on to a gray painted board. I then paint directly onto this in oils. I often paint inch by inch, or one section then blend the oil in and move to the next. As I work during the day for a creative agency, at night I do commission and my paintings, which is fine as I paint under lights. I prefer to use lights as they keep the colors consistent since daylight is always changing.

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Alexander Levchenkov Moscow, Russia *Surprise*, oil, 31½ x 27½" (80 x 70 cm)

Third Prize is a one-page editorial feature in *American Art Collector* magazine

My Inspiration

As a portrait artist, I am inspired by the image of a person, by their character, personality and richness of their inner world. Drawing people is incredibly interesting and at the same time very difficult. It is especially challenging to portray children. Once this task is achieved though, I feel deeply pleased. The mission of the painter is to convey the model's thoughts and emotional state to the viewers as precisely as possible. After all, if the viewers like the picture, then the energy and efforts, invested by the artist in its creation, return in the form of audience's delight and empower him to create new paintings!

My Design Strategy

Surprise depicts a scene from the childhood. Let's remember ourselves as children—how we loved gifts and pleasant surprises, treats and sweets! That was a trouble-free world, devoid of worries and concerns, when everything around seemed big, sunny and beautiful. And that's what the viewers see in this picture—sweets and gifts, and a room, flooded with sunlight, where an older girl is giving something to a little one. But what is there in this box? The viewers have an opportunity to dream and make their own conclusions.

My Working Process

In order to create a picture with a meaningful scene, first of all you need to

come up with an idea and think it over, read about such a scene or—best of all—see it in real life. After that, it can be modeled in a workshop, using the necessary environment, props and lighting. The artist creates a certain world that he wants to share with the viewer, transferring the conceived narrative as accurately and colorfully as possible to his canvas with the aid of oils and masterful brushstrokes.

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FINALISTS

Each receives an Award Certificate and a one-year subscription to *International Artist magazine* PLUS having their work seen worldwide by international galleries looking for new talent.

Maria C. Jimenez

New York, USA *Reluctance*,
oil, 12 x 9" (30 x 22 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

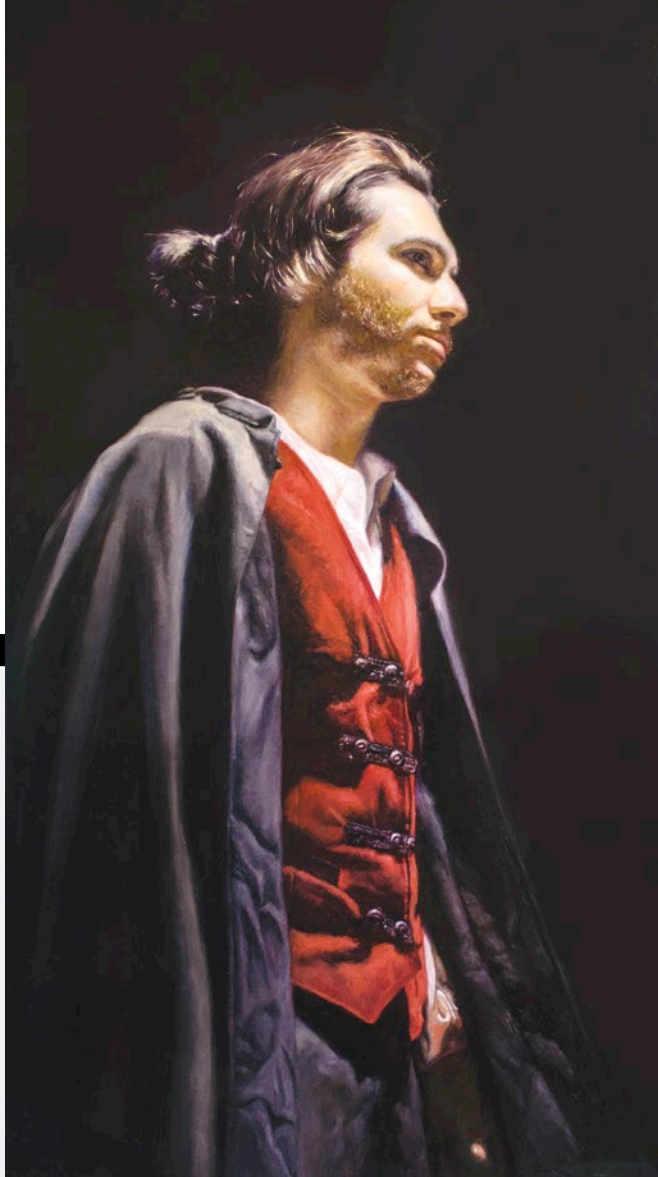
I was inspired by a high school student playing the role of Count Dracula from the fictional Gothic novel *Dracula* by Irish author Bram Stoker. I saw him perform the role in school rehearsals through a period of nine weeks. There is a moment in the play where he hesitates before he takes revenge and bites Mina Harker, the play's protagonist. That moment signifies anger, tenderness, revenge, solace, adoration and reluctance before dooming her to become a vampire. These are the feelings he experiences before falling in love with her.

My Design Strategy

The gaze against the dark background was strategically designed so the viewer looks at the dramatic lighting on the face, then at the red vest symbolizing dominance, anger, passion, power and danger. The black cape represents authority, darkness and mystery juxtaposed with the white shirt, or good and evil. *Reluctance* is a battle of willing and unwillingness, and where you are influenced by the choice you make.

My Working Process

I worked on some thumbnail sketches and



took photographs of this particular student while he performed in a play. After selecting the best photo that matched my sketches, I enlarged the drawing and copied that onto a canvas. I generally draw the entire figure and separate the light and dark values.

I proceeded to spray it with a non-toxic fixative to coat the surface drawing which I

then paint over. I begin layering the paint from dark to light tones until I'm happy with the final results.

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Garry Kravit Florida, USA

Sticky Steve, oil, 14 x 18" (35 x 45 cm)

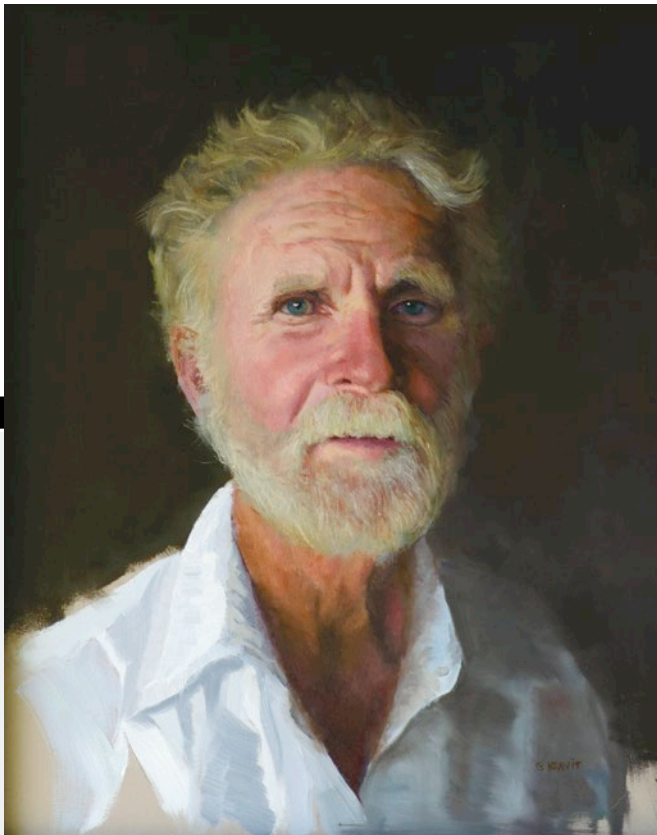
Finalist

My Inspiration

I believe there are two things worth doing in life—helping others and creating beauty. When I get to work on a project that celebrates a person who does so much for others and at the same time creates beauty themselves—well, the work of painting becomes almost effortless. Sticky Steve Morrison exemplified both and was the inspiration for this project. Sticky is a musician, beekeeper and humanitarian, but it was his work for the Nature Conservancy in protecting Florida lands that moved me; that and the scholarship he founded in his deceased wife's name to inspire young women to develop music skills and self-esteem. When a friend showed me her watercolor of Steve that was to be part of a celebration called the *Sticky Steve Exhibit*, I said, "I wanna paint him!"

My Design Strategy

Having never met Sticky, I spoke with a mutual friend and learned as much as I could about him. Then I read what I could find online. I look at visual art much as I do storytelling, whether fiction or non-fiction; as my friend John Dufresne would say, it's all a lie that tells a truth. I wanted to capture some slice of truth about him. I was in North Carolina at the time, and Steve was in Lake Wales, Florida, so I had no choice but to work from photos. I spent a lot of time staring at the photo he and his friend Mary sent me, as well as other photos.



My Working Process

Time is always a factor for me, as I make a living as an airline pilot and am away so much of the time. Generally, I'll sketch in with pencil or charcoal how I'd like to place the figure and then lay in a rough painting to set up values, paying particular attention to the range between light and dark. Next, I render the eyes and other features as well as I can, working to hone the values and set temperatures and colors as close as I can to where I want them to be. Getting the eyes right allows me to establish a deeper sense of connection with the painting and the person. I also find that while some artists can see things that are wrong right away, I'm not gifted with that that filter. I have to really work at it, and I need to walk away

from the painting, sometimes for a week or more, and then look at it with a fresh eye. I spend a lot of time looking back and forth between the subject (or photo) and the painting, sometimes for hours, and then make notes on what I want to change. Pilots are notorious gear junkies, so I've tried many products. At the same time, I'm a stickler for the products I use, which probably says more about me and a kind of superstition I've developed than it does about the products, but I paint almost exclusively with Michael Harding oils and Rosemary & Co. brushes.

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Catherine Mills

Ontario, Canada *Georgia*, oil on panel,
20 x 16" (50 x 40 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

This painting was part of a local initiative "Artists Painting Artists" and having the chance to paint the human face always excites me. Georgia herself is an inspiration. A single mother, visual artist and an expressive arts therapist, she is part of my local arts scene. After a trip to New York, amongst other works, I was captivated by the portrait Jean-Léon Gérôme completed (*Bashi-Bazouk*, 1869) of a man, an irregular "headless" mercenary who fought under the Ottoman Empire. I felt what I really loved were the rich, vibrant colors and after conferring with Georgia, this is our modern, feminine, non-colonial revision.

My Design Strategy

I have been fortunate in my art instruction and opportunities and have spent many years improving my portrait skills, drawing and painting from life. So after securing a spot at Nitram Fine Art Studios I had



Georgia come in for a live painting session and photo session. If possible, it's always fantastic to paint someone from life, to have their energy, engagement and feedback in establishing the pose, the costume (Georgia brought her own silk jacket, and knowing I have painted many insects in the past, note the dragonflies on the jacket). Georgia wanted to present herself "au naturel," and although we considered her holding brushes etc., that felt too contrived.

My Working Process

After completing a study from life and taking several photos, I selected an image and determined the final panel size. After gridding out the panel, I drew the image in pencil and began a burnt umber

underpainting establishing my darks and facial landmarks. Then, referring to my study from the live session, began a thin initial dead color layer, and when that was dry, I applied a thicker, final layer of oil paint. Attempting a "looser" approach, I tried to negotiate the line between rigid realism and a more organic result. The background color was inspired by a muted purple color observed in a home décor vignette and mixed using the skin tone as the harmonizing color.

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Summer Immersion (19" x 15")
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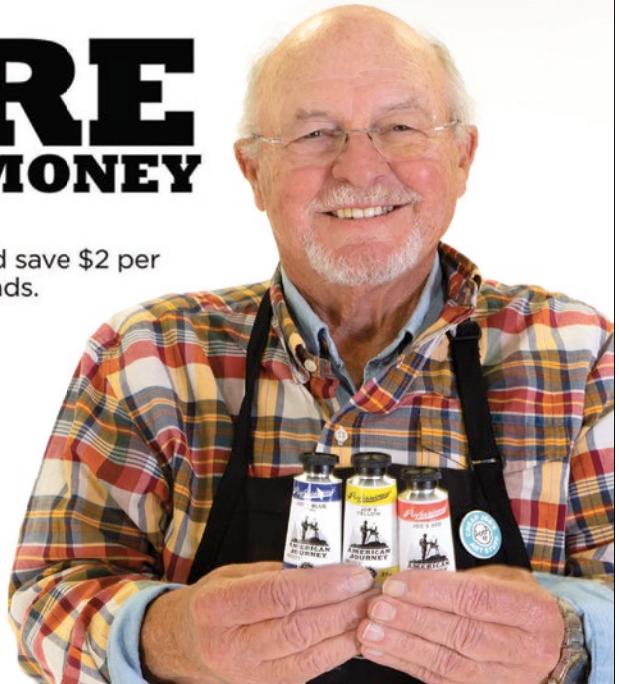
The average acrylic user could save \$2 per tube by switching acrylic brands.

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2 packs of tic-tacs.
2 kneaded erasers.

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Or 1 half bag of Doritos.

 **AMERICAN JOURNEY**
MILL STRENGTH ARTISTS' ACRYLIC





Gustavo Ramos

Arizona, USA *Woman in Red*,
oil, 18 x 24" (45 x 60 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

Woman in Red is inspired in technique by the Old Masters, and in concept by romantic literature. To think that Old World artists with limited tools achieved a level of technique unsurpassed to this day strikes a chord with me. This morphing quality of paint, where simple shapes of color combine into what seems to be a living breathing thing, is where I find my own spark in front of the easel. Conceptually, the painting is influenced by *The Scarlet Letter*, the 19th-century novel dealing with themes of identity, independence and the human condition.

My Design Strategy

My former art teacher Barbara Crawford used to say that "art should entertain the eyes, the mind and the heart." I always think of that when designing a painting. My approach is less strategic and more intuitive. With *Woman in Red*, I tried different poses and angles until I simply fell in love with one. While painting, I looked for what caused that initial emotional response and emphasized those qualities, being careful not to lose the overall feeling of quiet contemplation.

My Working Process

Depending on the circumstance, I either paint from life or from reference photos I

have taken. In this case I worked from both. Since the subject in the painting is my wife, it was easy to have her around if I needed to compare the skin color or expression and that helped in pushing the work beyond the photo. The painting began as a linear drawing, focused primarily on proportions and remaining general so as to not inhibit my fullness of brush later on. I painted several layers especially on the figure before signing the painting.

Contact Details

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- » Website: www.gustavoramos.art

Nanci France-Vaz

New Jersey, USA

Out of Eden, oil, 36 x 24" (91 x 60 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

I have loved mythological and Arthurian literature since I was young. My inspiration is film, the pre-Raphaelite period and the poetry of Tennyson. In my visual story, my female goddess figure is Eve. She has survived for centuries and now resurfaces in the 21st century holding a bitten apple, offering it to the male viewers. This is the first in my series *Femme Fatale*, so it had to express empowerment of strong women via allegory, myth and hope in contemporary society. Eve is non-redemptive for eating the forbidden fruit. She was innocent as she was tricked by the serpent. She stands bold and daring in the modern world.

My Design Strategy

My choice of model runs Art629 Gallery and is also an artist. She came to my studio for the photoshoot. I made a crown of flowers and tied them to a wreath, and I chose the dress via my wardrobe. The choice of color and clothing has to fit a time period or style. I put up a dark green drape to emulate the background suggesting forest and directed her in my photoshoot to express the natural mood and emotion. I wanted dramatic light for this. It had to be a fusion of classical background, with a

contemporary female subject with tattoos. I redesigned them using the name Adam and birds flying up towards her to lead the viewer to her eye.

My Working Process

I start in Photoshop using layers to compose a design and determine the scale based on what expresses my visual story best. The next step is drawing to work out the proportions, anatomical structure and values. The photo distorts figures and compresses values and colors. When I can get a model, I paint them from life to get a feeling of their character. If the scale is 30 inches vertically or less, I sketch in the

design from scratch with raw umber. If it's bigger, I transfer my drawing. This can take over a week. Sometimes I work on a white panel, sometimes it's toned. I never start the same way twice as every design is different. I then block in the painting using flat simple shapes, getting the values as correct as possible working from back to front. I usually have three layers in the head but leave the background thinner to create depth and not overpower my portrait or figure.

Contact Details

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Alex Tabet

California, USA

Leather and Thread, oil, 18 x 14" (45 x 35 cm)

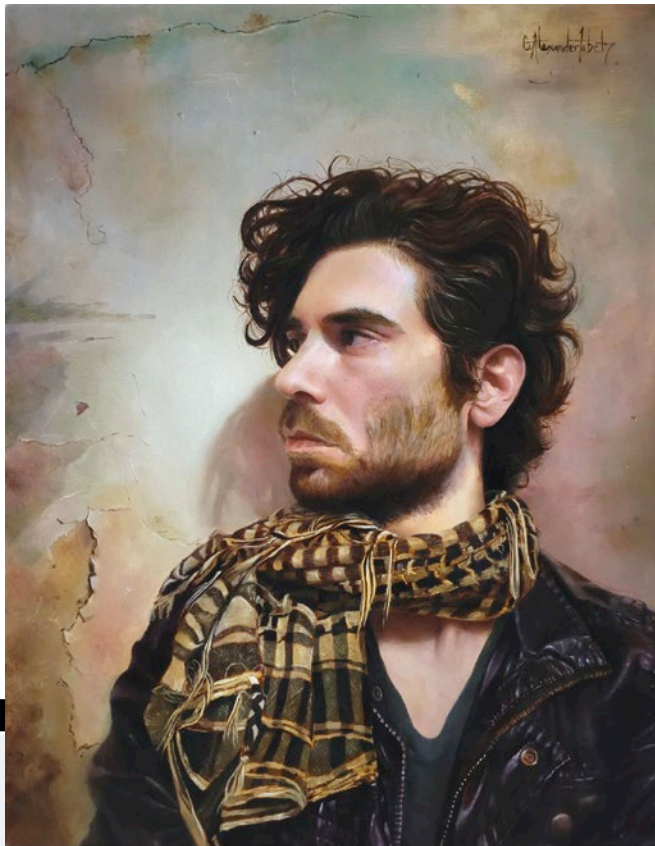
Finalist

My Inspiration

I love painting people. My joy is to not only capture a person's likeness, but more importantly their essence. An entire story can be told simply from an expression, gesture or attire. However, the global pandemic presented a problem in finding a model willing to pose for me. After a long struggle of thinking what to paint, I found the solution staring at me in my bathroom mirror. I realized I could just paint myself. I was moved by the challenge to self-reflect and discover. With quarantine in full swing, I had nothing but time to explore. Perhaps something about myself would be revealed during this strange time.

My Design Strategy

While I experimented with a range of various poses, I became drawn to the profile. There is something stoic and mysterious to me about profile portraits, maybe due to a



lack of eye contact with the viewer. Clothing can reveal just as much about character as facial expression. I chose my favorite leather jacket and a scarf to match, adding a level of interest, sophistication and intricacy to the painting. I used hues of red and green on the chipped wall to complement the colors on the face. I felt the cracks would add more character to the painting, creating a contrast between myself and my surroundings. Perhaps it's a subconscious expression of anxiety resulting from uncertain times.

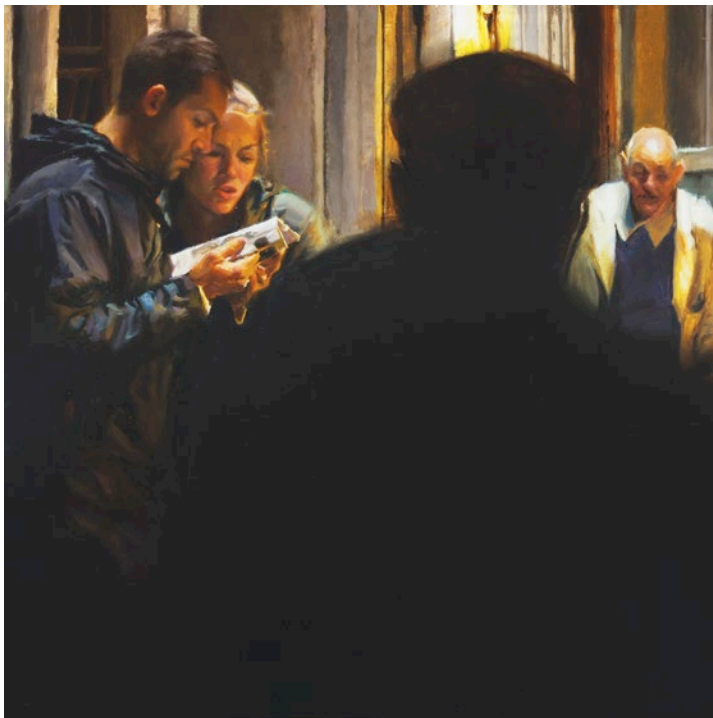
My Working Process

Painting to me is a balance of spontaneity and precision. I first prime my canvas with multiple coats of gesso that's later sanded to a smooth surface. This allows me to work

with greater detail and delicacy. Afterwards, I enjoy a straight paint to canvas method. I find a certain freedom in the absence of a preliminary drawing; discovering the subject for the first time as I paint. The foundational layer consists of a monochromatic underpainting using only burnt umber and titanium white to understand the form. Once dried, I apply thin layers of color and glazes to fully realize the portrait. The key for me is to never lose sight of the "drawing" aspect. I constantly adjust and rework the form until I'm satisfied.

Contact Details

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Joe Ceballos California, USA Foreign, oil, 18 x 18" (45 x 45 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

Many years ago, my wife and I traveled to Italy for our honeymoon. Being a fan of John Singer Sargent, it was hard not to think of his work while on this trip, especially as we traveled through Venice. I wanted to make a painting from this trip that captured a glimpse of people going about their daily lives while also conveying a little mood and mystery. I came across this picture I took in one of the many narrow streets, and I was intrigued by the tension between the couple. I loved that I could create a story about what was happening. It seemed to be an experience those of us who have traveled in the pre-smartphone era can relate to.

My Design Strategy

When I travel, I typically carry a camera and indiscriminately take tons of photographs. I like to look through them upon returning home, "hunting" for a unique moment captured. This section of one of my hundreds of photos caught my eye. I had also been studying Paul Strand's photography and his use of big, dark, graphic shapes to frame an image. Utilizing the dark silhouette as my foreground served as a great way to not only frame the couple but also to illustrate this idea of a dark, mysterious unknown, as traveling far from home can sometimes feel.

My Working Process

I started with a charcoal drawing as a rough guide. Using a larger brush and fast, loose

marks, I blocked in the big shapes of color and value. Putting my attention first on my focal point, in this case the couple's faces, I slowed down and tightened up my drawing. As I worked my way outward, I left areas loose where appropriate. Leaving the foreground figure blurred and with broken edges allows the viewer to comfortably see right past him. A variety of "finish" helps convey a sense of movement and spatial relationships. Drawing the viewer to a more resolved focal point, I like to keep the peripherals abstract. The audience becomes a participant, forcing them to use their mind's eye to complete the picture.

Contact Details

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Experience in art will tell us when a painting is finished. — Harley Brown



Debra Lott Kentucky, USA *RE-Aligned*, oil, 36 x 36" (91 x 91 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

My latest series of paintings illustrates the beauty, strength and resiliency of women. Two years ago, I painted a series in the context of the #MeToo movement where I revealed pivotal moments when survivors broke free from the culture of abuse. To build on this theme, my new series, *#WomenStrongerTogether* features survivors with tenacity, perseverance, stamina, fortitude and endurance. *RE-Aligned* was the first painting in this new series and portrays a woman's physical and mental strength.

My Design Strategy

Visual design is an important aspect to my paintings. I experiment with cropping and balancing negative space and use the figure as the central component in a composition with minimal background. This use of design along with strong contrast of light and shadow help create drama. The mirrored image suggests a personal physical interaction and adds to the mystery and abstract quality of this composition.

