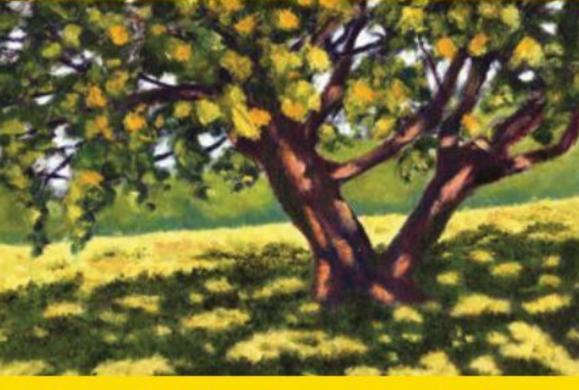
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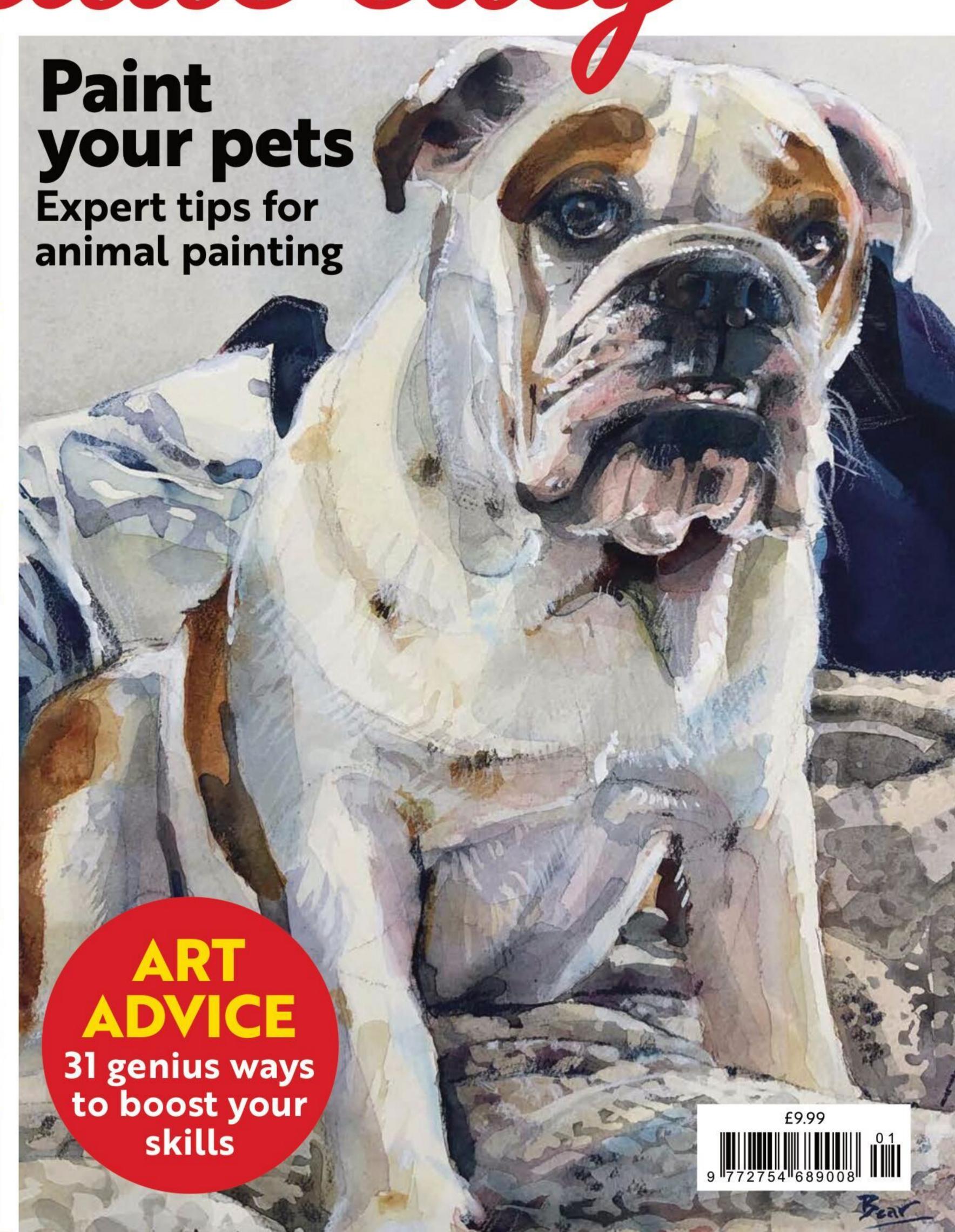
HOW TO MASTER LIGHT AND SHADE