My Working Process

My oil paintings and drawings are created to empower women and reflect upon the human

experience and often explore social, political, and contemporary issues. I first visualize how I want to accomplish this objective with my models and then photograph. I work primarily from photographs because I paint every day. I paint in the alla prima style with techniques that include naturalism, expressionism, semi-abstract and figurative distortion. My subject matter helps direct my decision on selecting the best technique for each painting.

Contact Details

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Lisa Rickard Florida, USA, *Callisto*, oil, 14 x 14" (45 x 45 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

I am inspired by human nature because the psychological characteristics, feelings and behavioral patterns that we all share as human beings are infinitely complex and mysteriously beautiful. My visual stimuli has always been drawings, paintings and sculpture by past and present masters of the art of the nude.

My Design Strategy

My design strategy begins with developing a themed series of nudes. *Callisto* is the second allegorical figure in my painting series honoring all art models essential to figurative artists who draw, paint and/or sculpt the human form. She, like the other figures in this series, is named after a heavenly body in the universe. Callisto

is one of the most intriguing moons of all orbiting Jupiter.

Each painting has an allegorical message representing one of the three stages of our lives: youth, adolescence and adulthood. *Callisto* allegorically represents the adventurous adolescent and displays a bold, engaging, yet pensive gesture reminiscent of a young adult's inexperience and exploratory nature. Strategically designing an allegorical meaning requires interpretation based on my growing knowledge of artistic anatomy and expressive design of human form.

My Working Process

My working process is always evolving based on the tradition of developing the skills necessary to paint a realistic illusion of form. For *Callisto*, I chose to paint on

mylar (polyester drafting film) rather than the usual painting substrate. With only the contour drawing of the figure fully realized, the composition evolved gradually with thin paint layers for her environment that I referenced from my perspective drawings created on paper. My current palette is a variation of a system of color strings that I learned from Douglas Flynt, an exceptional fine artist and instructor. My process of painting the dancing light that I see flowing over the human form is derived from his idea of thinking conceptually at the same time that optical clues are being processed and translated in paint.

Contact Details

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Occasionally I draw from life. It connects me with... "life." — Harley Brown



Johannes Wessmark Varmland, Sweden *Submerged*, acrylic, 39 x 59" (100 x 150 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

It is always inspiring to paint Agnes, whom I have painted several times before. She is very professional, and of course, very beautiful. Everything in this painting is inspiring, I think. The sunlight, the reflections in the water, the whole set is wonderful. It's not hard at all to be inspired when you stand on the edge of the pool, having this scene in front of you.

My Design Strategy

When I planned this photoshoot there were a few things I had decided in advance. I had in my head a picture of a beautiful woman, floating in a pool, completely relaxed. I wanted to convey a feeling of calm and stillness combined with all the eye-catching elements like the reflections in the water, the strong contrasts and the blue colors. I

always bring a set of different clothes for the model to choose from. We also change them during the photoshoot so that I have some variation. The shirt she wears is actually my own, but I think it works well in this case, a little too big so that it can float loosely in the water.

My Working Process

Since I am a hyperrealist artist, I always want to use photos as reference for my paintings. After the photo shoot, the model and I together choose which photos are okay and which to trash. After I have decided what photo to paint, I print it in the same size as the painting will be. This makes it easier to get the sketch correct which is important when painting with the level of realism I want to achieve. After the canvas is prepared with gesso so it is close to

smooth as paper, I make the sketch and cut some parts of masking film to protect some areas when I paint on some others. On my website under "studio," there are some in-progress-photos of this painting where you can see exactly how I do it.

When all bigger and soft areas are finished, I start adding small details with tiny paintbrushes and oil paint. I keep a close eye on my reference photo during the whole process, so I get the painting as realistic as possible. At the time of writing, this painting is on its way to Plus One Gallery in London, and I have begun painting on a new figurative painting, this time with a little twist.

Contact Details

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CALL FOR ENTRIES

HOW TO ENTER OUR ART COMPETITIONS

FULL COLOR DIGITAL PRINT-OUTS

Use the Official Entry Form over the page

ONLINE

Visit our website to upload digital files of the images you want to enter and pay for them using our secure server.

www.internationalartist.com

To upload your entries you need to prepare your image files to be at least 400 pixels at the shortest edge. Once

you are in the **Official Online Entry** page simply select which challenge you wish to enter then follow the prompts and finally pay the entry fee via our secure server. There you can also see other entries received along with past winners of our competitions.

CHALLENGE ENTRY FORM SCHEDULE AND CLOSING DATES

#	Theme	Issue	Closing
124	Landscapes	IA138	May 12, 2021
125	Florals & Gardens	IA139	Jul. 14, 2021
126	Abstract / Experimental Art	IA140	Sep. 8, 2021
127	Seascapes, Rivers & Lakes	IA141	Nov. 10, 2021
128	Favorite Subjects	IA142	Jan. 12, 2022
129	Still Life	IA143	Mar. 9, 2022
130	People & Figures	IA144	May 11, 2022



HINTS FOR PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR ARTWORK

- Set your camera to the highest quality available.
- Shoot your paintings dead square on and fill the frame as much as possible. We can crop out everything else.
- Take your paintings outside and photograph them in the shade. Indoor lighting can create unpleasant orange or blue color casts.
- To ensure crisp pictures, use a tripod.
- Turn the date off!!
- Rather than look through the display screen when shooting your digital pictures, use the viewfinder because there is less likelihood of the camera moving and creating a fuzzy picture.
- Make sure no clips or easel clamps intrude into the painting, and that frames don't cast shadows that fall onto the painting.
- Then print out your entries on photographic quality paper no smaller than 8 x 5" (20 x 13 cm) size. (Some papers have a yellow tint, which impacts on the finished result. If you are unsure, it might be best to take your photo files to your local digital photolab.)
- The full-color prints must be crisp and sharp, not jagged or bitmapped, and you must be happy with the color.

Please note that under no circumstances will any image supplied as a digital file on CD be accepted. Digital files/images must be entered online.

Being able to see the other online entries to your competitions gives me an idea of what my entry will be up against.

It's great to see your magazine using the digital technology to help artists be seen worldwide.

Because I am able to see the paintings that other artists are entering I am inspired to enter my own art.

I've always wanted to enter your competitions. Now I can.

Your online entry form is a good idea. I can even see the quality of the other paintings that have won previously.

I have just looked at your website and found out I can now enter your competitions online. Good news isn't it!

I am happy that your online entry form allows artists from all countries to enter.

Because our mail takes so long it is sometimes too late for me to enter. Being able to enter online certainly solves the problem.

Enter our
Art Competitions
from anywhere
in the world

CALL FOR ENTRIES

ia ART PRIZE CHALLENGE SERIES

A continuing series of art competitions designed to encourage the best talent working in the world today open to any painting or drawing medium.

ENTER OUR NEW ART COMPETITION

CHALLENGE No. 124

Landscapes

See your work published in *International Artist* magazine and also receive a 4-page Editorial Feature in *American Art Collector*, the prestigious magazine read by collectors and galleries looking for new art work in the world's biggest art market.

Winners and Finalists in our competitions don't just win awards to hang on their walls. The real value of entering and being one of the winners is that your work will not only be seen by hundreds of thousands of readers worldwide but also by leading galleries and collectors in America, the biggest art market of all. Our Grand Prize Winners receive a 2-page spread in *International Artist* magazine and a 4-page Editorial Feature in *American Art Collector*. Publicity at this level is priceless and could be a career changing opportunity for any artist, working in any two-dimensional medium.

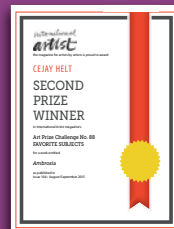
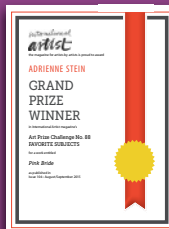


CHALLENGE No. 124 Landscapes

Medium	Any painting or drawing media
Entries Close	Last mail received on May 12, 2021
Entry Fee	US \$9 / £5 / €8 / AUS \$10 (See overleaf)
Send Entries To	See page 24 of Official Entry Form
Winners Featured	Issue No. 140 August/September 2021 The winners and a selection of highly commended works will be published in our <i>International Artist</i> magazine Art Prize report.

NOTE: The winners and finalists in Challenge No. 123 – Wildlife will be featured in *International Artist* issue No. 139, which comes out in June/July 2021

Every winner and finalist will receive an Award Certificate authenticating their prize.



"I was contacted by a large gallery in Massachusetts after they saw my work in *American Art Collector* magazine. We have enjoyed a great relationship for several years now."

— Jim Seitz, Artist



GRAND PRIZE WINNER

Our Grand Prize Winner receives;

- An Award Certificate to authenticate the prize
- 2-page spread in *International Artist* magazine read worldwide by more than 150,000 readers
- 4-page Editorial Feature in *American Art Collector* magazine

American Art Collector is the most prestigious magazine in America focusing on traditional fine art—the art most people want. It is read by affluent art collectors and galleries coast to coast, all on the lookout for new artwork and new artists. Having a 4-page Editorial Feature in this art market bible is the kind of publicity that could change your career as an artist.

"In large measure due to my exposure in *International Artist* magazine, I have now had almost 6,000 visits to my website from all round the globe. Being in *International Artist* magazine has truly proved to be an international experience for me and I continue to be grateful to the magazine."

— Alfred Nichols, Acrylic Artist, Mississippi, USA



2ND PRIZE WINNER

Our Second Prize Winner receives;

- 1-page spread in *International Artist* magazine
- 2-page Editorial Feature in *American Art Collector* magazine
- Award Certificate

The publicity you receive through this 2-page article in *American Art Collector* could lead to multiple sales in the world's biggest art market.

3RD PRIZE WINNER

Our Third Prize Winner receives;

- 1-page spread in *International Artist* magazine.
- 1-page Editorial Feature in *American Art Collector* magazine
- Award Certificate

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Our Finalists each receive

- An entry in *International Artist* magazine with their work seen worldwide by international galleries looking for talented artists to represent
- 1-year subscription to *International Artist* magazine
- Award Certificate

Read about the experiences some artists have had after their work appeared in *International Artist* magazine.

INTERNATIONAL ARTIST CHIEF JUDGE



Portrait of Vincent by Everett Raymond Kinstler

Vincent Miller, founder of *International Artist* magazine, is our Chief Judge for our challenges. He has judged art for more than 40 years worldwide, including in the USA, Singapore, Australia, Canada and the U.K., to name just a few countries. In addition, he is an artist and sculptor himself. Mr. Miller works with many of the greatest living artists and art schools. He supports great art by judging our challenge program.

If your art is selected you are among the elite in the world to be selected by Vincent Miller. We welcome you to submit your entries for the next challenge judging.



SUBMIT YOUR DIGITAL ENTRIES ONLINE; IT'S SO EASY!

RULES & CONDITIONS

Fill out the form overleaf to enter your digital prints or visit our website www.internationalartist.com to enter online. Only entries on this Official Entry Form will be eligible. You may enter as many times as you like (see point 4). See overleaf for entry address details.

1. ELIGIBILITY This is an open competition - all artists working in painting or drawing media are eligible to enter provided they meet the rules. To conform with the spirit of the awards all work must be original and completed within the last two years and would not be disqualified if it has won any previous prize or award in any other art competition. No copies from other artists' works or paintings from other artists' photographs or from published material will be allowed. Source material must be original and available on request. No supervised work will be allowed.

2. ENTRIES CLOSE You must have your entry in by May 12, 2021.

3. DIGITAL PRINTS Digital prints should be printed on photographic quality paper no smaller than 8 x 5" (20 x 13 cm). Every entrant may submit an unlimited number of entries for each competition. **Please**

do not send original artwork. Pictures will not be returned, so please make duplicates for your submissions.

4. ENTRY FORM Mail-In Entries must be accompanied by one original Official Entry Form per artist as printed on these pages. A photocopy or facsimile may be used for more than three entries. When entering digital entries via our website, you must agree to our rules and conditions before submitting your images.

5. PICTURE LABELING AND SUBMISSION Each print must be clearly marked on the back with the artist's name, the title, medium and the dimensions of the work. Don't write on the back of your digital prints, instead, write on a label and stick that on the back. Only properly marked digital prints, together with fully completed Official Entry Forms will be accepted. For protection, simply fold a cardboard stiffener around your entry.

6. ENTRY FEE There is an Entry Fee for each picture entered in the competition (see next page), payable by Visa, MasterCard credit cards, or by check/money order, and this must accompany the

picture(s) and Entry Form. The Entry Fee is non-refundable.

7. JUDGING All entries received will be viewed and selected by the Chief Judge of *International Artist* magazine of *International Artist* magazine.

8. PUBLICATION OF WORK Signing the Entry Form will be taken as permission to publish the painting, if chosen as a winner or finalist work in our prize report. Any work reproduced in this way will be given proper credit at all times. Although every care is taken by the publishers to match proofs to the material provided, there is the possibility that variations may occur between the slides provided and the colors reproduced in the actual magazine due to limitations of the four color printing process beyond the control of the publishers.

9. TERMS Submission of entry in this competition automatically constitutes the entrant's acceptance of all competition rules. The judges' decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into. Winners will be notified by mail and announced in the first available issue of *International Artist*.

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

THREE INTERNATIONAL ENTRY POINTS

For your convenience there are three International Entry Points. You can pay your Entry Fee by Visa or MasterCard.

1 USA / CANADA THE AMERICAS

Send your entry and payment of US \$9 per entry/picture to:

**International Artist magazine
Challenge No. 124:
Landscapes
7530 East Main Street, Suite 105
Scottsdale, AZ 85251, USA**

Enter your Credit Card details on the Entry Form below or include a Check/Money Order made payable to *International Artist*.
(Checks must be in US Dollars and drawn on a US bank)

2 UNITED KINGDOM / EUROPE AFRICA

Send your entry and payment of £5 (or €8) per entry/picture to:

**International Artist magazine
Challenge No. 124:
Landscapes
7530 East Main Street, Suite 105
Scottsdale, AZ 85251, USA**

Enter your Credit Card details on the Entry Form or include a Cheque/Money Order made payable to *International Artist*.
(Cheques must be in Pounds Sterling, and drawn on a United Kingdom bank)

3 AUSTRALIA / NEW ZEALAND ALL OTHER COUNTRIES

Send your entry and payment of AUS \$10 per entry/picture to:

**International Artist magazine
Challenge No. 124:
Landscapes
7530 East Main Street, Suite 105
Scottsdale, AZ 85251, USA**

Enter your Credit Card details on the Entry Form or include a Cheque/Money Order made payable to *International Artist*.
(Cheques must be in Australian Dollars and drawn on an Australian bank)

DEADLINE LAST MAIL RECEIVED ON MAY 12, 2021

Please send your entry to the Art Prize coordinator responsible for your zone to the address shown above.

LANDSCAPES

I am submitting images listed below for this Art Prize Challenge and enclose my Entry Fee for each entry as described.

When posting your entries, please don't use staples or paperclips on your printouts!

I understand these pictures will not be returned and that they may be published, properly credited, in a future issue of International Artist magazine. I warrant that the entries submitted are entirely my own work and that I own the copyright on each, as well as copyright on all source material from which these works were created. I hereby grant permission to the publishers for reproduction of this work for the purposes of this competition and agree to the terms and conditions as set out overleaf.

YOUR DETAILS Please print clearly

Your name _____
Address _____
City/State _____ Zip/Postcode _____ Country _____
Telephone _____ Email _____
(So we can contact you if you win)

YOUR ENTRIES

ENTRY 1:	ENTRY 2:	ENTRY 3:
Title of work _____	Title of work _____	Title of work _____
Medium _____	Medium _____	Medium _____
Dimensions (H x W) _____	Dimensions (H x W) _____	Dimensions (H x W) _____
Signature _____	Signature _____	Signature _____

Don't write on the back of your digital prints, instead, write on a label and stick that on the back. Please do not use bubble wrap, tissue, excessive tape or other elaborate forms of wrapping. Simply fold cardboard around the entry form as protection.

YOUR PAYMENT

Please find attached my check/money order for the amount of _____ made payable to *International Artist*

OR

Charge the total amount to my Visa MasterCard

Signature _____ Expiry Date _____



PRO • fessional Artist GALLERIES AND AN AGENT CAN WORK TOGETHER

Get acquainted with the ins and outs of working with agents and galleries By Graeme Smith

Not all galleries will cooperate with your agent, and the best galleries serve as agents for their artists. In this situation it is likely worth asking the gallery to be your agent too. If that means you have more than one agent then no problem, but you will need to make sure the demarcation lines are clear.

There should be no financial link between your agent and the gallery.

- » The agent works for you, so all arrangements are between you and a gallery. Otherwise there are potential problems due to a lack of clear expectations.
- » Your loss in commissions may be too great.
- » Your agent may not be prepared to negotiate their commission with a gallery.
- » The gallery may expect the agent to do more.

A gallery may not do their normal job when an agent is involved.

- » The gallery may hold back on what is normally done for promotion.
- » If you have previously exhibited at a gallery this situation is different. The arrangement regarding your agent can be based on past results.
- » In most circumstances an agent shouldn't mean less income for a gallery. In other words, it comes from your share.

When you hire a space there is less chance of demarcation problems.

- » Any gallery director should only take a small commission.
- » Your agent will have more freedom and should work harder in that situation.
- » They could be given a higher commission.

What buying influences are there?

- » Economic buying influence: this is the person who has the final approval for the purchase. They can say "no" when everyone

else approves or vice versa. Without this person's approval there is no sale.

- » User buying influences: this person makes judgments based on their job performance. There could be several people in this role. They'll make recommendations that they believe their superior will approve.
- » Technical buying influences: these people screen possible suppliers and make recommendations. A curator, head of art department or someone with artistic knowledge. They can't give a final "yes" but can and do give a final "no" (often).

Having a mentor.

- » Someone within an organization who can lead you or your agent to others. Their role is to help make the sale and you need their support.
- » They can help you position yourself effectively with each one.
- » They could be in the buying department of the organization.
- » They might have their own organization (architect, designer).

What is the ideal client profile?

- » Identify your best prospects. It's worth spending quite a deal of time on this aspect.
- » The 80/20 rule says it's not worth spending time on anyone who is not a good prospect.
- » This makes sure the bulk of sales have a win/win outcome, where the client feels good about the outcome, and you'll most likely make a sale.

Know anyone interested in starting an art career?

- » Check out this link to find out more: www.amazon.com/dp/B08KGT7DLR

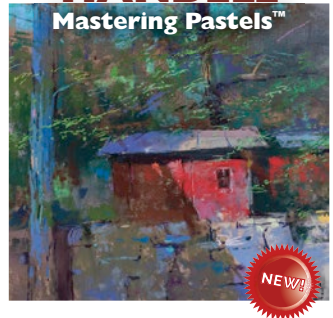
Best wishes in your art career in 2021! 🍀

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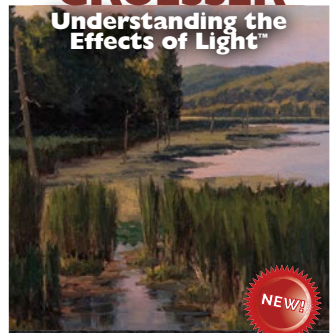
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Tina Garrett works on a portrait.

Coming Full Circle

The Scottsdale Artists' School in Arizona has an in-depth conversation with artist and instructor Tina Garrett about her journey from student to recognized master

SCOTTSDALE ARTISTS' SCHOOL: How did your journey as an oil painter begin?

TINA GARRETT: In 2012, I was awarded the first of two merit scholarships from the Scottsdale Artists' School, and I took my first oil painting workshop under Romel de la Torre. My long career as a freelance children's illustrator had ended because crayons were replaced by iPods. I had to reinvent myself and SAS helped me do that.

SAS: Why was oil painting the logical next step for you?

TG: I had always dreamed of painting like master works I saw on my school field trips, but it wasn't until the end of my illustrating career, when I had to reinvent myself one way or another, that I let myself dream—and take the leap.

SAS: How long before you were able to make a living as a professional artist?

TG: Thankfully, I had the support of two SAS scholarships. I studied my notes, read all the books recommended and did the color charts. I took every workshop I could as if learning to paint was my full-time job. By the third year, my work started to receive real

recognition and I began to contribute to our family income again.

SAS: When did you start teaching oil painting?

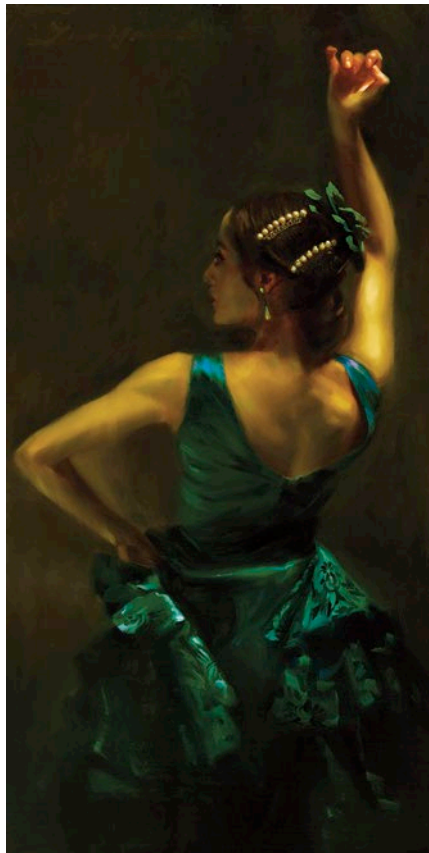
TG: In 2013, right after I took Aaron Westerberg's workshop, a group of artists asked if I'd teach them what SAS had taught me. My husband, a career fire captain who had been working two extra jobs, joked that he'd ring my neck if I taught that class for free. I invested in studio equipment and held my first workshop. I immediately fell in love with teaching.



Tina with her large-scale oil, *Melancholy*, 46 x 72" (91 x 182 cm)



Bravado, oil, 24 x 30" (60 x 76 cm)



Turquesa, oil, 36 x 18" (91 x 45 cm)

SAS: Tell us how it feels to be an SAS instructor?

TG: If you visit the videos on my Facebook page, you'll see that on May 8, 2017 I made my first ever live broadcast...I cried like a baby; I'm not embarrassed to say. The teachers at SAS are the best in the world, and I am absolutely honored to be included.

SAS: What are the challenges for students wanting to become professional artists?

TG: There are several. Lack of family support is the first and most critical.

The successful professional artists I know have supportive families like mine. My husband worked his tail off so I could keep reinvesting in my learning. A focused learning path is very important. An artist is usually recognized for a certain media or style and students who bounce around have a much slower learning curve which hinders their development.

SAS: What options do artists have to take your workshops?

TG: I taught a limited in-person, socially distanced workshop at SAS in January,

however most of my workshops are now online. Thankfully, I started online teaching and mentoring years ago, so the switch was easy for me. I have personally added two virtual mentoring programs for both beginners and advanced artists, and I teach one-day intensive programs though the SAS Adult Art Online program. I'm so thankful for all of the students who've worked with me this last year. Being able to stay safely at home with my family in Missouri and stay connected with my students has truly been a gift. 🎨

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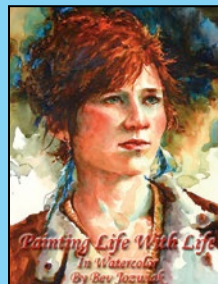
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JAMES GURNEY



The three colors I chose for this painting include Pyrrole Red, Yellow Ochre and Prussian Blue. The Yellow Ochre is less saturated than the Cadmium Yellow that I have used in other studies, and the blue is different, but those primary colors plus white give me all the strength of color I need for the red and blue awnings and for the dull greens of the trees and the veggies on the tables.