LEARN TO PAINT REFLECTIONS



CREATE AMBIENT
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Welcome to your brand new art annual!



Give yourself a pat on the back. In your hands is a comprehensive painting guide that is guaranteed to give your art journey a helping hand. Think of it like a friendly art mentor. It's packed full of tips and tools to better your artistic practise.

From the publisher of Artists & Illustrators, Britain's favourite art magazine, Painting Made Easy is full of

creative light bulb moments. Covering a wide range of subjects including portraits, life drawing, landscapes, still life, wildlife and flowers, it will help you develop the subjects you love whilst also inspiring you to try something new.

Inside, you'll find a Basic Skills section, covering topics such as blending and tonal studies as well as tricks for painting *en plein air*. From there, we lead into an Inspiration segment which includes 31 bite-size tips on how to boost your creativity.

Next up, there's Step by Steps, Sketching and How To features covering a wide range of themes including tips on how to paint your pets and ways to make your sketchbooks sing. Then popular artist and art tutor Jake Spicer has compiled a Figure Drawing workshop series, featuring his trademark clear and precise instructions on how to paint the different elements of the body.

Throughout are one off features offering clever painting advice and tips such as what to consider before booking an online art course. All in all, I hope you enjoy the encouragement and that it inspires you to get to work with your pens, pencils and brushes.

j. 5.

Niki Browes Editor

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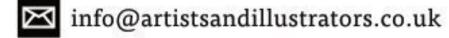
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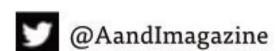
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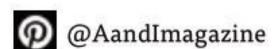
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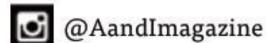
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PAINTING MADE EASY

Contents

BASIC SKILLS

6 BLEND AND CONNECT

Grahame Booth shows how to join elements together in a watercolour painting

10 TONAL STUDIES

Five principles to help you create successful highlights and shadows in your art

14 SIMPLE STREETS

Painting complex city scenes is made easier with the help of acrylic pro Hashim Akib

18 PARK PAINTING

Denis John-Naylor eases you into painting outdoors over the summer months

INSPIRATION

22 EVERYDAY ART ADVICE

Martin Kinnear's 31 bite-size tips to boost your skills and put you on the right track

35 SIMPLIFY YOUR PAINTING

Five ways to reignite your creativity and start habits that will last a lifetime

47 10 MINUTES WITH... SORAYA FRENCH

The Society of Women Artists' president on bold colour choices and gender imbalances

ADVICE

41 HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR NEXT SUPPORT

The five questions you should ask yourself when shopping for your next canvas

63 MIXED MEDIA FOR NEW TEXTURES

How different mediums can add extra interest to your watercolour paintings

106 HOW TO CHOOSE AN ONLINE ART COURSE

When it comes to picking an art course, Aine Divine has some expert advice

STEP BY STEPS

30 PHOTO PORTRAITS

Add some personality to your pet portraits with this easy-to-follow watercolour guide

36 FRESH FLOWERS

Anne-Marie Butlin shows how to capture the optimism of freshly cut blooms

42 EXPRESSIVE FIGURES

Discover how to create a more painterly finish when working from a sketch

SKETCHING

48 TELLING STORIES

How adding texts and setting themes can make your urban sketches flourish

102 CREATIVE SKETCHBOOKS

Kate Osborne opens up her sketchbook to show you some inventive ways to develop your ideas while working in private

HOW TO...