Farmer's Market,
gouache,
5 x 8"

TRIADS

Part 2:

How to Chart Your Colors

James Gurney tests the properties of three-color palettes

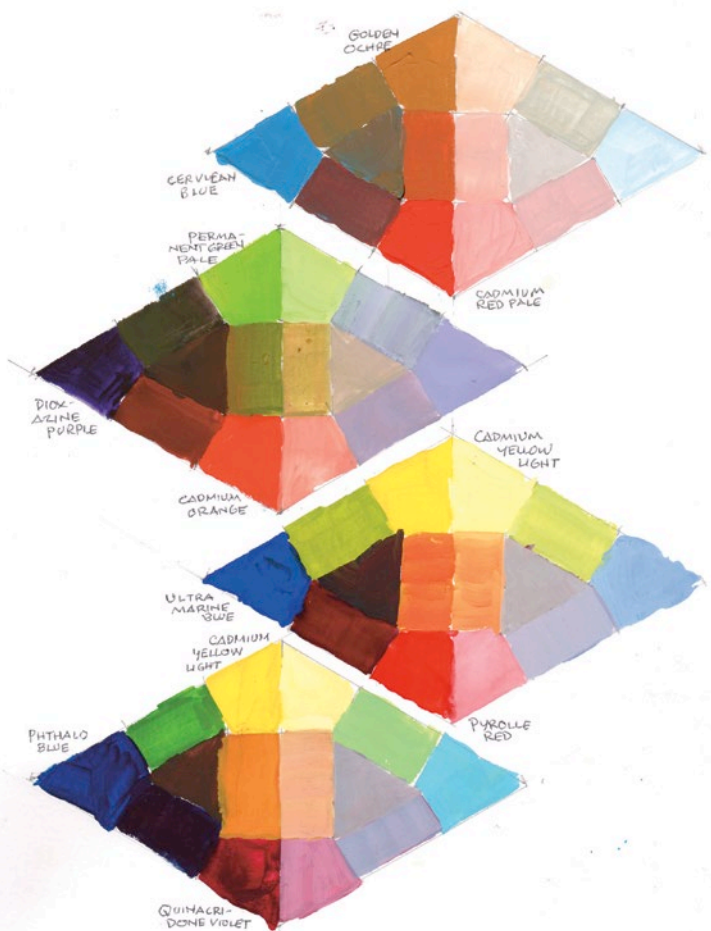
In my previous article, I shared some on-location paintings I created with just three colors plus white. For this second part in the series, I'll show you how to create a Triad Test and an Eight Gray Test and show how they apply to real-world situations. These charts will let you test the range of colors that are possible with each color and encourage you to experiment with different ways of making neutral colors.



THE TRIAD TEST

The triad test is a chart that shows the range of possibilities that each set of colors offers. Each diamond-shaped diagram is composed of two adjacent equilateral triangles. The triangle on the left shows the pure colors straight out of the tube. The one on the right is a pale mirror image, a lighter tint of the same colors.

The three starting colors are placed at each corner of the triangle. The rectangle between each of the triangles is the secondary color produced by a mixture of two primaries. The triangle in the center is a mixture of all three. That central color is it's the neutral gray for that gamut.

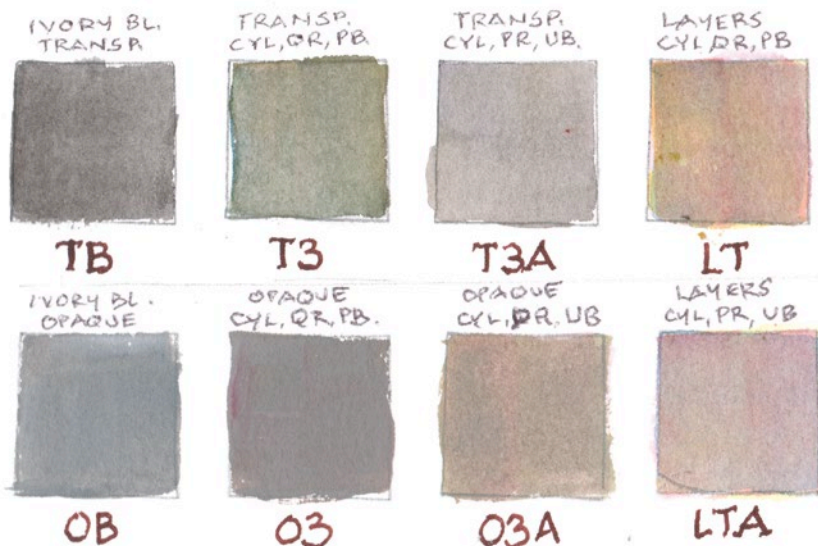


METHOD FOR PAINTING A TRIAD TEST

- 1 Draw a diamond shape consisting of two equilateral triangles, three inches on a side. Subdivide them as shown. The colors in the corners of the triangle are the subjective primaries of your triadic color scheme.
- 2 The base colors in your triad are the highest saturation colors in your scheme. The rectangles between those subjective primaries are the secondaries for that scheme, and they will have lower chroma. In the center of each triangle is a mixture of all three colors of the triad. That's the relative gray or neutral.
- 3 The tints on the right triangle can be made by mixing with white (titanium white or zinc white), or they can be made by adding water and painting them transparently. Try making triad tests both ways, with opaque and transparent tints.
- 4 These charts don't have to be perfect or precise but do your best to make the values of the tints consistent with each other. Paint at least three triad tests side by side so that you can compare the triads at a glance. Paint them in your studio notebook or paint them on a sheet that you keep in the back of your sketchbook to help you in future to choose your triad for a given painting.
- 5 Be sure to make a note of what colors you used so that you remember later.

EIGHT GRAY TEST

Grays are anything but dull and neutral. They're the chef's sauce, the binding ingredient, of any color scheme. In this challenge we'll make a middle-value gray swatch with black tinted with water. Then we'll try to match that particular swatch with seven other grays made with different ingredients.



HERE ARE EIGHT DIFFERENT WAYS TO MAKE A NEUTRAL GRAY

Top Row

TB: Transparent black made from Ivory Black tinted with water to a middle gray.

T3: Transparent wet blend of Cadmium Yellow Light, Quinacridone Rose and Phthalo Blue.

T3A: Transparent wet blend of Cadmium Yellow Light, Pyrrole Red and Ultramarine Blue.

LT: Three layers of transparent color: Cadmium Yellow light, Quinacridone Rose and Phthalo Blue. Be sure to let each layer dry before adding the next one.

Bottom Row

OB: Opaque black tint, from Ivory Black tinted with Titanium White and warmed with a little yellow and red.

O3: Opaque gray made from a wet blend of Cadmium Yellow Light, Quinacridone Rose and Phthalo Blue, lightened with Titanium White rather than being thinned with water.

O3A: Opaque gray made from a wet blend of Cadmium Yellow Light, Pyrrole Red and Ultramarine Blue, lightened with Titanium White rather than being thinned with water.

LTA: Three separate layers of Cadmium Yellow Light, Pyrrole Red and Ultramarine Blue. Note how the resulting gray is more active than the others, with colors vibrating.

PAINTING A GRAY SCENE FROM HIGH-CHROMA PRIMARIES

For this painting, I want to pick a triad of three of your brightest primaries and try to harness them by painting a scene that's as grayed down as I can make it. If any color gets too strong, I'll cancel it out with the two other colors.



Lenny's Barn, gouache, 5 x 8" (cadmium yellow light, quinacridone violet and phthalocyanine blue). For this painting I chose a subject that's mostly gray with a few ochre and dull green notes. Harnessing those pure primaries forces me to cancel them with complements, which feels like driving a Formula 1 race car in a stop-and-go traffic jam.



Grumman LLV, casein, 8 x 8" (golden ochre, cadmium red pale and cobalt blue hue). This triad doesn't deliver a very deep black, and the green is weak, but it contains a blue and a red that allowed me to describe the bold stripes on the sides of the Grumman LLV delivery truck. As I finish the painting, I decide to add a note of cadmium green for the patch of color that appears through the driver's window. That's an extra-gamut color, or a color from outside the triad, but it's OK to bring in another color into your gamut if you need it.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

James Gurney is the author of *Color and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter* and *Dinotopia: A Land Apart from Time*. His newest video tutorial from Gumroad is called *Triads: Painting with Three Colors*. It includes the making of all the art that appears in this article. Charley Parker of *Lines and Colors* says, "It gives a good introduction to the basic concepts of painting with limited palettes." Find the video tutorial at gum.co/color2.

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The Portrait Society of America

Chairman's Letter

Looking to the Future

In 1998, I received a phone call from my friend and mentor, Everett Raymond Kinstler. Days before, he had attended a meeting in New York City with Gordon Wetmore, Ed Jonas, Tom Donahue, Christine Egnoski, Bill Draper, Daniel Greene, Burt Silverman and Stephen Doherty. They were forming a new society of artists, a not-for-profit organization that focused on a singular mission: to foster and enhance educational opportunities for artists, where they may learn, grow and connect called the Portrait Society of America (PSoA), and he wanted me to join. I was a 29-year-old artist, excited by the idea that a group of dedicated professionals were forming a community committed to sharing their knowledge and

experience with each other.

I joined the following year and attended my first conference as a finalist in the *International Portrait Competition* in 2000. The event was in Chicago, and I had never been a part of anything quite like it. I watched in awe as master artists painted on stage from live models. I listened, enthralled, to stories from the legendary artist, Bill Draper, and the awards banquet speaker, world renowned author Tom Wolfe, just to name a few of the inspiring presenters that year. I was in heaven! But the best part of all were the many artists I met from all around the country, most of which I enjoy friendships with still today. I left Chicago wanting more, and I couldn't wait for whatever the PSoA had to offer next.

Over the years, I have sat at the feet of many giants of the art world and have learned so much from what must now be hundreds of demonstrations, lectures, presentations, panel discussions and articles, all sponsored by the PSoA. I am a product of these educational experiences. I have been shaped by them, and I would not enjoy the career I do today had I not been a part. Now, more than 20 years later, I look back with such pride, having been a Grand Prize winner in 2001, a member of the faculty since 2002, a member of the board since 2010, and now chairman of the Society.

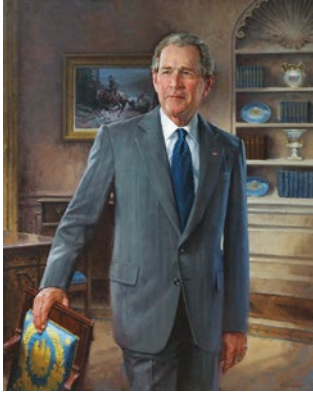
I am so honored to serve in this role, and I certainly have big shoes to fill! Gordon Wetmore, our first chairman, who led with



Sought after instructor Michelle Dunaway will be teaching a pre-conference workshop May 4 focused on Painting the Portrait in Charcoal.



Dean Mitchell, in an interactive conversation with Michael Shane Neal, will share his story of how he found support as he was emerging from poverty into the art world while in a nation divided on race.



Painting a presidential portrait is a rare honor, and in his August 11 Wednesday Webinar titled Presidential Portraits, John Howard Sanden will illustrate his experience painting President George Bush and his wife Barbara Bush.

such grace and Southern charm, was devoted to creating a thriving artist community, often quoting President Kennedy, "A rising tide lifts all boats." Ed Jonas became our second chairman and took on the role with focused determination, precision, and an eye on quality in everything he did. A man of endless talents, the society will forever reflect his devotion to excellence. I'm also grateful to vice-chairman Dawn Whitelaw, my first college painting instructor, and friend of more than 30 years, who took the helm last June following Ed's sudden passing. With her passion for education, her intelligence and her creativity, she navigated us through these last several months of unparalleled challenges related to COVID-19, which gripped our world and changed the way we were accustomed to connecting, always with an eye on the big picture.

It is my fervent goal to carry on the traditions of our past Chairs and my dear friends who have led the Society with selfless generosity. Along with the tireless efforts of our executive director Christine Egnoski, the PSoA staff, faculty and volunteers, and the unwavering support of our members, I am encouraged that we remain on solid footing despite the challenges we have all faced over the last year. I'm so pleased by the quality of the excellent online content and events that the society has organized, which have kept us in touch with each other and am pleased to share our upcoming program.



A guiding presence in the arts for over six decades, Burton Silverman will present his unique historical perspective on realism on May 8.

WEDNESDAY WEBINARS

The Portrait Society is hosting its 10th Wednesday Webinar next month. These monthly programs feature a variety of topics and formats including panel discussions, individual presentations and painting live from a model. Future programs will feature John Howard Sanden presenting the White House Portraits, Seth Haverkamp demonstrating his approach to the portrait and Susan Lyon hosting a critique session from pre-submitted work.

THE ART OF THE PORTRAIT – WORLDWIDE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

In its 23rd year, *The Art of the Portrait* is the premier event focused solely on the portrait. For 2021 we will host this four-day event virtually and attendees will have unlimited access to all the content for 30 days. Our esteemed faculty is Anna Rose Bain, Joseph Daily, Michelle Dunaway, Kerry Dunn, Max Ginsburg, Quang Ho, Robert Liberace, Susan Lyon, Dean Mitchell, Michael Shane Neal, Alicia Ponzio, Mardie Rees, Burton Silverman, Dawn Whitelaw and Elizabeth Zanzinger.

FALL PORTRAIT ACADEMY

Our plans are coming together to host another online education event in the fall of 2021. The focus will be a workshop format where attendees will draw and paint under the direction of a prominent artist. Confirmed faculty include

Suchitra Bhosle, Casey Childs, Max Ginsburg, Pramod Kurlekar and John Howard Sanden.

THE ART OF THE PORTRAIT – APRIL 21-24, 2022

We have signed a contract to have our 24th annual *The Art of the Portrait* in person! We have already confirmed a number of faculty and programs. Watch our website for future announcements, and we very much look forward to a time when we can inspire and connect again.

Although we still have challenges to face in 2021, our commitment remains strong to continue to bring a full line-up of inspirational online programming and opportunities to interact with our community as well as looking to 2022 as we plan to gather in person again. I am grateful to the many faculty members who are sharing their work, time and expertise with us all. As we look forward to the future, stay safe and healthy and thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission.

Sincerely,

Michael Shane Neal,
Chairman



JOSEPH DAILY

Seeing the Details

BY CHRISTINE EGNOSKI

In February 2005, the Portrait Society's founding chair Gordon Wetmore phoned artist Joseph Daily to tell him of the good news that his painting, *Ben*, was juried into the *International Portrait Competition*, the annual exhibition and competition focused solely on fine art portraiture. Unable to reach him, Gordon had to leave a message, because Joseph was out at his day job painting houses.

Raised by two freelance illustrators, Joseph graduated from the School of Visual Arts in NYC, but like a lot of artists he struggled financially. He soon resorted to a job painting houses to pay the bills, and with his last bit of spare time and money, he painted a full-length portrait of his soon to be father-in-law, Ben.

It was this painting that won Joseph

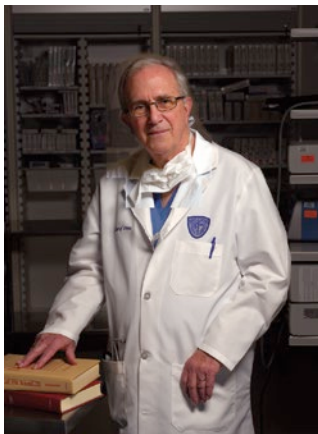
the Best of Show and People's Choice awards at the 2005 competition. While at the conference, Joseph was introduced to Minnie Churchill, director of the Winston Churchill Heritage and the keynote speaker at the annual awards dinner. Ms. Churchill fell in love with Joseph's work and soon commissioned him to paint several new portraits. Over the next five years he completed more than 80 commissions, both in the United States and United Kingdom. It was this fortuitous meeting that threw a struggling career into swift success.

Now a highly sought-after portrait artist, I recently interviewed Joseph about his process and how he paints the stories of his sitters through intricate compositions and a close attention to details.

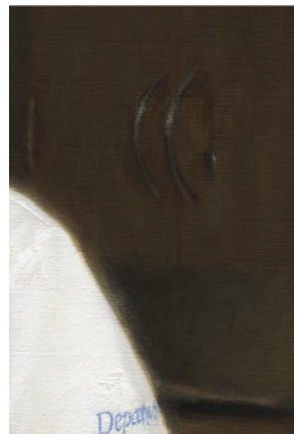
Your painting of Dr. Robert Smink was a commissioned portrait and originally the doctor wanted to be portrayed in the operating room. After a brief photo shoot and conversation, you were able to steer him to a second composition that was much more successful. Can you tell us about that process? You are right, when Dr. Smink contacted me he wanted to be depicted in the operating room. I have included that image for reference and as you can see, the environment felt cold and cluttered, the books he brought seemed incongruous with the setting, and there was a lot of machinery that I didn't find picturesque. However, after talking with him he told me 14 years earlier, one of his cancer patients' husband was an amateur photographer and had asked Dr. Smink to pose for him at one of the nursing



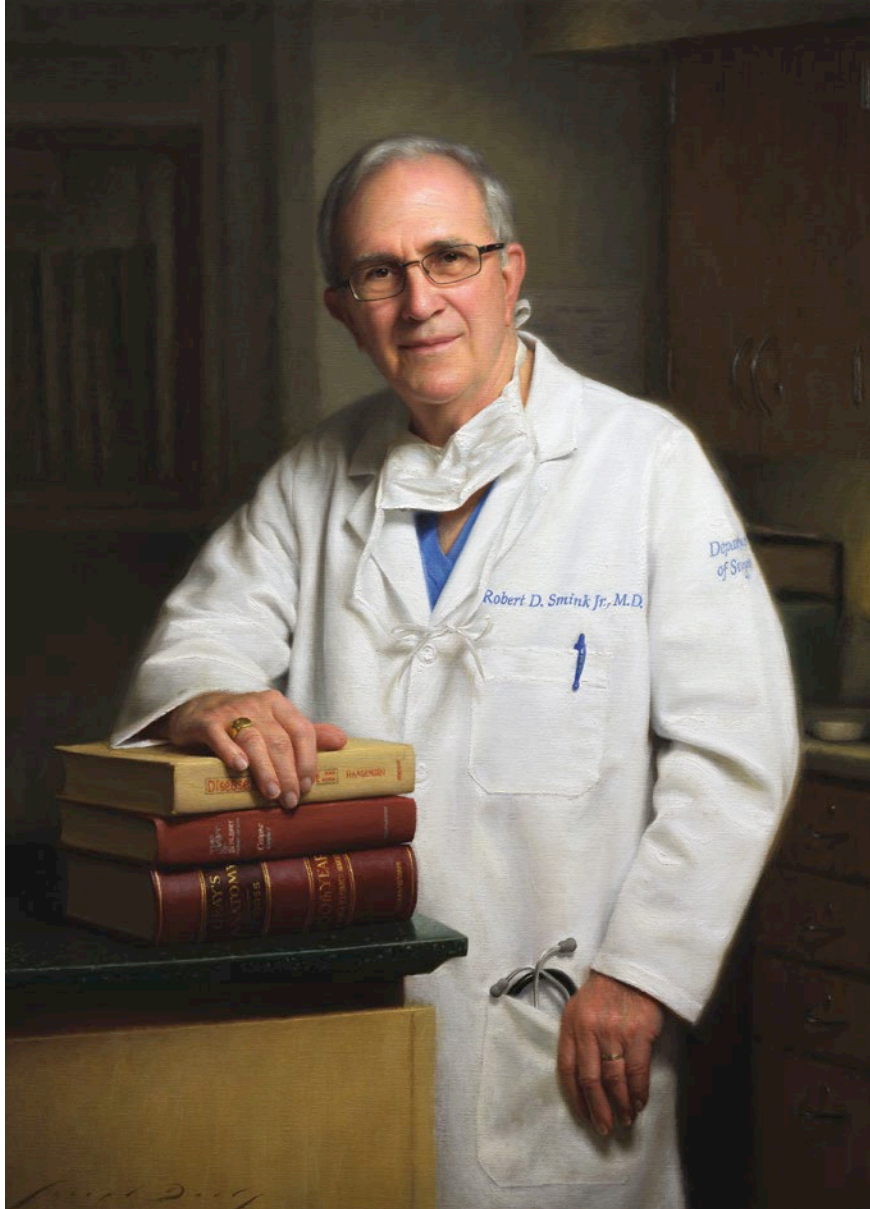
This photograph taken by Dr. Smink's patient's husband 14 years before our portrait sitting inspired the final composition.



Dr. Smink, photograph in Operating Room.



Dr. Smink (detail) shoulder and cabinet.



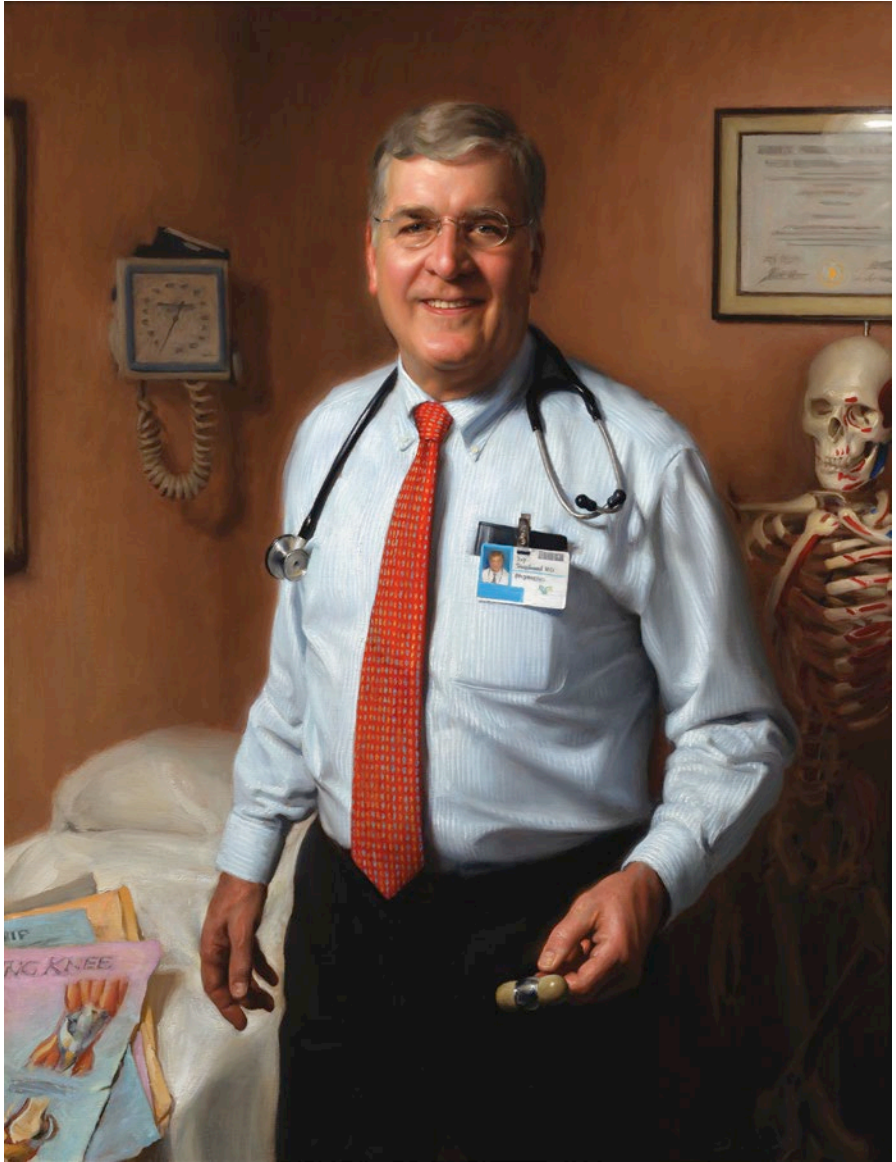
Dr. Robert Smink, Jr., oil, 43 x 31"

stations. Dr. Smink always liked that photo, and so we did an impromptu second photo shoot at that same nursing station just to be thorough. When I got home and reviewed my photos, it was obviously the stronger setting for the portrait.

The image you sent of the cabinet in the background is a great example of softening edges and including detail but pushing it into the background. How do you achieve that?
Trial and error, time and patience! Sometimes

these background areas of a portrait can be harder to paint than the main subject. They need to "read" correctly as what they are, yet they often need to be quite subdued to appear to recede in space and not distract

THE ART OF THE PORTRAIT



Dr. Jay Siegfried, oil, 43 x 33"

visually from the subject of the painting. In this case, the cabinet represents three or four layers of paint, with substantial drying time in between each layer. It was a gradual process of adding detail, wiping it away, building texture, scraping it back down, back and forth and back and forth until I felt that the area looked both realistic and barely there at the same time.

You were commissioned by another doctor and had some challenges with the space but also with all his “tools of the trade.” Can you tell us how you handled all the details so that it didn’t overpower the sitter?

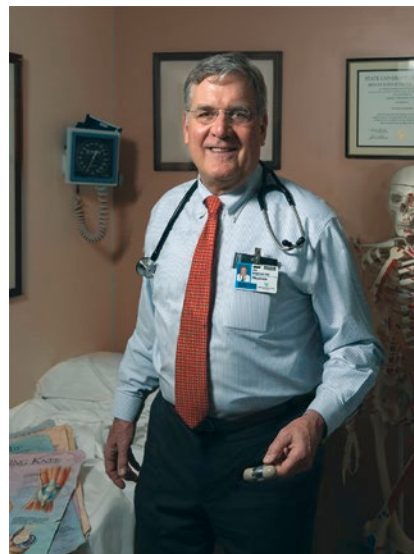
This portrait was an example of thriving within external constraints. Dr. Siegfried’s office was so small that I could only practically set up my lights and camera tripod in one spot, which fortunately offered me a nice view of the exam bed on one side of Dr. Siegfried and “Bones” the skeleton on the other. I had to manipulate the space a bit in Photoshop to make everything fit, and I also did a substantial amount of editing—in the reference photo shown, I had already deleted an outlet box and altered the color of one wall from white to terracotta to match the other wall. As you can see, I then went on to change the face of the blood pressure gauge from black to beige to lower its contrast, and I deleted the plaque

on the wall directly behind Dr. Siegfried’s head. I also substantially darkened that section of wall in the painting, in order to add contrast along the light side of his face. But even after a lot of editing, this is still a fairly dense composition, so I relied on varying my paint handling to help keep the viewer’s focus on Dr. Siegfried.

The detail of the graphs on the exam table add to the story of his practice. Can you tell us more about why you decided to include them?

Dr. Siegfried told me that he frequently used these anatomical diagrams (in conjunction with Mr. Bones) to help his patients understand the mechanics of their bodies during the rehabilitation process. Compositionally, I liked how they covered up some of the stark white of the exam bed and harmonized with the rest of the colors in the painting. Unlike the lettering on the diploma, the word “Knee” was too large to just blur it completely, but I tried to scuff the edges and lower the contrast so that it did not distract from Dr. Siegfried himself.

The detail of the shirt, tie and stethoscope is handled so well; how important is it for you to soften the edges to help in transition and shapes? Edge quality is extremely important to



Dr. Siegfried—photograph from portrait sitting with adjustments.

me when I paint. Because they are part of the central figure, I generally painted Dr. Siegfried’s stethoscope and tie in “high resolution” relative to the surrounding elements in the composition. Additionally, the stethoscope is made of smooth, shiny rubber and polished metal, so I painted most of its edges more cleanly and crisply than the edges in Dr. Siegfried’s face. But if you follow the tube of the stethoscope up over Dr. Siegfried’s shoulders, its edge blurs and breaks up as it goes back in space and passes behind his head. And on our left, the bell and diaphragm of the stethoscope are painted much more cleanly than the edge of Dr. Siegfried’s shirt arm, which is further back in space. The white stripes in Dr. Siegfried’s shirt are also painted more thickly and boldly in his chest (closer to the viewer), and they start to disappear as his shoulder turns away in space. In this way, I find that details in a seemingly busy composition can actually strengthen the effect of three-dimensionality in a painting, rather than just cluttering it up.



Dr. Siegfried (detail) medical charts.



Dr. Siegfried (detail) stethoscope, shirt and tie.



Muriel Jennings, oil, 34 x 27"

Tell us about Muriel Jennings' portrait. I know it was painted after her death, which can require some particularly creative measures. Can you tell us how you were able to put together such a strong composition with little reference material?

A posthumous portrait can be a real adventure for the artist, and Muriel Jennings' portrait

was probably my biggest adventure to date! My primary reference for the painting was a 4-by-7-inch sepia-toned headshot, probably from around 1940. Obviously, this was not ideal, but in a way it was a blessing, because it gave me the freedom to invent the rest of the composition myself. My wife posed for

the body and hands in front of a bedsheet in our living room, which fortunately has a large window along one wall that receives similar light to the lighting in Muriel's headshot. However, my wife's complexion and hair color are different from Muriel's, so I also asked an acquaintance to pose for a painted head study

for color reference. In the studio photo, you can see some of the reference materials I was trying to juggle.

The lace dress, lace collar and necklace were handled beautifully. Where were you able to locate these items to include in the portrait?

The dress was given to my wife years ago by an old friend. She actually had wanted to give it away, but thankfully my mother-in-law had rescued it, kept it in a closet, and then thought of it when I received this commission. It seemed to fit the time period well, and the lace collar was a joy to paint. Although the actual dress is black, I thought it would look less severe if altered to midnight blue, and I was relieved to hear from Muriel's daughter that Muriel often did wear blue.

The necklace also belongs to my wife, and although it is probably the item with the least amount of historical significance in the painting, I thought it helped visually, as an intense little color note to anchor the whole composition. The blue pendant harmonizes with Muriel's blue eyes and dress, and the sparkling miniature pearls somewhat echo the effect of the lace collar.



Studio set up for Jennings Portrait. From left to right: The dress, a full size black-and-white print of my photoshopped composition, my wife's necklace, my 9-by-12-inch head study (on the tripod), the original headshot of Muriel (clamped to the top of the board) and the painted portrait.

Do you work mainly from photographic sources or do you combine life sittings?

For my portrait commissions, I work mainly from photographic sources, but I do ask all my subjects to pose for at least one head study from life for around three hours. I usually paint it on a 9-by-12-inch linen panel, and then I keep it next to my easel as a reference while working on the full-sized portrait. These

head studies are generally pretty rough by my standards—I don't make the subject "pose" or hold still, since I want them to be as comfortable as possible, and I don't worry about the facial expression, since that will come from the photographs. Painting a head study mainly gives me a chance to "steep" in the lighting situation and the character of the subject. While I'm painting, I internally absorb much more than I am able to put down on canvas in three hours, and this act of internalizing really helps inform the finished painting. By contrast, when I only take photos, I find that I remember almost nothing about the light, color and forms in the scene after the photo session is over.

Also, when possible, I request a final sitting in which I place the nearly finished painting next to the subject and paint the finishing touches from life. In addition to giving me another look at the subject in person, a final sitting gives the subject (and often their spouse) the opportunity to request minor adjustments to the painting if anything jumps out at them. [Go](#)

Close up painting details—lace collar and blue necklace from the Jennings Portrait.

Master Showcase

Entering competitions is one way for artists to have their work seen. For the past 16 years, the Portrait Society has hosted a member's only competition with five categories. The following pages feature this year's first place winners.



Alexandra Tyng

First Place Commissioned Portrait
Into the Light, oil on linen, 32 x 24"

INSPIRATION

Alan Gregory commissioned this portrait as a gift to his grandchildren. Alan led a high profile, rollercoaster life as a developer for many years. When he retired, he transitioned into a more introspective phase of life. He wanted the portrait to reflect the life-changing self-improvement campaign of his most recent 20 years of life; he called the improvement "coming out of the darkness and into the light."

PROCESS

One of Alan's requests was for a simple, dark background. I usually compose the figure and background as an integrated whole, but this portrait would be different in that the figure would be not only the sole conveyor of the theme, but also the personality and energy of the subject. I wanted to show him as a man who was capable of cycling up Cadillac Mountain and walking his dog for miles along the hiking trails of Acadia, but who had chosen to sit down and enjoy the conversation. The pin-striped suit and tie are references to his decades-long career; Alan insisted on wearing these because he wanted his grandchildren to know who he had been and to understand his life as a whole.



Michael Bergt

First Place Outside the Box
Released, gouache and colored pencil, 21½ x 28"

INSPIRATION

The year 2020 was shocking for so many and in so many ways. I felt the need to "re-present" reality in a way to make us aware of how many preconceived notions we hold. Manet's reclining nude *Olympia* shocked the art world for a variety of reasons, including subject matter, technique and composition. We've become so accustomed to seeing the world of *Olympia* attended by her black servant, that I wanted to flip the narrative. What if *Olympia* were black and the servant white, would that make us aware of what we're not even conscious that we expect to see?

PROCESS:

At the time, I was working on a series I called the *Chrysalis* series, a nod to the collective pause we were experiencing in lockdown. Instead of seeing the lockdown as a limitation, I wanted to posit that it was potentially a metamorphosis, including the opportunity to emerge in a different state. The butterfly is the perfect metaphor for this. Therefore, the maid is presenting *Olympia* with an armful of butterflies, and the potential for a new state of being.



Daud Akhriev

First Place Non-Commissioned Portrait, *Federico*, oil, 39 x 39"

INSPIRATION

This past summer I had a helper in my studio, a young guy from Argentina, full of ideas for his future despite the time of chaos. I liked his eccentric look, with the messy, curly hair and curious gaze. I had some cloth from Morocco which I'd been using in a series about fishermen. But when Federico held up the fabric it looked so great with his skin and his face. The white studio walls assisted to define the silhouette. That type of composition has often been used in Classical art and icons, where a strong diagonal brings you to the focal point in the almost-center.

PROCESS

I drew the composition quickly, and then slowed down to begin "sculpting" his form with direct brushwork. Artists like Sargent, Serov and Repin were my ideals when composing the portrait. With more modern painters, I love the coloration of Schiele and Klimt.



Robert Johnson

First Place Plein Air, *Aging Apple Tree*, oil, 16 x 20"

INSPIRATION

This year in late summer, I was captivated by this apple tree that has been growing near my studio door in Virginia for years. It seemed to communicate a determination to survive with grace despite its advancing age. I did a quick drawing of the tree before the light changed.

PROCESS

I started by applying a thin wash of transparent oxide red and viridian to the entire canvas, which can add subtle color to the finished painting when left visible. I then laid in the size, placement and gesture of the tree using thinned transparent oxide red with long descriptive brushstrokes keeping in mind the negative spaces and where the branches would flow off the sides of the canvas. I then began capturing the form, texture and colors of the tree. I was fascinated by the subtle color variations of the bark, wood and moss and tried my best to capture them with color and descriptive brushstrokes.



Shuai Han

First Place Animals as the Subject, *Peaceful*, acrylic, 32 x 24"

INSPIRATION

When it was getting dark, the crowd in the zoo gradually dispersed, the birds came home, and finally calmed down after a noisy day. My 3-year-old son and I passed by the Flamingo Lake, and then he said, "Dad, the flamingo stops making trouble. I miss my mother and homesick. Let's keep it quiet and let it be quiet."

PROCESS

The flamingo, the phoenix of Nirvana, is also a symbol of totem. Therefore, in this painting, it is placed in an extremely pure environment, so that the quiet is purer, and the white feathers bring out the quiet realm more. The composition of the lake mirror surface reflects a real me, a vague me, and reality and illusion present the same picture. White clouds drift by, thoughts fly...

Enhance and Protect Your Finished Oil Paintings

By John Seibels Walker

When I was growing up in South Carolina, my father had an art gallery where he principally dealt in antique paintings, much of it being oil paintings from the 19th and early 20th century. He employed an art conservator and offered very fine picture framing services as well. I spent much of my free time and summers working there and gaining an exposure to the art business which, it turns out, ended up being very instrumental in my formation as an artist and as a portraitist.

The presentation of our gallery paintings was always of utmost concern. It was important that they were clean, varnished and appropriately framed. And it was not just a priority for the paintings that we owned and represented for sale, but also for many of our clients' canvases that were brought to the gallery for framing, proper stretching and varnishing. This included numerous portraits done by assorted portrait artists from near and far for our local clients. Most artists at the time did not really take varnishing seriously, but my father did. He advocated for the proper care and finishing of every painting that came through the gallery. It became normal for me to see varnishing being done as a service for clients once their paintings were completely dry.

When one walks through a fine art museum, one typically sees oil paintings which have a finished and unified surface—a surface that may be shiny or possibly satiny, but not completely matte or dry looking. Historically, oil

Gloss MSA Varnish by Golden



John Seibels Walker varnishing his portrait of John Kasich.



The Honorable John R. Kasich, Governor of Ohio, oil on linen, 62 x 40"

paintings were varnished to give them the finished look that artists desired, bringing them back to the look of when they were freshly painted, but also to protect the paintings for years to come. Of course, the environment which most artwork used to live in was not particularly art friendly. Many locations were quite damp and frequently filled with smoke from fireplaces, candle or lamp light and tobacco products. Paintings needed all the protection they could get! Varnishing a finished painting,

even with a fragile natural resin varnish like Damar, was critical for that protection. In fact, it was so critical to the successful presentation and protection of artwork that the grand French Salons in the 19th century used to have "Varnishing Day" when all the paintings to be hung were laid out on the floor for final coats of varnish before opening day.

So, with all of that in mind, I have always tried to be very conscientious about varnishing my finished portraits. I typically wait at least a year to be sure that all of the pigments I use, including the slowest drying, have fully cured enough not to bind in any way with a final coat of protective varnish. This is especially important should the varnish ever need to be



removed for any reason. I make every effort to schedule in the varnishing of my previously completed oil portraits during my travels for the following reasons:

1) Most oil paintings look much more harmonious and finished after having been varnished, so they show better and therefore represent your work better when hanging up on the walls of homes and institutions. Lighting is not always ideal where things ultimately hang, so a painting where some colors and passages have become flat and dry while oiled areas still look wet and shiny is distracting to the viewer and lacks the illusion of form and dimension.

2) It is always beneficial to revisit one's own artwork after some time has passed. You can see things more objectively while viewing the choices that you made and learn from both the good and the bad choices you see in your work. This will help make you a better painter.

3) Caring about your paintings with knowledge and expertise is very meaningful to your clients. Returning to varnish your work or helping them to find an art services specialist who can do so, shows great professionalism and that you value your work. In many cases, lasting friendships are formed with one's clients, so caring for your artwork nurtures those relationships too.

Of course, how much one may feel the need to varnish an oil painting is fully dependent upon the quality of the painting surface one is dealing with. Whether an artist has previously left a surface oiled out or varnished with a retouch varnish may affect where one wants to go with a more substantial final varnishing.

These days, I like to use a non-yellowing Gloss MSA synthetic varnish made by Golden. It has a UV filter and cleans up with mineral spirits. Several other brands make virtually identical products: Daniel Smith, Liquitex, Gamblin, etc. If gloss is not your taste, a coat of satin can be applied over the harder and more protective gloss coat for a softer affect. Because I am frequently "on the road" traveling when I take care of varnishing portraits, I often apply the varnish while the portrait is still in the frame so that the client can easily rehang the portrait the next day without my returning to reinstall the painting into its frame the next day. I would not recommend this, however, unless you have an



John Seibels Walker varnishing the Pastides' portrait.



President Harris Pastides and Ms. Patricia Moore-Pastides, University of South Carolina, oil on linen, 68 x 50"

extremely steady hand and use a high quality square-edged flat brush allowing one to cut a very fine clean edge at the frame so as not to "glue" the portrait to the frame!

Before varnishing a painting, it is essential to dust and clean it entirely. I first use a broad bristle brush on the painting's surface followed by the palm of my hand, which picks up light lint and dust. I then lay the painting on a flat surface such as a protected table or bed in a location that will be completely free of people or pets. You will also want to be sure that you have adequate ventilation during the process, but that the painting is away from any strong fans or heating/cooling vents that might stir up dust.

These new synthetic varnishes are thick, sticky products and you must spread them on with a wet into wet method. I choose to create bands of about 4 to 6 inches at a time working across the painting and down from one end to the other. I try to set things up where I am working with enough of a raking light for me to constantly check my progress and make sure that I am not missing any spots or leaving any hairs or heavy lint stuck behind in the varnish. I will have my small varnish can and a paper towel in one hand while I use the brush with

the other. This way I can wipe my brush off on part of the towel if needed as I go. As you move along, you can go back and stroke varnish back into wet passages, but it may startle you to see that the new strokes look matte and choppy against the surface that you have already created. Do not worry, it should quickly meld together again. Study your surface carefully as you go and give everything a good final review before you put your brush away.

The varnish dries and levels fairly quickly, but I always recommend leaving a painting laying flat overnight before rehanging. I also try to bring along some "Don't Touch/Wet Varnish" signs to place next to a work when I varnish a painting on location. A thumb print in still wet varnish cannot be removed, so an extra warning to all is a good thing. I then wrap my brush up in plastic wrap to be cleaned later and I am on my way! 📌

ABOUT THE ARTIST

John Seibels Walker splits his time between his home and studios in Charlotte, North Carolina and Lucca, Italy. A portrait artist for many years, John's work is known for its luminous flesh tones while capturing the character and uniqueness of each sitter.



FUR, FEATHERS & SCALES

Wildlife artists working in a variety of mediums share their processes for capturing the unique textures of animals

From the tough, wizened skin of the elephant to the fluffy down of a newly hatched emperor penguin, animals are as diverse in their textural qualities as they are in appearance and behavior. The feathers of a hummingbird are soft and delicate, while the scales on a West African green mamba are vivid and glistening—and the fur of a snow leopard looks as plush as the snow on which it prowls. Capturing the likeness of any beast undoubtedly comes down to more than the mere depictions of these surface-level features, but nonetheless, observing the feathers on a painting of a cactus wren that looks *exactly* like a cactus wren, or a rattlesnake in which every scale and scute has realistic depth and form—well that is just *cool*.

Nine exceptional wildlife artists take us through their techniques and approaches to capturing some of the most common textures found on our planet's fauna. We're diving into fur, feathers and scales.

Feathers





Rachel Altschuler, *April*, hummingbird, acrylic on canvas panel, 14 x 14" (35 x 35 cm)



Paul Hopkinson,
Nuthatch, watercolor,
12 x 9" (31 x 23 cm)

Rachel Altschuler **acrylic, US**


 [@rachelaltschuler_art](https://www.instagram.com/rachelaltschuler_art)


 [Etsy: /shop/rachelaltschulerart](https://www.etsy.com/shop/rachelaltschulerart)


My process always begins with a pencil sketch directly onto the canvas. As soon as I have everything in place and proportions look right, I begin to paint the background. I tend to gravitate toward neutral blues and greens as they complement the shadows and undertones that I see in most birds. I mix up enough of that color to cover the entire background and from there I begin building the shadows and blocking in color. I rarely clean my brush and lay the paint on very thick. Once that base layer is complete, I begin the feather work. I use a combination of filbert and flat brushes and begin laying them in one brushstroke at a time. I often add water to the paint when I'm doing feathers because the water allows the texture of the bristles to come through more, and in turn create more realistic three-dimensional looking feathers. Once that is complete, I spend a small amount of time doing detail and highlighting work. It's a process that's taken years to develop and will probably continue to evolve.

Paul Hopkinson **watercolor, UK**

www.devonartist.co.uk

 [/thedevonartistpaul](https://www.facebook.com/thedevonartistpaul)

 [@the_devon_artist](https://www.instagram.com/the_devon_artist)

 [/thedevonartist](https://www.youtube.com/thedevonartist)

I tend to approach painting fine feathers, as well as fur, in much the same way. I start off with a pale wash to define the main structure for the subject behind those lovely details—watery consistency, wet on wet washes first, then let it dry. For the details, we are going to work with various layers of fine lines, using four different consistencies of paint: watery, milky, creamy and thick. The first watery layer will need to be applied lightly, so to do this work with a small tipped brush like a size 00. Using a very light hand start working on the fur or feathers.

Consider the directions of the lines within your subject—doing this will help keep you



Greg Beecham, *Feathers and Dust*, golden eagle and whitetail jackrabbit, oil, 24 x 36" (61 x 91 cm)

on course with the correct direction and in turn give you a much better shape to the fine feathers. Remember to overlap your lines as well, so imagine elongated crosses which are still sort of heading in the correct direction. Once your first layer of detail is dry, continue by adding a second layer of detail onto the subject in a slightly thicker, milky consistency, but this time using slightly fewer marks.


Working this way with the next two layers of fine overlapping lines will eventually mean your darkest, thickest mix will be only for those deep shaded areas. Keep your layers light, gradually getting darker as you work through the levels, finishing with the darkest mix but for only a few areas to give your bird or animal the shape and realistic look you need. Working on single large feathers such as a bird of prey, you will need to at first adopt my previous method, but after the first two consistencies, start to add the classic V-shape of fine lines each feather

has within them, building up the darks as you go but still allowing your previous layers to show through.

Greg Beecham oil, USA

www.gbeecham.work

 [/gbeechamart](https://www.facebook.com/gbeechamart)


 [@gregbeechamstudio](https://www.instagram.com/gregbeechamstudio)


Process, for me, starts in the field. Spending time with animals, getting to know them, their personalities, their habits, their anatomy, etc., is incredibly important for the wildlife artist before the painting process even starts. One of the things necessary for a piece to be a work of art, according to Tolstoy in his essay, "What is Art," is that the artist must have a moral relationship with his or her subject matter. I take that to mean a passion for the subject matter. If a person wishes to be a wildlife artist but has no passion to be in the field as often as possible with the critters, that person should find another genre.

The initial part of design is an exciting photo image. Birds and other animals don't hold still, so photos are considered essential in wildlife painting. I begin by painting an underpainting, a quick work-up so that I can see problem areas in design, drawing and lighting before starting the finish work. When working toward the finish, I am concerned about all the tools of the trade, color, value, texture, edges, drawing and composition. Texture, for me, is as important a tool as all the others. For that reason, I use no medium in my paint, and employ the use of a palette knife probably 60 percent of the time. This builds up a rather thick layer of paint, which I like to call, "sculpting with paint." Occasionally I get asked, "how do you know when a painting is complete?" My answer is fairly simple, "When one more brush or palette knife stroke is less than..."

John Banovich oil, US

www.jolmbanovich.com

 /banovichbrand

 @banovichbrand

I have been painting in oils for nearly 45 years, and in the last 20 years I have come to appreciate that “less is more.” What used to be an attempt to make things look perfectly real, almost photographic, has now evolved to a much more refined application of paint to capture the essence of an object. I use enough strokes to capture the feel of fur, but not enough to capture the literal representation of the surface.

I first start with developing a compelling composition. This is where your emotional strength as an artist must reside. For all of my major works I always start with a concept sketch then go to a large-scale canvas that has been stretched (Belgian linen, medium tooth) then primed with five coats of color. I mix yellow ochre, burnt sienna and stone grey together, forming a warm undercoat for my drawing. After sketching my composition onto the canvas in detail, I start with a warm burnt sienna and permanent mauve mix underpainting. I also refine my drawing to emphasize the values to make sure the composition will work.

After this moment of solitary introspection, I begin to add color, starting with the middle tones, then move up to darks and lights. This will establish shape quickly and set the values up so I can then just focus on color and hue. I always start out with thin, translucent applications and gradually move toward thicker applications. Every stroke must be wet on wet at this point, otherwise it will get too detailed too quickly. Once all the middle, darks and light values are played in I start to add the details while the oil paint is still wet, making sure the strokes follow the direction that the fur naturally grows.



John Banovich, *Cat in a Corkwood*, oil on Belgian linen, 62 x 48" (157 x 121 cm)

Luke Frazier oil, USA

www.lukefrazier.com

 /bossbull

 @huckdoc

Considering that I create wildlife and sporting art, and that my own personal style tends to be painterly or structural, my goal is to create a scene or sculpture that represents my personal views on nature. My approach to painting and sculpture would best be described as representational impressionism. The first and foremost thing I try to understand is the structure and anatomy of my subject. I've always said, “You don't build a house by starting with the shingles—the bones have to be there

first.” And as the master sculptor Edward Fraughton taught me, “Know where the ends of the bones are, and the middles will take care of themselves.”