52 TRY EGG TEMPERA

Give this traditional painting medium a go with the help of these five recipes

56 PAINT REFLECTIONS

Capturing shiny surfaces won't seem so daunting with these exercises

60 TRY A NEW PALETTE

Mix up your colour combinations with Lizet Dingeman's expert suggestions

HOW I PAINT

64 JEANIE KINSLER

The figurative oil painter offers her top tips on composition, texture and colour

70 PETER QUINN

Advice on painting complex scenes from the Royal Watercolour Society member

76 MARK ADLINGTON

The wildlife artist shares his advice on how to capture the fiery spirit of wild animals

FIGURE DRAWING

82 BONE STRUCTURE

Jake Spicer begins his series on the building blocks of life drawing with a look at why understanding the human skeleton is key

86 MUSCLE AND TENSIONS

In part two, the spotlight is on how to capture tension through musculature

90 WEIGHT AND FORM

Part three shows how the distribution of fat creates individual forms and how to capture them in your life drawing class

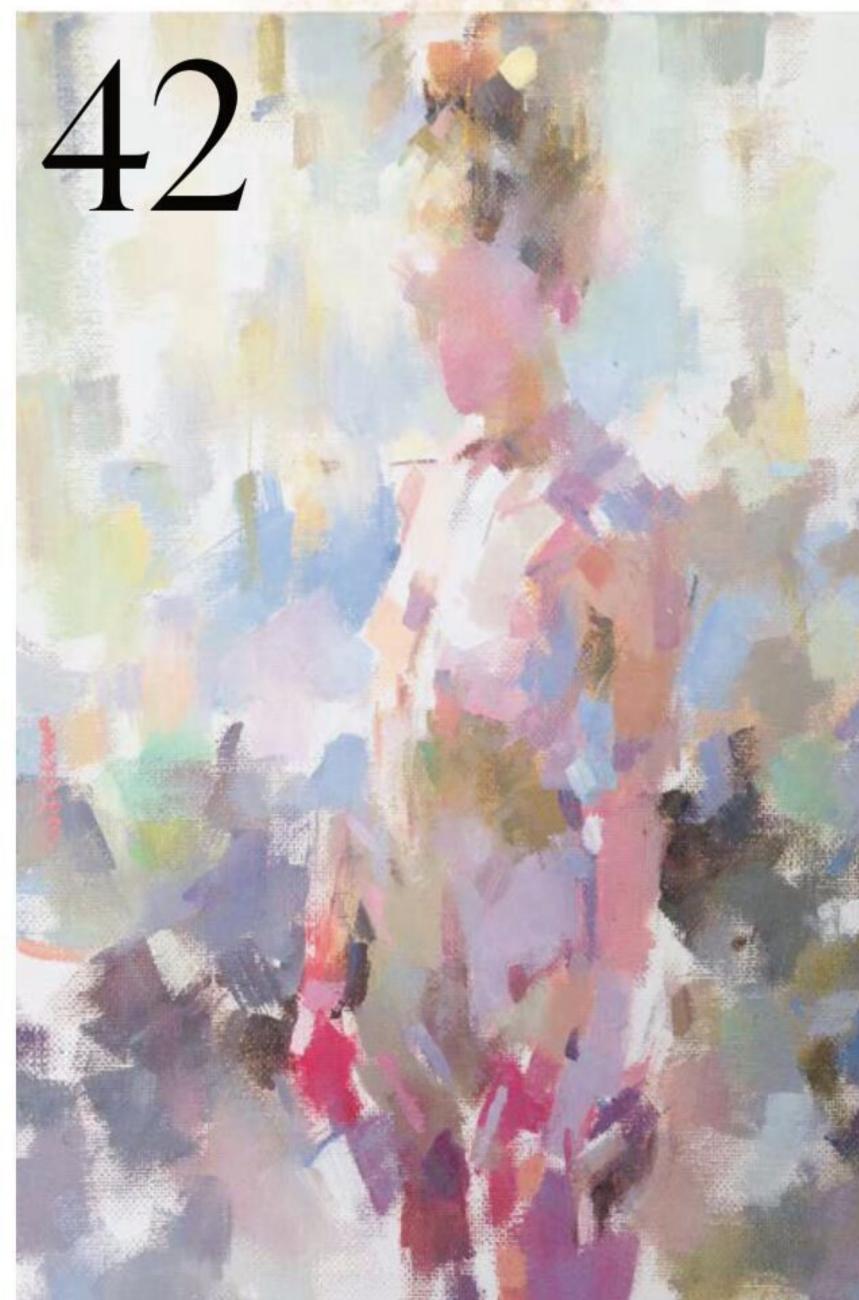
94 SURFACE

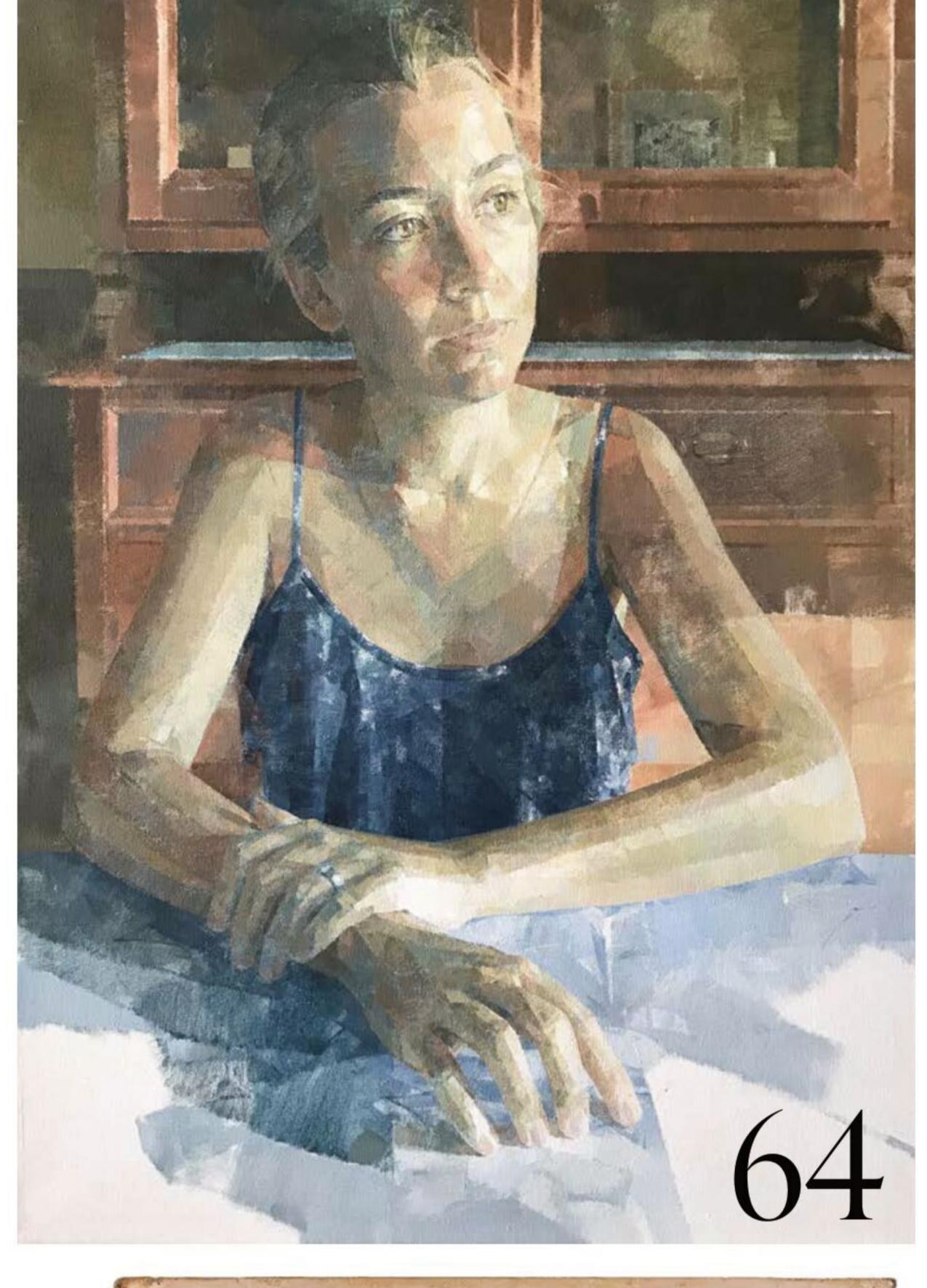
Next up our attention turns to capturing skin, hair and other surface textures