I've never been a highly detailed “hair” painter; I paint the illusion of fur (and scales or feathers) or rather the textures I see. I try to achieve this by using any tools available, i.e. brushes, fingers, paper, sponge, pencil, palette knife—whatever—to create the appearance of the subject's texture. This knowledge comes from trial and error, and in the judicial application of drawing, layering, color, values and handling of the hard/soft edges. Trees, rocks, grass, sky, clouds and animals have texture, each so




Larry Seymour, *Look Into My Eyes*, gouache on illustration board, 9 x 13½" (22 x 34 cm)

very different. Understanding the process requires mileage and years in front of the easel. Honestly, in some respects, I still feel like I'm still in kindergarten.

David Lanier acrylic, USA

www.dlanier.com

 [@david_lanier_paintings](https://www.instagram.com/david_lanier_paintings)

As a general rule, I work from dark to light, beginning the painting with broad washes of color that are slightly transparent. These thin layers define the form of the animal by depicting the play of light and shadow. I use the flat brushes for these broader and looser applications of paint, but then I go back into them (when dry) with my round pointed brushes and try to indicate the direction of the fur patterns in primarily the mid tones. Most of this part will be covered up with more opaque layers, but it serves to give me a road map of where I'm going for the rest of the process.

Usually, the third layer and subsequent layers will be much more opaque applications of paint. I usually don't concern myself with getting the color absolutely perfect until the third or fourth layer of



Luke Frazier, *The Pounce*, oil, 24 x 24" (60 x 60 cm)



Luke Frazier, *McNeil River Buffet*, oil, 30 x 36" (76 x 91 cm)



David Lanier, *Nelli*, Boykin spaniel, acrylic on Masonite, 14 x 11" (35 x 27 cm)

paint. I gradually paint thicker layers as the painting develops, with the last highlights being the thickest. Fur can be varied from subject to subject. Some hair is thicker and "wirier" while others are softer and wispier. Lighting conditions can affect the color and sheen of the fur. A dark coat of fur, when viewed outdoors, may reflect a blue sky on the top portions of the animal and the downward portions of fur may reflect the colors of the grasses. A white dog standing on a reddish patch of soil may appear to have a reddish toned belly because of the reflected light from the ground.

Every painting begins with small pencil sketches for composition purposes. I try to paint my subjects in natural appearances—I want them to have a "ring of truth" to their portraits. Sometimes I paint them messy—wet fur and a little muddy—sometimes just the tips of their ears may be wet from walking through wet grass. Others may have wind-blown fur that gives them a sense of place and an added dimension of life. It's these little things that give the portrait authenticity and believability.

Larry Seymour gouache, USA

www.larryseymourwildlifeart.com

Animals and art have always been a part of my life, winning my first award in elementary school with a crayon drawing of a chipmunk. I want my paintings to have as much detail as possible and be as realistic as possible, so I use photos for reference.

I do a loose, fairly detailed sketch of my painting on Strathmore illustration board for wet media, as it gives me the best surface I have found for my purposes. Next, using clear acetate, I cut out a piece that exactly covers my subject area. Using weights to hold down the acetate, I use an airbrush and transparent watercolor to airbrush a "loose" background. Not only does this save time, but it gives a good effect to the background.

I'm now ready to work on my subject. Using gouache, I brush a base coat on the area where I'm going to start. I use several brands of gouache—even though they all have raw umber, all of the raw umbers are a little different, some more yellow, some more brown. Once the base coat is down, I start building up layers of hair going from dark

to light to dark to light, etc., one hair at a time. Sounds time consuming, but you don't notice. The main thing is that you need good brushes. I use Kolinsky sable brushes sizes 1 to 4. These brushes have fine points and large bellies so you can do a lot of hair before going back to the palette. I work on one section at a time until I get it all done, usually working from back to front. This helps me get the depth I need.

Scales

Lori Dunn scratchboard, Canada

www.loridunnart.com

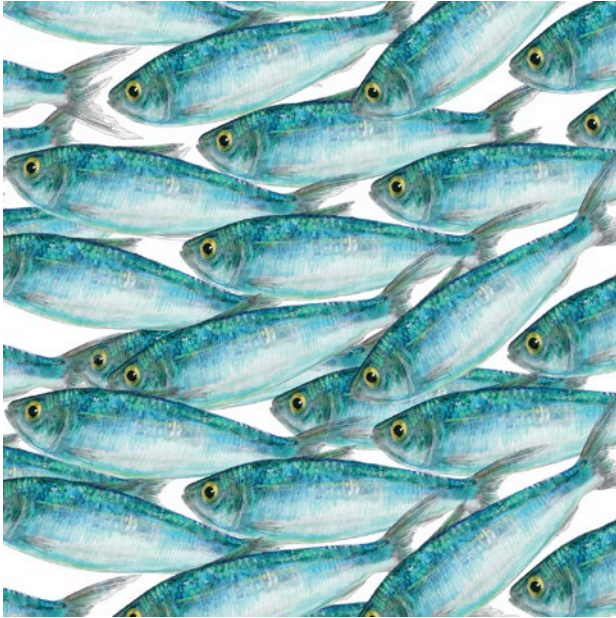
Scratchboard involves a process of removing black ink from a kaolin clay support. The more ink removed, the lighter the value that is achieved. My process begins as a light layer of etched lines or stippled areas. Increasing both the concentration of lines as well as their depth, defines form and light. My choice of tool is important in allowing for the smallest of details in my wildlife



Lori Dunn, *Mira Al Futuro* (detail), scratchboard, 6 x 9" (15 x 22 cm)



Lori Dunn, *On a Grand Scale*, scratchboard, 9 x 20" (22 x 50 cm)



Ali Elly, *The Goldstripe Sardinella (Sardinella gibbosa)*, mixed media, 19½ x 19½" (50 x 50 cm)



Ali Elly, *The European Pilchards (Sardina pilchardus)*, mixed media, 19½ x 19½" (50 x 50 cm)

artworks. For 80 to 90 percent of my work I use an x-acto knife with a sharp No. 11 blade tip, adding additional tools as required. Observational skills combined with an understanding of the subject are critical when rendering feathers or scales, as their appearance is often defined by their location on the body.


Scales can be smooth or rough in texture, consequently reflecting light or absorbing it. I usually begin with very tight cross hatched lines using the tip of an x-acto knife to achieve the shape of the scale, while etching in multiple directions as needed to increase value. In small areas where scales overlap, I may require an archival India ink pen to sharpen the shadow lines. Each scale is treated as an individual element requiring a variation of value and detail. This is critical in reptiles as the scalation is unique to each species, often with a distinct pattern, geometry and number.

Ali Elly mixed media, UK

www.aliellydesign.com

 @aliellydesign

 @aliellydesign

The design for *The Goldstripe Sardinella (Sardinella gibbosa)* started with an ink fine liner sketched outline, with the depth of colors built by adding a watercolor base and adding various shades of paint in layers. When using a limited palette this depth of colors is important. The shimmer of the scales is achieved by applying gouache paint in bold and pure brilliant white colors. For *The European Pilchards (Sardina pilchardus)* I began with a pencil and ink sketch, creating depth of color through layers of watercolor. I experiment with the unpredictability of the paint as a base. Then I move on to a much finer brush and gouache paint to achieve the scale details. The haphazard “scribbles” achieve the desired movement of the individual fish. Finally, scanning the painting into digital software, various backgrounds were added. The color of the background is super important, as it not only affects how the colors of the fish are perceived but can really help highlight the scales. 



Lori Putnam

Indoors & Outdoors

Lori Putnam's artwork is informed by her experiences painting both in plein air and within her studio

Continued growth comes from both accurate observation and creative experiment. There is a great deal of learning from painting outdoors that informs my studio work, but the reverse is also true. For me, painting in plein air is not simply a one-

directional path leading to a larger studio painting of the same scene. As a painter of a wide range of subjects, I find that what nature shows me in the field can serve as prompts, often feeding more creativity indoors. The controlled environment of a studio

frees me to take on different challenges, experiment with materials, be spontaneous or make a concrete plan, push boundaries and explore totally new ideas. Often Mother Nature's database in my brain spills out in the most surprising of ways. When I return





Color at Cut Bank, oil on linen panel (plein air), 9 x 12" (22 x 30 cm). Private collection.



Safe Harbor, oil on linen panel, 30 x 40" (76 x 101 cm). Private collection.

to the challenges of plein air, tiny lessons from the studio come to my aid, completing the circle of knowledge.

Take a look at the true value structure of a European street scene in *Pause après-midi à Avignon*, all in shadow but bathed in warm reflected light as it bounces off stone walls and walkways. Apply that same idea to a high-key still life painting, oranges, lemons, glass and peonies, mostly in shadow, against a pale-colored cloth and illuminated by a cool light. Next, vision how chaotic tree trunks and limbs seem as you paint aspens, in backlight, surrounded by golden leaves and a deep blue sky. What can that teach me about painting a group of figures in a similar setting?

The painting *Color at Cut Bank* was painted on location in Glacier National Park. Pale



grasses, yellows, yellow greens, and blue greens are generally associated with this type of scene in early fall. There is so much to learn here, and this particular painting is the great ancestor of numerous descendants including the demonstration piece, *Peaceful Passage*. In the case of *Peaceful Passage*, other elements from the plein air painting were also beneficial, such as the shapes and use of line in the hillside and the values used for the shadows.

With *Abstracted Harbor*, I knew from the very beginning that I only wanted to suggest the busyness of the boats rather than to draw one or two specific boats. I decided to stick to an analogous color scheme, all no more than 20 percent color saturation, and all tones above a middle value. The only piece of information truly gleaned from the scene was a quick glimpse of reflected color that I spotted on one of the boat hulls. It became the cornerstone on which all other colors would be built. Without previous, controlled, exploration in the studio, I never would have thought to try this.

I have a horrible photo from a trip to Charleston in 2013. I do not really know why I took it, except to say that I knew instinctively that there was something there. One day for no apparent reason, an idea came to me. Why not marry that photo with the plein air experiment? I no longer had the small painting in my possession, only an image and memory of when I painted it. It took hours to locate the bad snap I had taken in Charleston. In the end, I chose to bring the values even closer and slightly darker and tighten the spans of analogous colors to suggest even later in the day. *Safe Harbor*, a studio piece from 2020, was the result of that union.

My Art in the Making Peaceful Passage



Grass and rocks
in a light value 3 or 4

June 17, 2017
Waterton Lakes
A.M.

light, warm
rock face

Darken overall
water - few waves



REFERENCE PHOTO

Notice the soft light in the resource photo. That is the feeling I wanted to capture. I will refer to this for inspiration but not be bound to it.

STAGE 1

This is a thumbnail sketch made on location with notes written in the margin. These will help me to put my brain back in Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, Canada. This is the key to keeping studio paintings fresh.



STAGE 2

I do not always start paintings in the same way. The painting drives the process. Here I chose to lay in a roadmap using thin paint and only the thumbnail sketch as my guide.

WHAT THE ARTIST USED

Gamblin Artist Oils

- » Cadmium Yellow Light
- » Cadmium Yellow Medium
- » Indian Yellow
- » Cadmium Orange Light
- » Brown Pink, Asphaltum
- » *Naphthol Red
- » Dioazine Purple
- » *Ultramarine Blue

- » Payne's Grey
- » Radiant Turquoise
- » Phthalo Green
- » Permanent Green Light
- » Cadmium Green
- » *Titanium White
- » *Denotes primary palette Lori uses for plein air.

Brushes

- » Lori Putnam Brush Sets (Rosemary & Co Brushes):
- » Ivory and Evergreens Long Flats
- » Extra-Long Flats
- » Egberts in various sizes

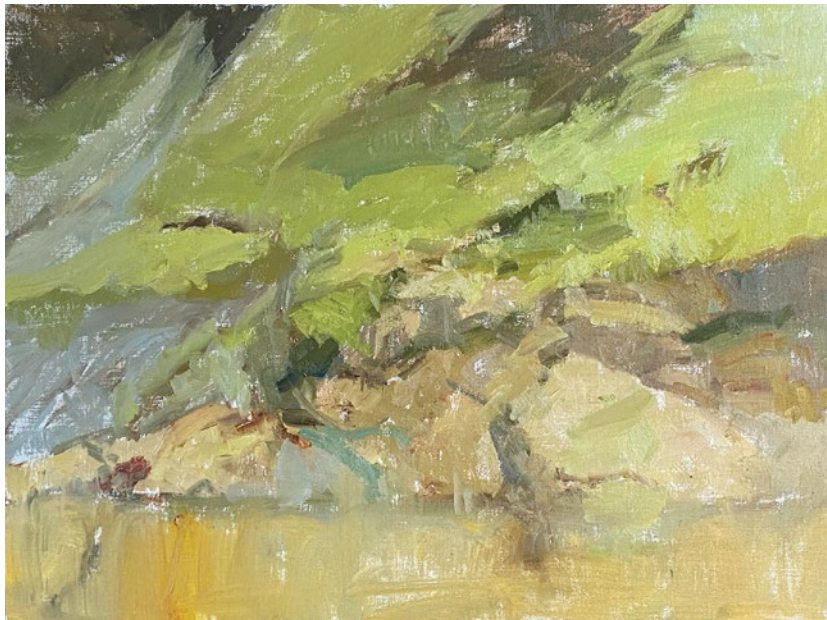
Materials

- » Wind River Arts, 30 x 40", #15 Claessens double-oil primed linen mounted on ½" Gatorfoam
- » Gamblin Gamsol mineral spirits
- » Screen printing brayer and squeegee
- » Soft paper towels



STAGE 3

In the studio I have the luxury of massing in the shapes with various hues, something I rarely do outdoors. Bending from one puddle of paint insures I stay in the proper value and saturation range. Using large extra-long flats, I make directional marks as if I'm carving the hillside out of clay.



STAGE 4

Once the entire canvas is painted in large value shapes, I often soften a few edges or scrape back paint that may be too thick to paint subsequent layers. If using a photo, I put it away and paint from my heart.



STAGE 5

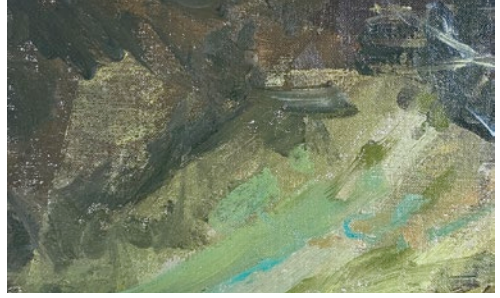
I used a brayer to soften edges and displace paint on random parts of the painting. It has been pulled downward from the waterline, making it look quite transparent. Lightly pulling across a soft paper is used for the same purpose producing a slightly different effect.



STAGE 6

I am finally ready to add medium and small shapes using Egberts and extra-long flats of different sizes. The longer brush shape means I can super load them with a lot of paint. Some of the thinner under passages are left as they are, some get thicker paint and some marks are quite impasto.





STAGE 7

Final decisions regarding edges, value and transitions are made slowly and from a distance. The painting appears tightly rendered when I step back but should retain its abstracted quality up close.



STAGE 8 COMPLETED STUDIO PAINTING

Peaceful Passage, oil
on linen panel, 30 x
40" (76 x 101 cm)



Abstract Harbor, oil on linen panel (plein air), 11 x 14" (27 x 35 cm). Private collection.

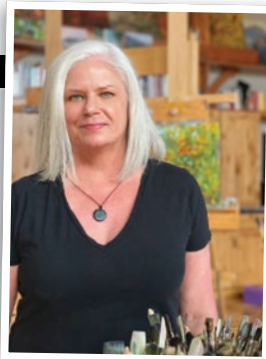
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Lori Putnam began painting professionally in her mid-30s while still learning from the nation's top artists. In 2008 to 2009, she and her husband sold their home and moved to Italy for the purpose of her uninterrupted concentration and self-teaching. Putnam's paintings have received awards from notable organizations including the Salmagundi Club NYC, Oil Painters of America, American Impressionist Society, California Art Club, the Portrait Society of America and from plein air events across the United States and

Europe. More than a dozen museums have recognized her work through awards, exhibitions, or acquisition. Putnam loves to travel, painting and teaching across the globe. Serving as vice president of Art Ambassador for a Colorful World, she also works with children in less advantaged areas of the world, bringing them joy in the midst of the most horrific of circumstances.

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Zufar Bikbov

Medium to Medium

Plein air artist Zufar Bikbov utilizes pastels to assist in the creation of his oil paintings



May, oil, 14 x 11" (35 x 27 cm)

This painting was created at Wayne Plein Air Festival in Pennsylvania is one of my favorites. I love the juxtaposition of the lilacs' flowers color variations and the surrounding cool-colored leaves, along with the contrast of the slim young branches of the bush and heavy ancient walls of the river-stone shack behind it. By the way, lilacs were the favorite flower of Russian composer Sergey Rachmaninoff.

It is hard to argue that oil painting is an easy technique. During the painting process as we're continuously fueled by inspiration, we artists have to manage a number of drawing and painting skills, plus consider the slow drying period of the paint.

Once we approach an idea of painting something, our sketchbook and pencil become our best friends. Idea and aesthetic drive get tested on paper as an arrangement of shapes and values. It is a conversion of real scenery into an abstraction. Throw hints of texture in here and there, define values for major shapes, place this all into a rectangle, and we've got a rough blueprint of a finished artwork. Sketching and drawing are important steps on our way to a successful painting.

Then comes the moment when we have to change pencil to brush, and we have to switch from dry medium to paint. With confidence from working on sketches, we jump into the world of an entirely different medium. Confidence starts to fade when working wet on wet when you start noticing the lines or shapes that need to be corrected. Drawing gives better control of what's happening on your work surface, and that's absolutely true for a number of reasons. One of them is that we practice drawing more often. Drawing is an affordable and quickly accessible way of creating an image. We spend much more time in our lives with a pencil in hand rather than a paintbrush. So, can drawing be extended further into the




Crisp Breath of October, oil, 11 x 14" (27 x 35 cm)

Created from imagination, I tried to collect here all my visual memories of fall. Despite what started as an abstract piece, it turned into a quite realistic image. I enjoyed experimentation with texture and color throughout the entire surface of the painting.

painting process? Oil pastel became that solution for me.

When are Oil Pastels Helpful?

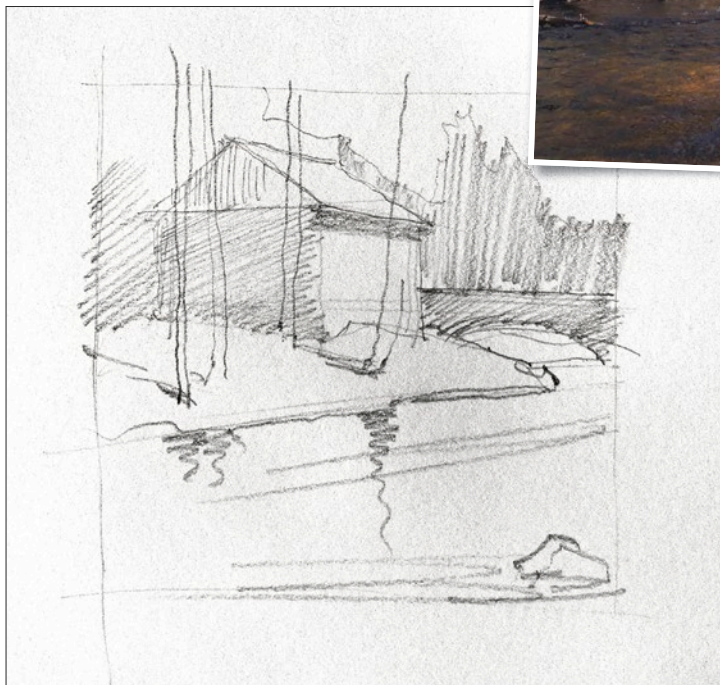
1. Transferring drawing to painting surface (canvas). Instead of thin oil paint I use an oil pastel stick.
2. Block-in stage. The pigment of an oil pastel adds an extra color during the block-in stage.
3. Texture. The touch of an oil pastel stick on wet or dry oil paint helps create color textures different from what can be achieved with a brush. In this demonstration you can see me using oil pastel working on the water surface area and masonry of a stone barn.
4. Adding lines "with character" like tree branches or cracks between rocks. This works best over dry paint.

Another situation where oil pastels work well: what if while in a rush packing for a plein air session, my sketchbook has been left at home? Then I can easily sketch on my canvas panel with an oil pastel stick. Oil pastels don't leave too much pigment on the surface. The demonstration is a process of work with oil paints for most of the painting, but the addition of oil pastels adds a new, fresh look to the painting in "difficult areas." 

My Art in the Making March



Reference Image



STAGE 1 SKETCH

I'm quickly sketching this scenery with pencil to define main objects to be included in the painting. This is the first approach to the scenery, and sketching takes about three to five minutes to come up with a simple composition. This sketch is about six by six inches. It can be done in the form of a thumbnail, and it is a good idea to do more than one sketch if needed.

WHAT THE ARTIST USED

Oil paints

- » Titanium White
- » Kings Blue
- » Ultramarine Blue
- » Manganese Blue (hue)
- » Viridian
- » Olive Green
- » Cadmium Lemon Yellow
- » Cadmium Orange
- » Ochre Yellow Light
- » Raw Sienna
- » Raw Umber
- » Oxide Brown Transparent
- » Terra Rosa
- » Permanent Alizarin Crimson

Oil Pastel

(Neopastel Caran d'Ache)

- » Bronze
- » Reddish Orange
- » Brown Ochre
- » Burnt Sienna
- » Olive Black
- » Bluish Green
- » Royale Ochre
- » Sky Blue

Brushes

- » #6 Flat Bristle
- » #4 Flat Soft
- » #2 Flat Soft

- » #2 Round Soft
- » #0 Round Soft
- » Filbert Grainer $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch (Princeton Select)
- » Filbert Grainer $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch (Princeton Select)

Other materials

- » Palette Knife
- » Classic shape with straight edges
- » Plein air easel
- » Canvas panel
- » 10 x 10" (25 x 25 cm) oil primed
- » Galkyd Gel (in a tube)

- » Brush Cleaner: Turpenoid Natural
- » Paper towel
- » Vinyl Gloves
- » Sketchpad
- » 6B Pencil

STAGE 2 ENHANCING THE SKETCH

Once the initial idea feels right, values and texture are added and shapes more carefully defined. The group of trees in front of the building has been redesigned, making the composition less busy and building more visibility. The composition is placed into a definite rectangle and the sides are divided into thirds, giving me a clear vision of how the painting will look. Added value scale will help later during the painting process.



STAGE 3 TRANSFERRING COMPOSITION TO CANVAS

Using mainly brown and dark blue oil pastels, I am transferring the composition from a sketch to a 10-by-10-inch canvas panel. Drawing on canvas with pastel allows me to create new dimensions of composition objects, since the panel is bigger than my initial sketch. Looking mainly just at my sketch helps avoid becoming distracted by the complexity of the actual scenery.

Continued ▶

STAGE 4

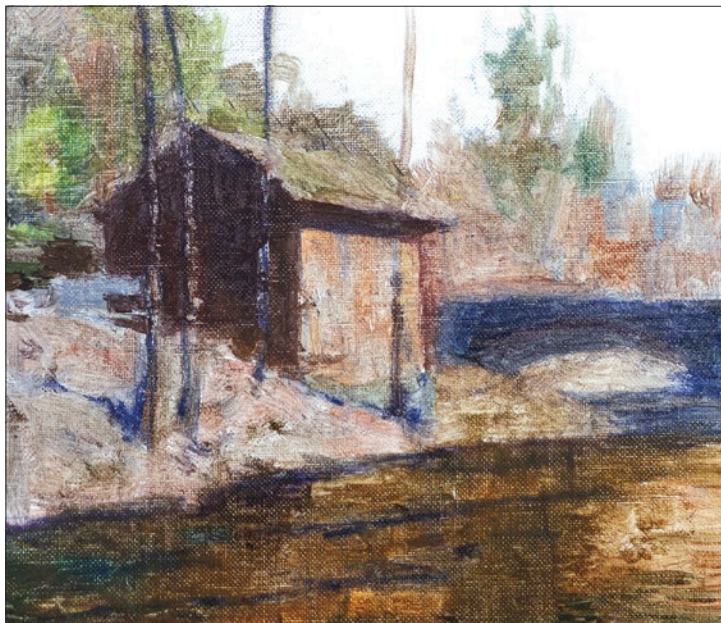
UNDERPAINT/BLOCK-IN

Using mainly transparent and semi-transparent colors mixed with Galkyd gel, I am painting over all areas of the canvas except the sky. In this scene, the sky is the lightest area, so leaving it white for now doesn't affect values distribution.



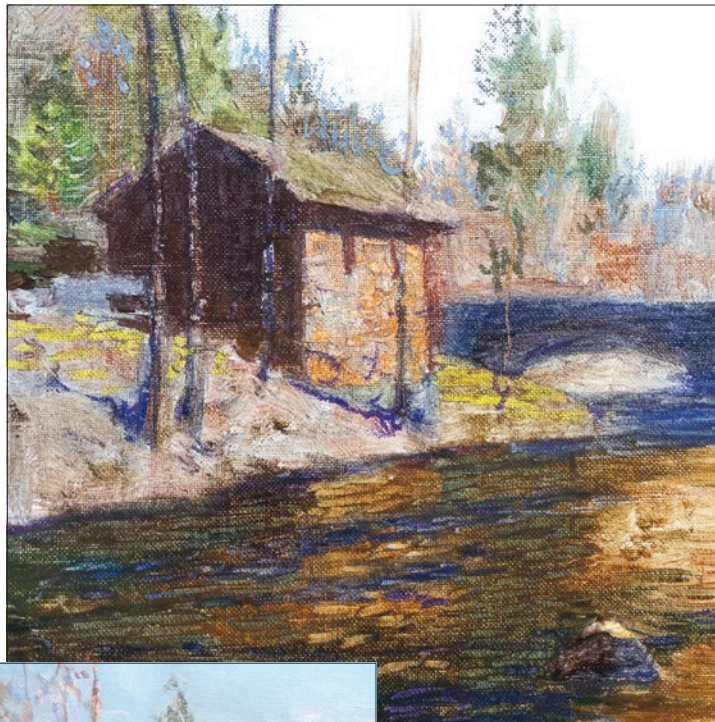
STAGE 5 SCRAPING OFF EXCESS WET PAINT

This stage is quick. I am using a palette knife with straight side edges. This stage helps to thin the first paint layer, expose the texture of the canvas and remove unwanted texture created by the paintbrush over the river bed area. The water bed will be the most challenging area, requiring a lot of attention through the entire process of painting.



STAGE 6 ADDING EXTRA COLOR AND TEXTURE

Here, I'm using oil pastels mainly of light colors. The paint layer is still wet, and paint gets moved easily under touch of a pastel stick. However since pastel leaves a color track, no white canvas gets exposed. This effect is well-observed in building reflection in the water. Sky blue pastel is used to add color and shape to the skyline in the background.



STAGE 7 END OF BLOCK-IN

Sky and sky reflection are added, giving the full range of color temperature presented in the painting. Thicker paint is applied over the river bed and sunlit side of the building. Dashes of oil pastel are placed over the building wall to create a rough surface of stone. Even without details, the composition looks solid.



STAGE 8 FINISHED PAINTING

March, oil, 10 x 10" (25 x 25 cm)

This is the longest stage of the painting process. No area of the painting is left without attention. Details are added and some of them get scaled back. A solid amount of paint is applied over larger shapes and all details like smaller branches of trees, casted tree shadows, rocks and sparkles on the water surface. Once this layer is dry, extra lines of tree branches can be added by a sharpened tip of oil pastel. Don't forget to sign your painting!



Mom's Home, oil, 11 x 14" (27 x 35 cm)

This painting was commissioned by the homeowner's children. Their mom just moved out of this house to her son's home, and this house was placed on the market. I tried to express bittersweet feelings. The warm April sun and yellow tulips wake up memories of happy days in this house, but the darker windows of the house with pale reflections in them remind us that those days are in the past.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Zufar Bikbov is a nationally recognized artist known mostly for plein air landscapes.

A native of Russia, Bikbov was introduced to painting by his father, a talented engineer and amateur artist. Bikbov trained from the age of 9 at Zelenodolsk Youth Art School in Kazan in the Russian realism tradition. He admits that having plein air in his school curriculum was one of the most important things that led him to fall in love with landscape painting.

As a young adult, Bikbov's desire to help others led him to embark on a career in medicine, but he eventually shifted his focus to fine art. Bikbov also believes that teaching is an important social role every professional should go through. He is associated with Lyme Art Academy and the American Academy of Landscape Painting and

enjoys sharing the skills he's learned from Russian and American art. His own online project, www.confidentartist.com, is a platform where one can find a variety of painting and drawing classes.

During his exhibitions, visitors often mention that Bikbov's paintings bring "light and warmth" despite the scenery on the canvas, whether it's a warm summer sunset or a gray winter day. Bikbov is the recipient of multiple prestigious awards at national plein air competitions and art shows. If you want to take classes to learn painting and drawing from the artist or see more of his works visit his websites.

Contact at
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www.confidentartist.com



Joyce Fournier

Wherever it Leads

Joyce Fournier's abstract expressionist artwork develops through an organic process of paint application



Burlisque, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36" (91 x 91 cm)

I was inspired to use some bold pinks in this piece to offset the blues. I liked the looseness I experienced while creating this work, and you can see the scraped-out areas add a mystery to the work. Sometimes the painting just comes together, and I fought the urge to make adjustments along the way. I am glad that I did. The spontaneity in this piece is quite evident.



The Day After, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 24" (60 x 60 cm)

This painting was one of four pieces worked on simultaneously, per my usual process of working in series. I began with an application of gold followed by a blue gray. It was this color combination that excited me. I chose to use black sparingly so as not to lose the serenity of the work.

As a lifelong multidisciplinary artist, I have had many artistic interests over the years, but it was not until I began studying at the Academy of Realist Art in Toronto in 2002 that I realized my passion for academic drawing and painting. I spent several years developing my skills in this area never thinking I would someday become an abstract painter. At the time I did not appreciate abstract work and dismissed it as a less than

perfect modality employed by artists for whom drawing proficiency was lacking. My opinion changed, however, when I opened a gallery of my own and took the time to educate myself in the area of abstract art and abstract expressionism.

In the beginning I struggled somewhat as I had no idea where I was going, only that I loved the freedom I experienced when I painted on big canvases, with watery acrylic paint and

large brushes! I would best describe my work as entirely conceptual. It is bold and passionate, created with conviction in response to a specific emotion or state of being. Working medium to large in size, I start by randomly applying heavy bodied gesso to the canvas to create a geometric design. I then use this design as a template for acrylic paint application. I rarely use color directly from the tube and prefer instead to mix my own. I feel this lends

Persuasion, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30" (76 x 76 cm)

When creating this painting my goal was to expand my color palette to include some warmer earth tones and greens, colors I do not normally use. I loved the way the burnt sienna made the teal pop. I scraped out various areas to reveal earlier layers of color. I then dribbled on white as a last step allowing for drips and splatters and *fun*.



intimacy to the work. I am not brand specific when selecting paint but prefer to focus more on getting the color right rather than being constrained by the limitations of one brand. Using large brushes and palette knives, I allow some paint to drip while quickly scratching out various areas to reveal the underpainting. My goal is to say as much as possible without having a big discussion. I want people to see what speaks to them, depending on their own situations. People see different things in my work, things I often do not see. Movement, color and passion are words I hear people use when describing my work. [📄](#)

My Design Composition and Tactics

Working in Series

- » I work in series, creating three to five paintings at a time of different sizes and orientations using the same color palette. This practice allows me to be experimental, fluid and quick with regards to getting something down on the canvas without the risk of over thinking. I often find that the painting I originally planned to be the focus of the series ends up playing a lesser role as I develop the others. In fact, sometimes the “outlier” painting tends to be the most loose or spontaneous, and often the one I like the best. The “outlier” canvas is the one I use to wipe off excess paint as I create other larger pieces and comes about completely experimentally as I try out different colors and techniques.

I Always Paint to Music

- » As an avid music lover, I always paint to music. Be it classical (most often), jazz or contemporary, music helps me get into the zone and lets me leave distractions outside the studio.

Using the Underpainting to Dictate Design

- » As the work is entirely conceptual, I have little, if any, idea where my painting session will take me. That said, I do allow the gesso underpainting to dictate design. What comes during this stage will propel me into a given direction. It is really all about shapes—which

ones to emphasize and which ones to modify. Some paintings have a freer design while others are more tightly knitted together.

Applying Paint to Enhance the Underpainting Design

- » Using the underpainting as a design template, I begin to identify shapes and then apply paint to enhance them. If I am planning to use gold in the painting, I almost always apply it as the first paint application. I find gold gives me a solid base from which to work and I can highlight certain shapes in the underpainting. Once dry, I usually apply black or grey to give the painting structure. I always use a semi-gloss medium to the paint to enhance flow.

Scrape Out Areas

- » Once I apply paint, I immediately decide if a particular area warrants scrape out. I scrape out with a color shaper to enhance the design of the underpainting and/or to add interest in specific areas. At times it is a simple one-line scrape in a random direction while at other times I may make a more artistic etching out. To scrape out or not is always a quick decision due to the quick drying nature of the acrylic. I rarely make adjustments once I scrape out and simply allow the initial marking to remain.

Encourage the Paint to Drip and Splatter

- » I am a big fan of being as loose as possible

with my brushstrokes. I often allow paint to drip and run in random ways which is a function of the unevenness of the underpainting as well as the viscosity of the paint. Once I am satisfied with the overall composition, I complete the work by splattering paint (most often gold, black or white, or a combination there of) using a fully loaded brush of watery paint. This stage can be messy, but the practice pulls the painting together.

Don't Overthink

- » I have found that overthinking leads to rigidity and a lack of spontaneity in creating the under painting and in the paint application. It also hinders my ability to know when the painting should be finished. When in doubt I walk away and come back in a few days to see the work with fresh eyes. I am amazed at how often I will deem the painting finished at this point and be pleased I did not over work it.

Take Photos at Every Stage

- » By doing so I can see my work in a more objective way and can appreciate where I am in the process. Photos allow me to further see what I like and what I need to change. They also offer me a developmental history of the painting from which to learn.

My Art in the Making Namaste



STAGE 1 UNDERPAINTING

I began by applying the underpainting with a large palette knife using heavy bodied gesso. The goal was to create an interesting grouping of shapes to serve as a design template for paint application. Once I was satisfied that the entire canvas was well-covered, I let this layer dry for 48 hours to ensure its integrity.



WHAT THE ARTIST USED

Professional level acrylics (both high viscosity and liquid)

- » Carbon Black
- » Titanium White
- » Sky Blue
- » Neutral Gray
- » Burnt Sienna
- » Red Oxide

- » Naphthol Red Medium
- » Primary Magenta
- » Antique Gold (Sargent Art Liquid Metal)

Other materials

- » Gallery wrapped canvas 30 x 30"
- » Artists' Gesso (maximum pigment and opacity load)

- » UV Stabilizing Medium in Semi-Gloss
- » Painting knives (medium to large) and palette
- » Nylon brushes in sizes 1-inch to 3-inch
- » 20 Langnickel Royal Sable brush
- » Color Shaper firm cup round #6
- » Color Shaper firm cup angle chisel #6



STAGE 2 APPLICATION OF GOLD

I randomly applied Sargent Art Liquid Metal in Antique Gold to various areas, working with the peaks and valleys of the gessoed underpainting. I was looking to emphasize some of the design elements while ensuring I left some of the gesso unpainted.



STAGE 3 ADDITION OF BLUE AND BLACK

Once the gold was dry, I added variations of blue and then black allowing some paint to drip. I then quickly scraped out (with a color shaper) some of the black using a zigzag motion to reveal the gold underneath (see scrape out in the black lower right quadrant).



Continued



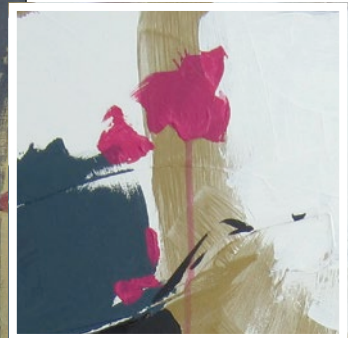
STAGE 4
WARM TONES AND SCRAPING OUT

I then created a focal point with a mixture of burnt sienna and red oxide making sure to add a few blobs of the same in the periphery of the painting to create unity. I then scraped out areas of the red to add interest. I repeated the process with a mixture of naphthol red and magenta.



STAGE 5 ADDITION OF PINK AND SCRAPING OUT

I then continued by adding primary magenta and then scraped out again to create interest. My goal was to embellish the focal point of the red pinks. I added blobs to the periphery as before allowing paint to drip.





STAGE 6 ADDITION OF SPLATTERS

Namaste, acrylic on
canvas, 30 x 30"
(76 x 76 cm)

Once I was sure I had gone far enough, I added splatters and drips in gold to the unpainted gesso as well as to some of the areas of black. I then selectively added black splatters to unify. My goal was not to overdo it. The painting is now completed.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Joyce Fournier is an award-winning internationally collected artist living in Toronto. Her current work is inspired by a long-time fascination with abstract expressionism and the freedom she experiences when painting from within. She was awarded Third Prize in *International Artist's Abstract/Experimental Art challenge*, December/January 2018. In addition to her abstract work, Fournier is also an accomplished portrait artist, sculptor and landscape painter who has exhibited extensively within Canada and internationally for more than a decade. Featured on several occasions in the prestigious *American Art Collector* magazine,

her work is found in Canada, the United States and Europe. She recently participated in the esteemed group exhibition *Woman's Essence* at Palazzo Velli in Rome, Italy, in 2020.

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Marco Grasso

Into the Jungle

Marco Grasso achieves realistic wildlife art by focusing on color, light and composition

I strongly believe that hyperrealism is about understanding colors and values rather than painting a lot of details. Most of my painting process is focused on creating a base layer that has all of the most important visual elements and works as a coherent representation of my reference images.

The more accurate you are in matching values and mixing colors, the less details you will need to make your painting look very realistic.

I try to cover the entire canvas as soon as possible since the white of the canvas can be distracting and make it more difficult to match colors. Sometimes I use a uniform wash as my base layer if my reference photo is dominated by one particular color. For example, if I am painting a tiger portrait I will cover the entire canvas with a mix of burnt sienna and orange.

I loosely sketch the scene with a few carefully mixed colors, so I immediately have an idea of how every value relates to each other and I can make adjustments. I don't expect to get my colors spot on in the first coat of paint: it's a game of adjustments, getting closer and closer to the desired tones as you proceed through the layers. I then gradually refine this first layer with more precise brush strokes, and I add more subtle values that describe the form and give each element a three-dimensional look. Lastly I paint the details and the most extreme highlights and shadows.



Ouverture II, acrylic on canvas board, 18 x 24" (45 x 60 cm)

I opted for a black background in this painting to isolate the tiger and bring out the bright orange of the fur hit by direct light. The strong chiaroscuro accentuates the drama and rage.



Arashi, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 32" (60 x 81 cm)

The Bengal tiger is hunting, with its eyes on the prey. I wanted to create a feeling of suspense and anticipation. The inspiration for the background comes from a Sargent painting, the dark brown and burnt umber tones complemented the colors of the feline.



Thanatos, acrylic on wooden panel, 20 x 20" (50 x 50 cm)

The title of this painting is a Greek word that means death. I aimed to create a dark, sinister atmosphere that reminded me of the folklore associated with the barn owl.



Notturmo, acrylic on canvas board, 20 x 16" (50 x 40 cm)

In this painting my main focus was the big and colorful eye of the eagle owl, where I have enhanced the contrast and saturation to make it really stand out. The posture and lighting give the bird a solemn appearance.

Working with Optimal Lighting and Color Shifting

I always have a tablet to look at the details and a print of my reference photos to check colors and values. It's easier to have a printed image under the same light as your canvas than trying to match and compare hues with a bright and oversaturated digital screen.

To have a well-lit canvas I use an LED light positioned 7 feet above the floor at a 45-degree angle to my easel. I set it on 5000 Kelvin (neutral light) because painting under warm or cold light will cause you to compensate by mixing colors shifted to the opposite temperature.

One of the challenges of working with

acrylics is color shifting. Acrylic paints usually darken in tone as they dry, making color matching more difficult. To compensate for this I usually prepare a slightly lighter color than the one I'm aiming for. The amount of color shifting varies drastically depending on the pigment and the composition of the paint, thus it takes a lot of practice and becoming familiar with your acrylic paints before being able to effectively work around this issue.

I think that one of the great lessons you learn from experience is that a painting is never finished, and you need some self-discipline to avoid overdoing details and obsessing over the smallest of particulars.

Painting every single hair of an animal, for example, can actually make it look less realistic, since in reality what we actually see is far less clear and defined than what the digitally processed high resolution images show. Few, carefully placed brush strokes can create the most beautiful and realistic of paintings. To get there though it's a long road of trial and error, of frustration and slowly and gradually better results. I believe that hyperrealism is not about talent, but rather about expertise that can be achieved through years (if not decades) of training and knowledge-gathering. As cliché as it may sound, practice makes the difference. 📖

My Design and Composition Tactics

Simple composition

I prefer simple compositions where the animal is the protagonist of the scene and all the other elements add to its beauty and character. I tend to eliminate distractions and place the subject close to the center of the image.

Strong chromatic contrast

I like to look for animals and backgrounds that have a strong chromatic contrast, as you can see in this demonstration: the dark green of the water makes the feline stand out. I also often purposely exaggerate this contrast.

Controlling the light

I use light to isolate the subject and create dramatic effects. I don't just copy the values of my references, but I often alter them on purpose depending on the atmosphere I want to portray.

My Art in the Making River Crossing

In this demonstration I will take you through the process of creating *River Crossing*, a 20-by-28-inch acrylic painting of a Bengal tiger. The most challenging part of this work was rendering the water effects. I saved details for last and focused on getting the values and colors right. Only when every element was relating to the others correctly, I moved to the final stages of painting details and strong highlights. As this demonstration aims to show, hyperrealism is more about the general perception of the image rather than fine particulars. The reference photo is by Andreas Breitling.



Reference Photo



STAGE 1 THE FUNDAMENTALS

In this first stage I outline all of the fundamental information using either the grid method or a projector. I use a red wash that would be easily covered by subsequent layers of color.



Continued

STAGE 2 DEFINING THE FUR

With as little brushstrokes as possible, I try to describe highlights, shadows and the color of the fur. I avoid any details in this stage.

WHAT THE ARTIST USED

Fluid Acrylic Colors

- » Titanium White
- » Carbon Black
- » Ultramarine Blue
- » Burnt Umber light
- » Quinacridone Magenta
- » Hansa Yellow medium

- » Pyrrole Red
- » Vat Orange
- » Green Gold

Brushes

- » Flat and round synthetic brushes, sizes from 14 to 3

Canvas

- » 20 x 28" smooth cotton canvas, primed for acrylics

Additional supplies

- » Tabletop easel
- » Stay-wet palette

- » Water bucket
- » Hand towel
- » Printed reference image
- » Tablet mounted on an adjustable holder
- » 40W LED light mounted on a tripod 7 feet above the floor



STAGE 3

UNIFORM WASH

I use a uniform wash of dark green as the first layer of the water. After covering the white of the canvas, I can match more precisely color and value.

STAGE 4

WATER REFLECTIONS

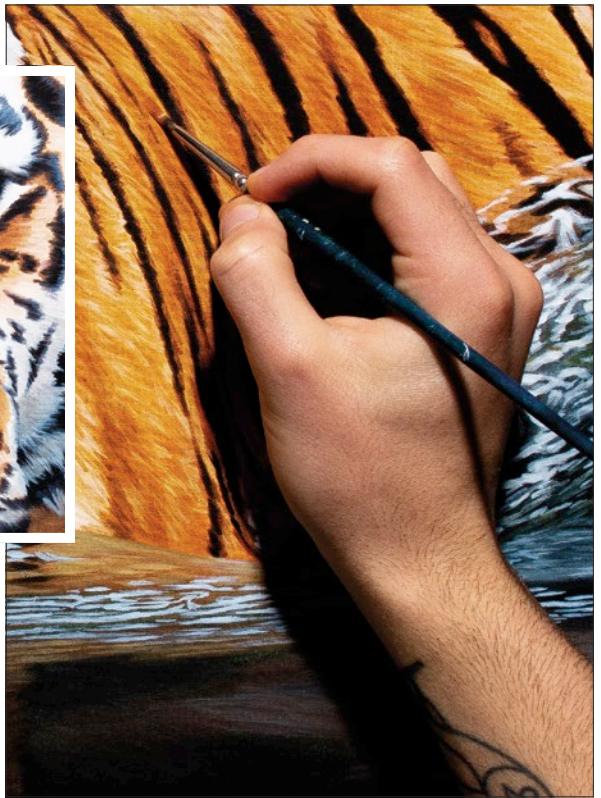
I paint the water reflections using a wash of white and ultramarine blue. For the duckweeds I use a yellow green, and I paint more loosely in the background to give the illusion of distance.





STAGE 5 MODIFYING THE FUR

In this stage I go back to the tiger and I start refining the fur, adding more details and adjusting the values. I can now relate every color to the others and be more precise.



STAGE 6 DETAILS

In this stage I paint the whiskers of the chin, and I can now tweak the reflection of the animal so that it looks specular.



STAGE 7

REFINEMENTS

I darken the background with a dark green wash to make it look more distant. I paint all the remaining visible whiskers (around the nose, above the eyes, on the cheeks) and their respective reflections.



STAGE 8 HIGHLIGHTS

To finish the painting, I add a few highlights and compare the result to my reference to make sure I did not miss any important elements. Lastly, I sign the painting.



STAGE 9 FINISHED PAINTING

River Crossing, acrylic, 20 x 28"


This is the completed painting. I always take pictures of my paintings before varnishing to avoid reflections. I then use a gloss varnish for acrylic. I apply two thin layers, three hours apart.

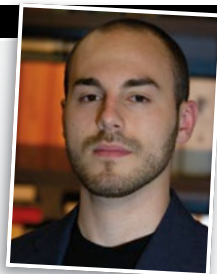
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Marco Grasso is an Italian wildlife painter. He has been trained by wildlife artist Tiziana Lerda and held his first solo exhibition in Cuneo, Italy, in 2018, in collaboration with Leonardo Dolce. Since then, Grasso has participated in collective exhibitions in Rome, Vancouver and Florida. He is a member of Artists for Conservation and the Society of Animal Artists and was awarded an AFC Medal of Excellence for his painting

Ouverture II. He is currently attending the Florence Academy of Art in Florence, Italy.

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Lyudmila Tomova

No Boundaries

Lyudmila Tomova creates fluid, rhythmic watercolors that embody a sense of freedom and spontaneity

Movement and mood are at the core of my artistic style. I merge both abstract and traditional painting in a loose painterly way to create an energetic and impactful artwork. My painting philosophy is to interpret reality and not copy it. I paint quickly with large gestural strokes free of preconceived logical steps, infusing passion and excitement. A fleeting moment is captured and transformed by means of rules and omissions, acceptance and refusal, luring the viewer round and around in circles. The brushstrokes are moving, pushing, emerging and overwhelming, but never still and quiet. Sometimes I jokingly call my approach “create-destroy-create” for this is exactly how I approach my work—a brushstroke is laid down on the paper and then part is taken away, followed by a new one in an ever-continuing, intuitive rhythm of gestures.

Medium and Inspiration

Although I equally love oil and acrylic, watercolor is the closest to my preferred visual language. It undoubtedly makes me fully embrace the unexpected, demonstrating a fleeting outcome of colors and happy accidents. I aim to capture that immediate moment of my subjects with a sense of spontaneity. The sources of inspiration for my work are the ever-changing states in man, animals and nature. I try to see beyond



Buddies, watercolor, 22 x 30" (55 x 76 cm)

Inspired by one of my favorite themes—horses at a horse farm in North Carolina. This pair looked great for painting with the repetitive shapes. I wanted to create movement and a larger dark value area of their bodies almost morphing into each other.

the obvious and probe to the bare core of my subjects.

Technique

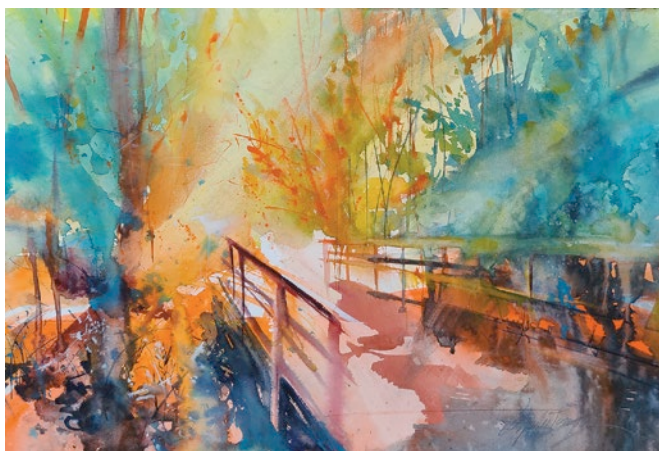
I use rapid, spontaneous, large brushstrokes, blurring the boundaries of one object from another, making them feel interconnected and part of a whole. Edges disappear, making my elements dissolve into the background, creating a dreamy and abstract mood of the painting. Combining opposites—large-small, sharp-soft,

rough-refined, dark-light together—I depict the desired effect of movement to the painting. What I am after is the first impression—I want to show all one can see at first glance. It is about experiencing the fleeting moment, thought or emotion. I do not wait for paint to dry before applying layers or details, leaving the interaction of water and pigment to chance. Trusting the process and guiding it boldly instead of rigidly controlling it allows me to fully integrate the beauty of the watercolor



Winter in New York, watercolor, 22 x 30" (55 x 76 cm)

Inspired by the carriages in front of the Plaza hotel in New York City from a photo I took many years ago. I like the sense of depth and perspective the carriages are creating. I approached the work in a very loose painterly way to capture this fleeting moment.



medium. Exposing another dimension of intense contrast, paradoxical states of dynamism and accents are my usual approach. Images, driven to a continual movement, imply energy generated by the struggle between light and dark with dramatic spontaneity. The results are deconstructed to the extent that meaning is shifted and possible interpretation becomes multifaceted. [66](#)

Greenway in Cary, watercolor, 15 x 22" (38 x 55 cm)

Plein air painting of the greenway in my neighborhood. The light was shining beautifully, and I wanted to create a very expressive painting using contrasting colors and wild brushstrokes.

My Art in the Making The Dance

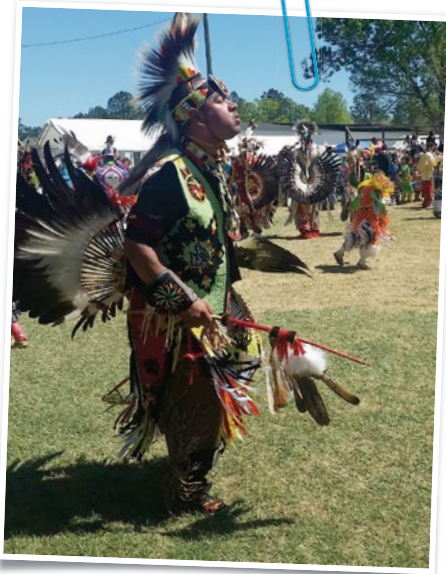


Photo Reference

This painting is inspired by my visit to a powwow of the Haliwa-Saponi people in North Carolina. It was the third day of celebration of this Native American tribe, dancing under the mesmerizing rhythm of drums and singing. I wanted to capture the moment of full immersion into both the music and the trance the dancer was experiencing. I decided to use an unusual combination of colors and accents to convey the magical feeling of this moment as well as my usual bold and loose strokes approach.



STAGE 1 SKETCHING AND COMPOSITION

I'm drawing the figure very roughly without any detail that might confine me later to selectively choose the important from the unnecessary, then defining larger shapes of light and shadow and establishing the overall composition of placing the figure slightly off center.

WHAT THE ARTIST USED

Watercolors

- » Indigo
- » Ivory Black
- » Ultramarine
- » Opera Red
- » Rose Madder
- » Turquoise Blue
- » Turner Red
- » Permanent Yellow
- » Yellow lemon

Additional Colors

- » Sap Green

- » Phthalo Blue
- » Paynes Gray
- » Pyrole Orange
- » Cadmium Yellow
- » Brown Madder
- » Quinacridone Red

Brushes

- » 2-inch flat brush
- » Three Chinese sable calligraphy/watercolor brushes
- » No. 10 rigger brush
- » Fat liner brush



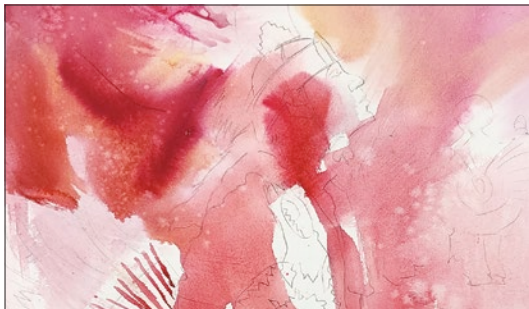
- » No. 4 sable round

Paper

- » 30 x 22" sheet Fabriano Artistic Satinato, 300-lb hot-pressed
- » 34 x 24" Masonite board

Additional Supplies

- » Palette
- » Three-compartment water bucket
- » Paper towel
- » 3b pencil
- » Plastic stencil with shapes



STAGE 2 BOLD BRUSHSTROKES ON WET PAPER

Next, I wet the paper thoroughly and apply very large brushstrokes throughout the whole painting, using one color to establish the overall mood in the painting right away. I boldly lift or wipe with paper towel some of the paint while adding more paint everywhere except where the light is. Choosing the unusual shades of red and pink help communicate the emotion in the work. Small areas of white are left where the light will be.



STAGE 3 DEFINING ABSTRACT SHAPES

Continuing to build abstract shapes, I introduce another color. While the paper is still wet, using a large flat brush, I start throwing more paint and adding another color. I let the paint and the water drip to interact freely with the pigment. Then I spray some clean water to add more effects.



STAGE 4 PAINTING SHADOWS AND DEFINING THE FIGURE

Mixing the darkest value in the painting, I begin defining the shadow and overall silhouette of the dancer. Using quick gestural strokes and drybrush technique for texture painting, I'm focusing only on the large shapes and unconcerned with small details. Squinting your eyes while observing your subject helps with seeing the larger shapes only. The goal at this stage is to quickly establish the contrast and the range of dark and light.

Continued
▶



STAGE 5 PAINTING THE FACE AND IMPORTANT DETAILS

Now I'm starting to focus on the face and some small details of the dancer's regalia. It's easy at this stage to become lost and overdo the detail. Concentrating on a few small areas helps in maintaining the focus to the face and interesting shapes. Mixing an unusual lime green color for accents sparingly adds an additional element of the unexpected.



STAGE 6 REFINING DETAIL AND BACKGROUND

Using a rigger and fat liner brush, I add lines in a quick gestural way to build and reinforce the movement. I also add spatter, drips and quick brushstrokes to deepen the shapes. I'm painting the crowd behind the dancer with quick brushstrokes as more of an impression than actual figures to keep them in the background.



STAGE 7 FINISHING TOUCHES AND UNIFYING

Lastly, I strategically place final touches to the face and check the values of the larger shapes. Using the large flat brush with a generous amount of water and color, I unify larger areas by boldly painting over smaller shapes, making them disappear.



STAGE 8 THE COMPLETED PAINTING

The Dance, watercolor on hot-pressed 300-lb Fabriano Artistic paper, 30 x 22" (76 x 55 cm)





ABOUT THE ARTIST

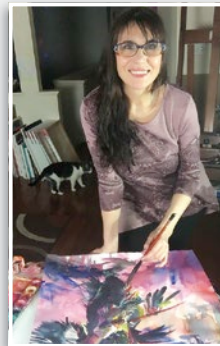
Lyudmila Tomova is originally from Sofia, Bulgaria, and currently resides in Cary, North Carolina. She immigrated to the US in 1990 and has lived in New York City working as a full-time painter, editorial illustrator and designer, exhibiting nationally and abroad. She studied Illustration at the Sofia's Academy of Fine Arts and later at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, graduating with high honors. Currently, she paints figures, portraits, murals and landscapes in various mediums in a unique expressive style. Tomova is also a Signature member of the Watercolor Society of North Carolina, the Georgia Watercolor Society and the Southwestern Watercolor Society. Her work has been part of numerous juried national and international exhibitions such as the 2020 *NC Annual Artist exhibition* at CAM Raleigh, *MOWS International Juried Exhibitions* in Barcelona, Spain, and Qingdao, China, the *1st International Watercolor Society Biennale* in Vancouver, Canada, and many others.

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Oliver Pyle

The Peaceful Painter



“Simply Stunning” — Coastal Views at Abbotsbury, watercolor on Millford 140lb Not paper, 21 x 28" (54 x 72 cm)

The view from the charming village of Abbotsbury is stunning. Chesil Beach, a 16-mile pebble bank and prominent feature of the Jurassic Coast (a World Heritage Site) leads the eye towards the promontory of Portland in the distance. With a large painting such as this, creating a sense of harmony across all the elements—land, sea, sky—is a challenge, with a risk of allowing too much detail to distract from the view. To keep these areas “quiet” much of the painting is developed using a wet-on-wet technique to establish color and tone, with extensive use of glazing.

For such a small geographic area, the United Kingdom offers a wonderful array of opportunities for the landscape painter—rugged heathland, rolling downlands, restful pastures and a remarkable coastline. The cool

northern light that is with us for most of the year shines a soft light onto these landscapes, making them ideal subjects for watercolor. While many experts of the medium prefer painting contre-jour scenes, the time of day

that I like to be in the landscape is near dusk or dawn, when strong directional light reveals the landscape’s shape and texture. Working with a limited palette of trusted colors, watercolor enables me to make an immediate response



Glorious Purbeck, watercolor on Saunders Waterford 140lb Rough paper, 19½ x 13" (50 x 34 cm)

It was impossible not to be excited when I arrived at Kingston, Dorset, as the early-morning sun had burned off the mist sitting in the valley. The subject had everything: landscape details in the tree and drystone wall, with a sweeping vista beyond. Poole Harbour is visible in the distance and Corfe Castle, a reminder of our direct influence on the landscape, sits proudly on a natural mound in the Purbeck Hills. It was important to capture the sense of soft morning light and the tree's branches were arranged to emphasize the aperture through which we view the landscape beyond.



Last Days of Summer, Kimmeridge Bay, watercolor on Millford 140lb Not paper, 14 x 28" (36 x 72 cm)

The panoramic format is a favorite of mine and offers compositional flexibility for coastal scenes. Kimmeridge Bay is a wonderful subject, and this format allows the distant headland and the shale ledges in the foreground to point to the flat, emptiness of the horizon, creating a sense of calm. Strong, directional evening light is a recognizable feature of my painting style, and here it creates a scene that is a complex combination of warm sienna and ochre highlights, offset by deep shadows of purple and umber. The simplest of skies ensures that our attention remains in the landscape.

Reflections of Summer, Arundel, watercolor on Millford 140lb Not paper, 21 x 28" (54 x 72 cm)

Close to home, the historic town of Arundel is a continual source of inspiration. I knew that a pleasant evening in early June would give me exactly the atmosphere I was looking for. In a large complex painting such as this, decisions need to be made before starting the painting. Boats, jetties, trees and the castle all compete for attention, so it was essential to establish a focal point and organize the painting and levels of detail accordingly. Keeping the sky, river and middle-distance trees as soft as possible has helped to lend the scene a feeling of evening tranquility.





The Warm Glow of Evening, Durdle Door, watercolor on Saunders Waterford 140lb Rough paper, 14 x 28" (36 x 72 cm)

Durdle Door lays claim to being one of the UK's most iconic coastal landscapes. The challenge when choosing these as subjects is to accurately capture their nature, while being able to offer something new to the viewer. There seemed to be a natural symbiosis between the pink glow of the evening sun and the mauve thistles growing on the cliff edge that would provide a fresh perspective for the painting. The thistles also act as a useful compositional tool, distracting the eye from the chaos of the foreground cliff face that I painted so fly.

to the landscape around me, capturing the subtle and delicate changes in hue. The inspiration from being outdoors, observing and experience the landscape and the extent to which we have helped to shape and define it informs every aspect of my work. I am interested in painting the wide-open vistas, just

as much as capturing the landscape's intimate details. In order to record and share these experiences with you, I rely on careful and accurate drawing, providing me with a structure that I can then drape with tones and colors. This permits little room for abstraction, yet by deploying a loose approach to my

brushwork, the paintings are able to convey a sense of peace and relaxation without appearing too regimented. The English countryside is beautiful. Peaceful. That is how I feel when I am in the landscape, and it is those feelings that I hope to convey through my work.



ABOUT THE ARTIST





Oliver Pyle is an established and successful landscape artist working exclusively in watercolor. Based in Sussex, England, his work is to be found in collections across the country and internationally, selling through high street galleries and online. Pyle's art is much in demand and features as The Oliver Pyle Collection, part of the UK's oldest and most prestigious Fine Art greetings card publisher, Medici Cards. He teaches watercolor and painting techniques through workshops, demonstrations and tutorials and is a regular contributor of articles to a range of publications. Since 2017, Pyle has been an ambassador for Daler Rowney, having used their pigments and brushes from the start of his

painting career. His work and experiences outdoors and in the studio can be followed on social media, and his popular blog, "Our Landscape," provides a fascinating insight into his understanding of the landscape, the extent to which we have shaped it and the inspiration behind his paintings.

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John Lovett

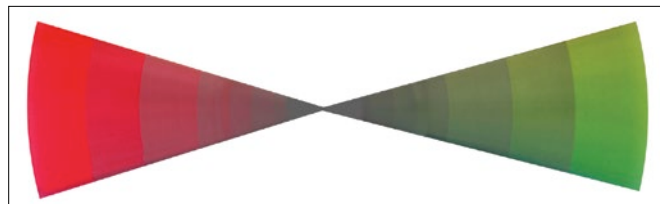
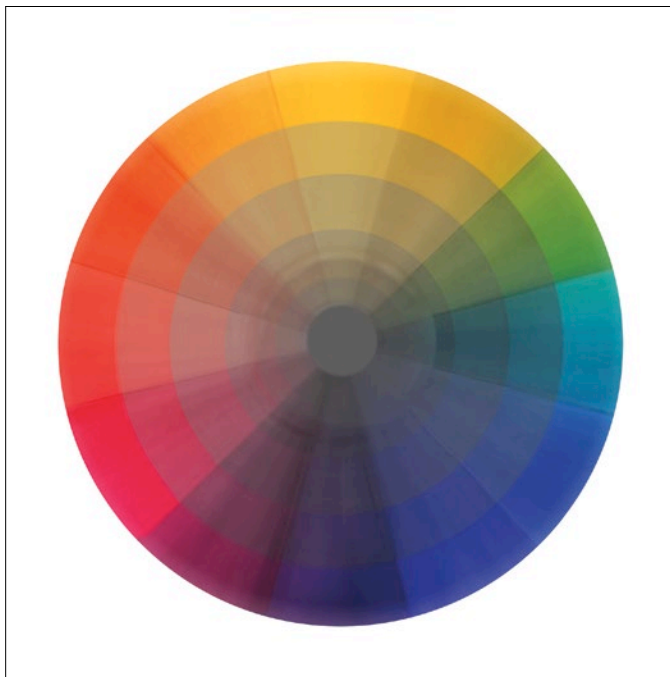
Mixing & Matching Color

John Lovett delves into color theory and demonstrates how to properly to mix pigments

No matter what medium we use, the ability to accurately mix colors is extremely important. Many students struggle at first, but there are a few points that will make the process of mixing and matching color much easier. First, we will look at some color definitions to help us understand the way color works, then we will examine a number of points and techniques to quickly make you an expert color mixer.

COLOR WHEEL

A color wheel is a very handy tool. The colors around the outside ring are saturated primary colors (red, yellow and blue). Saturated secondary colors which are mixtures of adjacent primaries (orange, green and violet) and six saturated tertiary colors which sit between the primary and secondaries. Mixing between any of the complementary pairs (any colors opposite one another on the color wheel) will give us a series of compound colors, with neutral in the center.



COMPLEMENTARY COLOR

A complementary color is the opposite color on the color wheel: red/green, blue/orange and yellow/violet. Here we see the complementary pair red and green and all the compound mixtures in between. These in between mixtures are made by adding progressively more of the complementary color.



COMPOUND COLOR

A compound color is a color containing a mixture of three primary colors. All the browns, khakis, greys and earth colors are compound colors. Here we have a saturated red and three compound reds.

SATURATED COLOR

Saturated colors are the pure hues around the outside of the color wheel. If not a primary color, they contain a mixture of only two primary colors.

TINT

A tint is a color containing white—or, in the case of watercolor, diluted with water so the white paper takes the place of white pigment.

SHADE

A shade is a color containing black. With watercolor a shade can be made by mixing three primary colors of almost pure pigment (very little water)



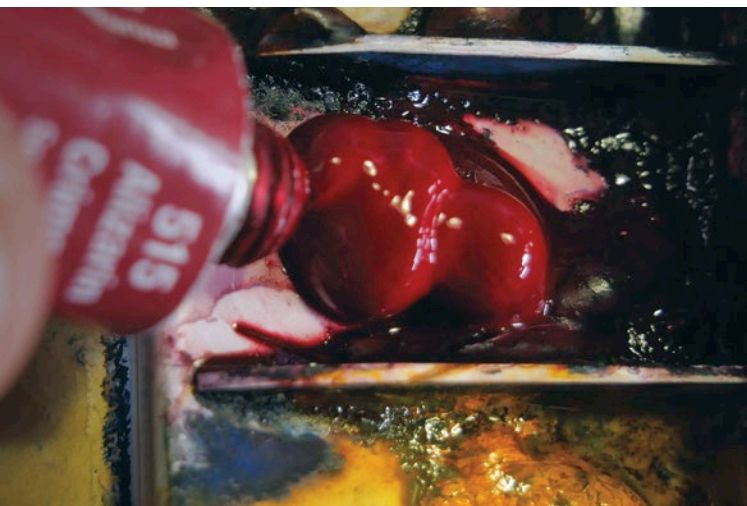
to achieve a neutral dark. This works best with transparent dark pigments, particularly yellow. Indian yellow or quinacridone gold are perfect for this. The resulting dark can then be pulled towards the hue by addition

of appropriate primary pigments. In the image above, we have pure alizarin crimson, plus a tint and a shade of the same color.

Reading through the previous definitions will give you an understanding of the theory behind the way colors mix and interrelate. We will now look at some techniques to make the color mixing process much simpler:

1. SQUEEZE OUT PLENTY OF PAINT

Trying to mix from a tiny dot of pigment makes the job of color mixing a difficult one. With watercolor, a fresh bead of each color about the size of an almond squeezed onto the palette will enable you to mix without interruption.



Squeeze out plenty of paint—it won't go to waste, even if it dries out.

2. WHEN MIXING, PICK UP ONLY TINY AMOUNTS OF PIGMENT

Start with a small dot of pigment closest to the color you are after. Try to pick up a spot not much bigger than a grain of sand. Mix it into a little water on your palette, then add a tiny amount of the next color to modify what you have. It is much better to add numerous small dots of pigment rather than a few big blobs. Big blobs tend to swing the mixture wildly from one color to another and go through lots of paint by the time the correct color is achieved.

3. THINK IN COMPLEMENTARIES

Most of the time we are mixing Compound colors (colors containing all three primaries). If we start with the pigment closest to the color we are after, then decide which way that pigment needs to be pulled to approach our desired color, it becomes a simpler task. Usually the more saturated primary colors we are mixing with need to be neutralized slightly. This can be done by adding a little of the complementary to the mix.



When mixing on your palette, a small amount goes a long way.

4. GET THE COLOR RIGHT FIRST, THEN ADJUST THE TONE

I always make my mixture a bit darker than I need then simply add a little water to correct the tone once the color is right. Often, I will apply a brush full of color darker than I need then dip the brush into the water and thin the

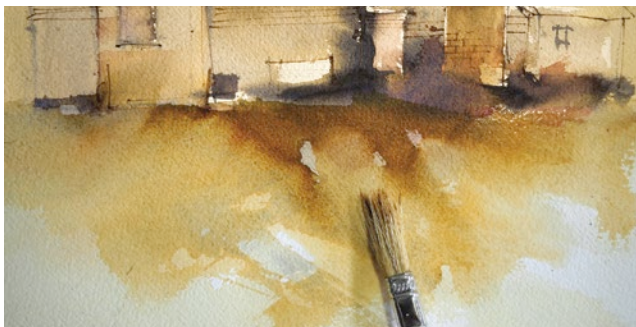
mixture out on the paper. This way I can see exactly what is happening.

Like any skill, color mixing requires practice, but by following these tips you will soon be able to mix any color you need. [▶](#)



In this example we are trying to mix a color similar to burnt sienna. We start with some permanent alizarin as burnt sienna is a sort of dirty red. To move the Alizarin away from a saturated red we need to add the complementary (green).

Here a dark burnt orange mixture is applied to a foreground then quickly diluted and manipulated with clean water. This not only allows the tone to be adjusted but gives variation to the gradations and edges.



This painting was done with just three primary colors: quinacridone gold (yellow), French ultramarine (blue) and permanent alizarin crimson (red). Most of the mixtures employed are compound mixtures containing varying amounts of the three colors. The foreground, underpainting of the walls and roof all used a dirty yellow mixture. The brick chimneys used the same dirty yellow with the addition of some more alizarin. A cool grey, loaded with ultramarine was washed over the walls and left hand tank. The only pure, saturated colors were in the striped alizarin blind, a splash of alizarin into the right-hand chimney, and while everything was wet, some pure Ultramarine dropped into the right hand building. The addition of these saturated colors was to put more life into what would have been a fairly monochrome painting. The dark colors in the windows and under the buildings were mixed from the three colors using very little water and lots of ultramarine to keep it from becoming too neutral and dead.

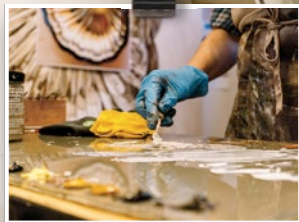


Since we are mixing from three fairly saturated primaries (Indian yellow, permanent alizarin and French ultramarine) we will first add a small amount of yellow. We now have a reasonably saturated orange so, to neutralize it we add blue.



The addition of the yellow and blue to the red are the same as adding complementary green to the red. Our end result is a color similar to burnt sienna. This can be further modified if necessary by adding tiny amounts of pigment to pull our mixture toward a slightly more red, yellow or blue hue. The secret is to use tiny amounts of pigment each time. It's much easier to add a little more than to try and correct a mixture overpowered by too much color.

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LESLIE LEWIS SIGLER

1. Underpaintings

Creating the underpainting is essential to my process. It's where I work out the composition, figure out my values and prepare for color.

2. Inspiration/reference imagery

These images of objects I've captured for paintings past hang on the wall and continue to influence future paintings.


3. Palette and paints (and blue tape!)

I have a small studio, so I keep my palette, paints, brushes, rags, solvents and miscellaneous supplies in a rolling chest at arm's reach while I'm painting.

4. Works in progress

I work on a few paintings at a time. This keeps me flowing—if I'm feeling stuck on a painting, I'll take a break and work on a different piece to refresh and clear my mind.

5. Silver objects

Silver utensils and vessels are peppered throughout my studio, some have been painted and some are begging for their portrait to be made. While they linger, I get to know their personality as they develop a beautiful patina. 

See more from the artist: www.leslielewisigler.com

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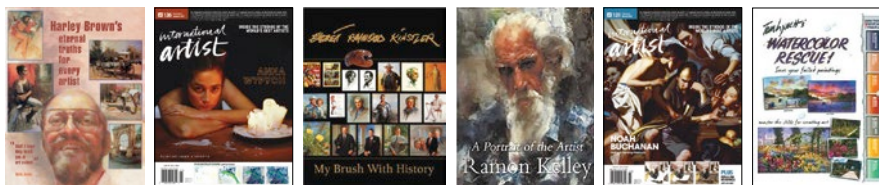
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Loosening Up at Cathedral Cove

Easy to say, hard to do. New Zealand artist Richard Robinson shows you the five keys to achieving a fresh painterly look without sacrificing realism

It's not often (hasn't happened yet) that someone asks me in a workshop how to really tighten up their painting style. With my students at least, the goal always seems to be to loosen up, to give more expression and freedom to their work. The trouble is, if you head straight for expressive painting without first learning the basics of seeing, drawing and painting, yes you'll get an expressive painting but it will be lacking in realism. How happy you are with the result will depend upon what style you want to achieve. When I started painting it was with tiny brushes and many painstaking hours trying to paint things as realistically as possible. Over the years my style has become looser and looser. Now I'm enamored by the life I can impart to each brushstroke. The realism is still there, but it's expressed in a much broader fashion. For anyone attempting a similar style I recommend learning the basics first, painting things as they are, as you'll learn in my beginner's course here: www.tinyurl.com/beginnerspack. Then, slowly add more expressive elements to your work, building on that good foundation. 



Richard Robinson, *Cathedral Cove*, acrylic on canvas, 15 x 15" (38 x 38 cm)

Student Critiques

Barbara Magor, *Cathedral Cove*

Well THERE'S some interesting texture! Great to see you took the challenge to heart, Barbara and really went to town using different tools and great globs of paint to give us all some generous texture to admire. The treatment of the foreground has lost a little realism but gained in abstraction and pure interest. I would love to see more of this from you!



Elena Sokolova, *Grots at the sea*, acrylic with oil glazing on canvas, 16 x 16" (40 x 40 cm)

Beautiful painterly work Elena! Great to see you playing with the different thicknesses of paint, some thin, some impasto, then some glazing of oils over the top. I suggest you try some using a palette knife or credit card to get some really interesting texture in the foreground. The strokes you've currently got there are a little uniform, so I'm not quite feeling the energy there that there potentially could be. Good strong color and nice to see some careful consideration of the drawing of form in the cliff as well. Great!



Eric Hillmer, *Cathedral Cove*, watercolor and gouache

Nice to see your different take on this, Eric. All that intricate detail in the cliff looks great set off against the simple washes in the sky and foreground. As for placing the gull and rock right against the edge of the painting, that's generally a no-no as it draws the eye to the edge rather than circulating through the main focal areas. But hey, you only have to look at one of Degas' paintings to realize that compositional rules are made to be broken. What I might suggest is to add a little more textural interest into the foreground. Also, how about a cast shadow for the gull and a sharper cast shadow for the rock? A soft shadow as you have it suggests diffuse light, whereas you have strong direct light on the cliff casting dark sharp shadows. Just some thoughts. Really interesting!



Barbara Magor, *Cathedral Cove—semi abstract version*

This one's gone even more abstract and textural—interesting! The drawing of the base of the cliff has gone a bit wonky. Was that intentional? Remember that going more gestural and abstract doesn't mean you have to lose control of the drawing. It's hard to maintain, but in my opinion well worth the extra effort to create a painting that's strong on both abstract aesthetics and technical drawing skill. You've sure got some beautiful textures working there. Great to see.



Lindsay Shaw, *Wish you were here*

Hi Lindsay, first of all, I love the chunky feel of your varied brushwork in the cliff—just gorgeous. Good to see you exploring the impasto texture in the foreground, although it's a shame that degree of freedom didn't spill out into the treatment in the water as well—got a little tight there, also in the sky which could benefit from a few larger more gestural strokes. You're walking the line between tight and loose in this painting, and with a little more courage could break through into a really exciting gestural piece. Really very nice. I encourage you to keep pushing.



Antonia Clark, *Cathedral Cove*, oil on canvas board, 12 x 12" (30 x 30 cm)

Antonia, great effort—pushing yourself to make gestural marks and impasto effects when you're clearly a quite controlled painter. You've made some repetitive patterns within your gestural marks, and when you do that it detracts from the feeling of freedom that is generally the intention of such marks. Making patterns can be a difficult habit to break, but it's worth the struggle. Before each stroke, think about how you might make it different from your previous stroke. Think of all the aspects of a mark you can change, like thickness, speed, size, pressure and shape, and then make a decision to change. Also try switching your painting hand or grip every so often. Enjoy!



Five Keys to Loosening Up

1. Make "expressive brushwork" your goal for the painting. Write it boldly on a piece of paper and stick it to your easel above your canvas. Intention is everything.
2. Lay out at least twice as much paint on your palette than you think is necessary. Painterly paintings need PAINT!
3. Use bigger brushes than usual. Also try out other tools like palette knives, credit cards, rollers, sponges, spray bottles, scratchers, scrapers, pourers or toothbrushes. Anything that makes interesting marks.
4. Consider the brushwork in the focal areas carefully, and don't neglect the drawing of key shapes. How can you achieve the shape and texture you want with the tools you have? Experiment and don't be afraid to scrape off and try again. In the non-focal areas go as nuts as you like with the brushwork.
5. Have fun! Be fearless. Don't worry about wasting materials. It's not possible to waste them. Painting supplies are made to be enjoyed.

Get the full video lesson here:
www.mypaintingclub.com/lessons/207-cathedral-cove

Reenie Mccallum, *Cathedral Cove*, oil on canvas panel, 11 x 14" (27 x 35 cm)

Hey Reenie, this is beautiful! Love the strong sense of warm sunlight you've created with all that bounced light into the shadows of the cliff. Dreamy! The little detail of the cliff seen through the archway is tantalizing! Great subtle color work in the water showing the banding at different depths and also the reflections of the cliff and figures. Nice. I can't think of anything that would improve on your great work except to see your signature on it and hung in a nice frame. Congratulations!

The Making of an Artist

Key Discovery: Color Maps

Master the principles of painting that took **Barry John Raybould** from raw beginner to prize-winning professional in only five years. Barry's work is proof that mastering these key discoveries really works, it worked for him and it can work for you too.

"In the process of becoming a professional painter, I have spent countless hours and tens of thousands of dollars gathering and organizing knowledge to help me personally grow as an artist. I have searched out key discoveries from a wide variety of sources including apprenticeships with several world-class contemporary artists, a personal library of over 100 contemporary and out-of-print historical textbooks on painting, and my own personal discoveries in color harmony. I have found that if you want to learn to paint well, there are at least **700 key discoveries** you need to know about and become proficient in. I have now structured these key discoveries into the **Virtual Art Academy**® programs of self-study courses to provide a quality alternative to expensive art schools and professional artist workshops for those who want to make a serious study of painting. Hopefully by sharing this knowledge more widely we can bring more beauty into this world."

A color map is a very quick, small abstract painting that consists of just a few color spots of approximately the right size and placement. Use the color map to:

- » Capture your first impression of a scene so you do not lose sight of what attracted you to it.
- » Capture the exact relationship between the planes of the light and shade. This is the most critical color relationship in any painting.
- » Work out which gray will best show off your main color accent.
- » Help you work out a major color strategy quickly.

Materials

Use any heavy drawing paper such as Strathmore 400-I medium 80lb (130 gm) white drawing paper. I do not gesso the paper. The advantage of regular, thick paper is that the paint sinks in and dries quickly. Just use your regular oil paint with no medium.

How to do it

- » Paint the darks first, then the grays, both very thinly.
- » Add more saturated and lighter value colors on top using slightly thicker paint.
- » Adjust all the colors and values until you have matched them as accurately as you can to the scene in front of you.



- » If the color looks wrong, scrape it off with your knife.



Tips

- » Keep your color maps small.
- » Use the same size as your regular mass notan paintings.
- » Do not worry about drawing anything. Your focus is just on the colors.



To learn more:

- » Go to the International Artist website www.internationalartist.com and click on Virtual Art Academy®.
- » To learn more about how the different types of small studies will greatly improve the design and color of your final paintings, see the Virtual Art Academy® Apprentice Program.

Visit www.internationalartist.com and click on the Virtual Art Academy™ button to access instant downloads needed to master the art of painting.

The Virtual Art Academy® Apprentice Program

A structured four-year program of 192 lessons that will help you systematically build up your foundational skills from the ground up to help you master painting. A key element of this program is series of 350+ assignments specially structured to help you build your skills, and an Online Campus where you can meet other students from all over the world to share your artistic journey, and support you along the way.

Each lesson includes an overview of the principle or technique, one or more short videos to demonstrate the skill you are learning, many examples of how to do it, and one or more assignments to assist you in assimilating the material.

Lessons For All Skill Levels

The Apprentice Program is designed for all levels of artists, from beginners to more experienced artists and professionals. Beginners work through the lessons in sequence. For more experienced artists, the program is structured to give you complete flexibility in your learning program. Strengthen your foundation in those areas in which you are weakest and take your paintings to a new and higher level.

Master Artist Critiques

A key element of this program is a study of historical master works. Discover what makes them work, increase your appreciation and enjoyment of great artworks, and apply that knowledge to your own work.

Flexibility

The program is available on a simple and flexible pay-as-you-go monthly payment plan. You do not need to commit up-front to the whole program and you can cancel at any time. Join our 800+ students who have already improved their painting skills, and you will soon be on the road to painting success.

Key Discoveries in Practice: Lerici Harbor



In this painting I have used the Key Discovery of **brushwork abstraction**. If you zoom into a small section of the painting, you see an abstract pattern of patches of

paint that could almost be a work from the abstract period of modern art.

By using this technique, your painting will work on two levels. When viewed

from further back, you get the feeling of a harbor town bathed in late evening light.

But when viewed up close you see a patchwork quilt of brushstrokes, each of a different color, but harmonizing within a whole.

This makes the painting much more interesting to the viewer. To achieve this, you also need careful control of the color harmony in your work.



To learn more:

- » Go to the International Artist website www.internationalartist.com and click on Virtual Art Academy®.
- » You can learn much more about brushwork abstraction to make your work more exciting in the full Virtual Art Academy® Apprentice Program.

IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF ART

Harley Brown's fascinating things no one else will tell you

Finding Ourselves in Art

Two Words: Value Design

Here are two words that if fully understood and used, take artists to inspiring levels of art: *value* and *design*. This idea is explored within chapter four of *Harley Brown's Eternal Truths For Every Artist*. During my life in art, the great artists I've known continued to bring them up. It didn't take long for me to really understand what value and design meant. Look at any remarkable work of art and we see how these two factors bring such masterpieces. A well done drawing or painting needs to be brought together with the strong elements of design and value. Major artists past and present have these same aesthetic goals going through their minds while painting.

For Instance

While proceeding on a piece, my mind works in a realist-abstract combination. I'm drawing a face but at the same time, I see shapes while working with shadows, the darker against lighter areas. Those shapes are so important as I integrate them into the work, joining with other shapes. Shadows of features, hair, hands, clothing, background. Developing these shapes lifts the art spirits while leading to the ultimate, overall design.

On the Edge

As seen in chapter six of *Eternal Truths For Every Artist*, while creating our paintings and drawings, we know all those edges cannot be the same. This is of such importance. In art, as in life, there are continual variations of visual edges. Lost and found edges, sharp and

soft edges. Over a lifetime, humans subconsciously understand edges.

When we see something close and in detail, other areas might soften. Darker edges might disappear into shadows, or areas of the same value. The artist decides how to handle these variable edges. Variable is key.

Periodically, Take that Turn

Once in a while, when you are about to paint a familiar subject, make it different from any that you've done. Different lighting, angle, color, even a different subject. Like a serious actor deciding to do a lighthearted play or film; an opera star singing a popular tune. This is demonstrated in chapter eight. Doing this will strengthen your inner self magnificently. After I've painted such a work, and it's well done, I'm flying. And not just momentarily.

A continual reminder. Look at the light areas and highlights on a face. Now the shadow areas. Do not overdo the touches of reflected light within the shadows. This can ruin an otherwise fine piece of art. And watch that you don't make the light areas too light. Your subject has the answers.

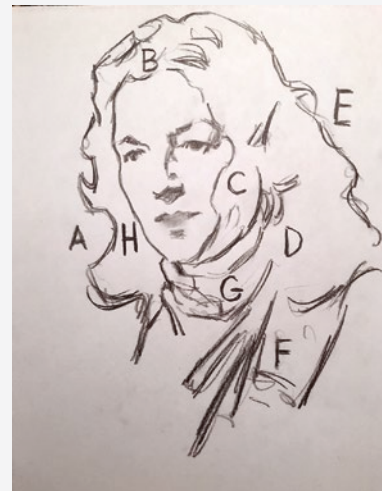
Keep in mind that a work of art should have an overall cooler feeling or warmer feeling. Landscapes, portraits, still lifes...abstracts! Not equal warm and cool, unless the values with design are spectacular. That overrides everything.

We Really Are Directors

As seen in chapter 11, like a director bringing all the amazing complexities of a film together, the artist has

somewhat the same commitment; although alone in a quiet studio.

In our world an artwork needs overall subject positioning, angle, design, lights/shadows, values, color, small shapes against larger shapes, minute details and larger simple areas, textures and "smoothed down" portions. All this on behalf of that Inspiring Subject. And like the film director, we feel confident, even knowing there might be uncertainties around artistic corners. Those uncertainties are typical and involve the unexpected. Such is life. The "unexpected" keep my mental adrenaline flowing; and after all these years, I'm happy dealing with them. With all this happening, that's when



Fran

Here's something you might think strange. When I saw this work recently, I thought, "Hey, that's a terrific portrait. I'd like to know who's the artist." Well, I looked down for the name and what did I find...my name. I felt both surprised and very happy I did that particular piece. Its origin was revealed. It's a pastel I did 30 years ago when living in Tucson, Arizona. It's a portrait of longtime artist friend, Fran Odum.

Back then my art friends and I would often get together for painting sessions. One particular day, Fran decided she would model. A few weeks ago, Fran sent me an image of it. It looked interesting enough I wanted to share this story and details with you.

Here's what I put into this portrait. Fran sat comfortably with the light on her right. Her hair tossed easily, wonderfully framing her face.

- A. Hair coming down that side gives a good contrast with the light skin tone. Also the drama with its shaping and angle, loosely done on the outside.
- B. Important crisp and soft edging against the forehead. So important to get that "hairline" right.
- C. The cheek with light area softly turning into shadow. Both color and value are extremely important. Also notice that the dark area of shadow gets "lost" in the dark hair.
- D. Dark hair and shadow. A few bits of light touching hair to break up that large dark area.
- E. The outside of the hair again adds angled drama with a touch of purple in background to take away silhouette effect. Soft edges.
- F. Clothing without too much detail, but helped in overall design. Angles there opposite back of hair. Light area at bottom right work goes up to hair area on the left side. Angles all over. Visual movement.



- G. Wonderful warm red color loosely placed here. Simple shadow, light to dark. Very subtle touches of sweater and neck within that shadow area. Not overdone.
- H. Extremely important to get the edge of Fran's cheek absolutely right; with cheekbone and precise curvatures. Yes, "precise" can work with art. I'll add the same for that shadow under the nose. The lips are shaped with their perspective turning away. Plus the line between upper and lower lip is hardly seen. Each time lips are painted, such decisions are made accordingly.

Eyes

Much care must be made within the eyes. Fussing is necessary right from the start of a portrait. In this case, I had limited time to do everything. Certain complex features demanded concentration. I like their detail contrasting with looseness of hair and sweater.

Overall

I like that his portrait shows Fran in a very relaxed almost contemplative mood. Like in a film where she is remembering a precious moment from the past. Or thinking about her next painting.

the day seems to be only a few hours long: "What, it's midnight already?!"

Here's One of the Basics

My outer, conscious mind sees, my inner mind paints. For instance, when I'm portraying a person, I need my basic technique and observations to carry me consciously. What keeps moving me and bringing life to my work is my subconscious stepping in and playing a very big part in what I'm doing. We artists work hard on the basics and over time our deep passions begin to flow. Bravo passions!

Bottom Line: Ourselves

In the middle of creating an artwork, we shouldn't care what others might think of it. That feeling can hinder the flow coming from the inner mind. We're influenced by other artists, both present day and past masters. That happens as we develop, like growing into adulthood. In time with hard work, we evolve and eventually reveal our own true selves. This is without doubt; I've seen it happen many times... including me. So no fretting, just keep creating art.

An NB on Art

With our artwork we remember: In time, we'll know when to "quit" a piece, whether or not it's "finished."

Thank You, Dear Reader

I realize our conversations are quite one-sided but still I'd miss them. Where else can I rant on without being interrupted? You are tops at listening.

Before we retire for the day, we straighten our studio. Next day, we thank ourselves.

Being an Artist

Throughout my life in art, most of my close friends have been artists. There's never been a moment of jealousy or envy. Our art is quite different from one another, and always we've been genuinely excited for each of our successes and joys. I can't imagine being without these friends; we talked art and life, the good times, the sadness, the glories. Such individual and shared journeys, year after year. Many of those dear friends have gone but they totally live in my mind. Being an artist is eternal.

To Draw or Not to Draw... That is the Answer

Drawing to me is like I'm on a solid life raft going down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Exciting as could be and knowing it'll be secure all the way. Day by day.... year after year.

Whatever the level of the drawings, what's important is the doing of them. I speak here from over 70 years of experience. If any of you have an uncle (or anybody) who's never drawn before, get him a 6B pencil and a pad of drawing paper. Tell him you'll bring him a big container of his favorite ice cream once a week if he puts in a drawing a day. (Five-minute drawing or three-hour drawing.) Then watch what happens. You, in turn, will be inspired with what you experience.

And again, THE HARLEY OATH, as seen on page 126 of *Eternal Truths for Every Artist*:

"I—do hereby declare that, from this day forward, I will do a drawing FROM LIFE, taking a half hour (at least,) every day, for the rest of my life. So help me Harley."

A number of my artist friends would sometimes paint outside with the sunlight landing on their canvas. Others painted with their canvas turned away from the sun, meaning the blue sky would light their canvas... a bit cooler than sunlight.

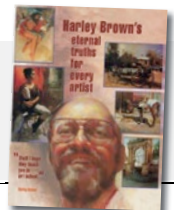
It's often a tradition with artists to have their studio windows on the north side. No sun coming through. Light from the bright blue sky steadily entering the window all day. Again, that light is somewhat cool. When these artists work into the evening, they have special lighting, exactly the same as the North light. Keeping a steady hue of light on their art.

Seriously study and consider the Munsell Color Theory. We delve deeper into this theory in chapter nine, and it is important. The best part is that it is a color theory which makes practical, intuitive and aesthetic sense. Many major artists have used it starting a century ago.

I've found that the person who knows how to get the right model pose is the model herself. The way she sits, reclines or stands will be original because it happens naturally, not controlled. The way her hands, legs and arms appear are inspiring from the start. This works almost always.

I generally use this approach with all who model for me. And if there is something I want extra, like the subject holding a pot or touching a necklace, I watch as the model moves around and then I say, "oh, please hold that pose." Understanding those values helps immensely in working with colors. Including when wanting to push colors. Once in a while, I'll go wild with colors, and it works if the values are laid in solid.

Harley Brown's Eternal Truths for Every Artist is available through his personal store at www.harleybrown.ca. This book is Harley's personal legacy for the art world, and he appreciates immensely the support he has received throughout his career. Those interested can visit his website and subscribe for updates.



BALINOESKI

Meet Tasha. I portrayed her from an old photograph but mostly my memory. Tasha took care of my parents' house and the family. This was in Russia, I was in my late teens and going to art college. Seeing Tasha here hits me deeply; she was my first love. And those of you who have followed my history know I've had my loves. I didn't think she knew my feelings towards her until her final day with us. She said goodbye to the family and then came over to me and said, "I know how you feel towards me. Never forget this: I will miss you more than you'll know."

While doing this portrait as often happens, my hand moved within this work guided by spirit and memory. I never question what is happening. Why this color, why that shape. Most important was bringing her to life. Her face done with delicacy contrasting with my strokes of ecstasy. Back and forth, both approaches flowing naturally. You can see my hand working with sketch marks and unfinished spots. I stopped suddenly and didn't dare put on another stroke. That was because she was there. Alive and back with me.

I've planned on having this



TASHA, pastel, 16 x 14" (40 x 35 cm)

portrait in a place it will be seen for at least the next two centuries. Tasha, my memory remains.

Depending on how it is approached, everything on planet Earth can be made into a marvelous painting or drawing. There are no limits with regards to subjects. Take, for example, John Singer Sargent's great painting of fence posts, *Home Fields*.

A quick, preliminary sketch of a subject can give the artist some foresight into what to prepare for, solving problems ahead of time. Like having a "simple date" with the subject before getting really involved.

Yes, you can put details within areas of your choosing, including centers of interest. But also, remember there are other parts of your work that want to be left relatively alone; nice contrasts to the busier areas.

Harping

As seen in chapter 10, whatever we are painting, we have to get it right from the start, beginning with those first few lines and shapes. Like going on a journey and making sure we're on the right pathway. When we are too casual as we begin our work on paper or canvas, we can get lost and pay dearly.

I can't press this maxim enough. Take time with personal accuracy.


In a Nutshell

At the start, my art career was rocky beyond belief. After art college, I had nowhere to go with my artwork. No galleries, no buyers. I tried selling through second hand stores, fairgrounds, saloons. Finally, I got a peddler's license and went from house to house and things began to happen. Knocking on doors, people could see my art. I started doing portrait sketches in their living rooms for 3 to 5 dollars. Customers appreciated my skills and after a few months, I was doing oil and pastel portraits.

The reason I'm saying this is because I never wavered in my career as an artist. No plan B. I began to call myself a "professional artist." I got some ridicule but ignored it and aimed straight forward. Finally, under unbelievable circumstances a janitor allowed me to display and sell my art in his office. A few years later, a framer began selling my works. Finally, a well-established art

dealer spotted my art. He offered me a fair deal, and we worked together successfully for many years.

Other dealers throughout the West connected with me, and my future was set. The following decades were inspiring all the way. How unusual was that time? A well-known film company heard about me and wanted to know more of my history. Once they got the details from me and my "*Confessions...*" book, they said, "Mr. Brown, you have lived a most interesting life, but it's much too bizarre to film; no one would believe it." They were right about that. My bottom line: no matter what, make it happen!

One of the many things I found about art—it is a never-ending joyous journey. Right from the start at the age of 7, I've been devoted to art right to this moment as I write these words. Each day I find new artistic challenges, including subjects I've spent a lifetime painting and drawing. They keep my brain cells in constant motion; it's a natural part of me. Like a mountain climber looking up at a challenging peak. "Okay, here we go!" 

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Susan Lyon, *Profile of a Poet*, 14x18", oil

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Saint Sulpice Interior by Kyle Ma, kylemafineart.com
24 x 20" oil on C13DP Claessens Linnen Raymar Panel

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