98 THE BODY

In Jake Spicer's final article in his life drawing series, he pulls together all the lessons we have learnt so far

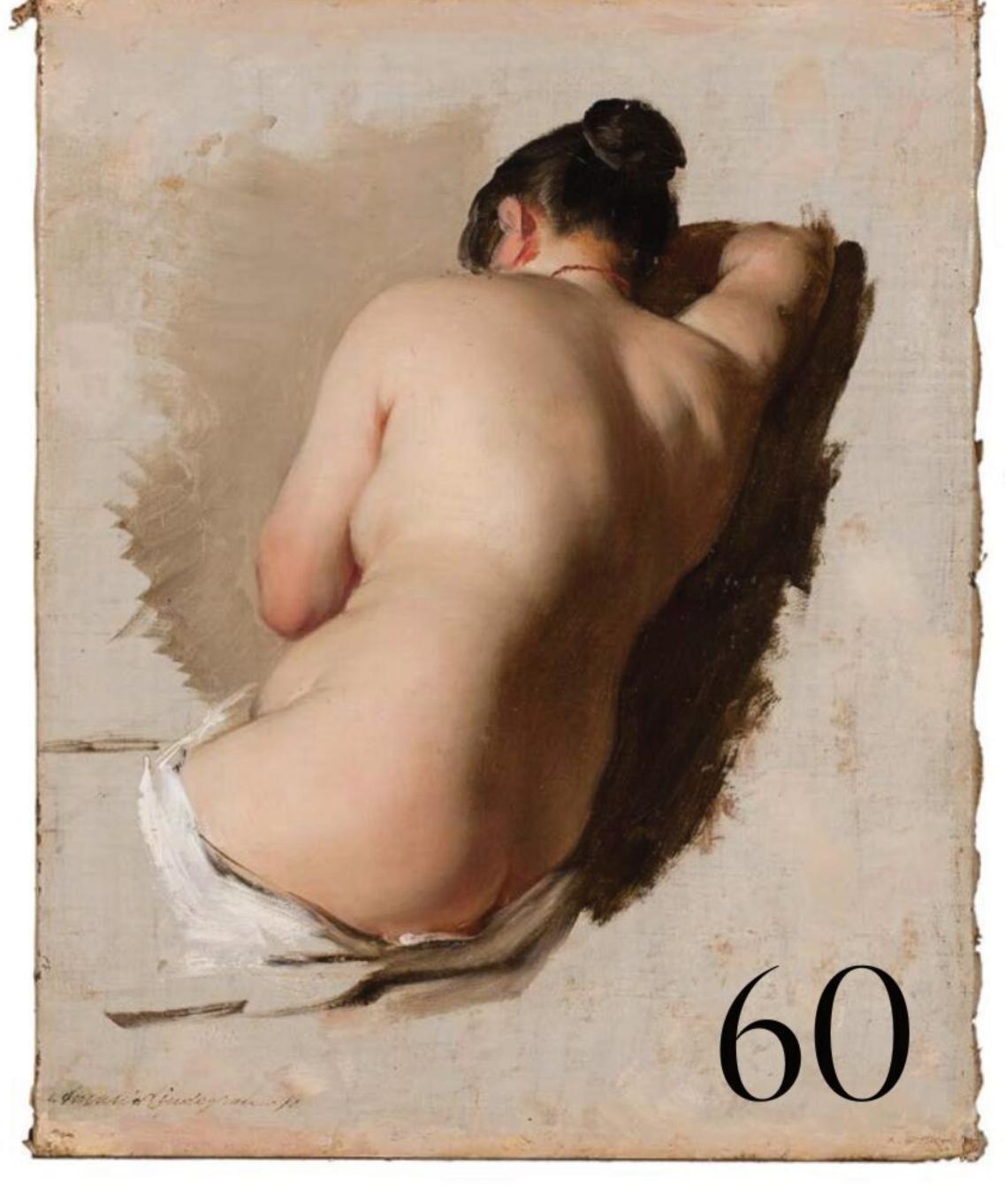


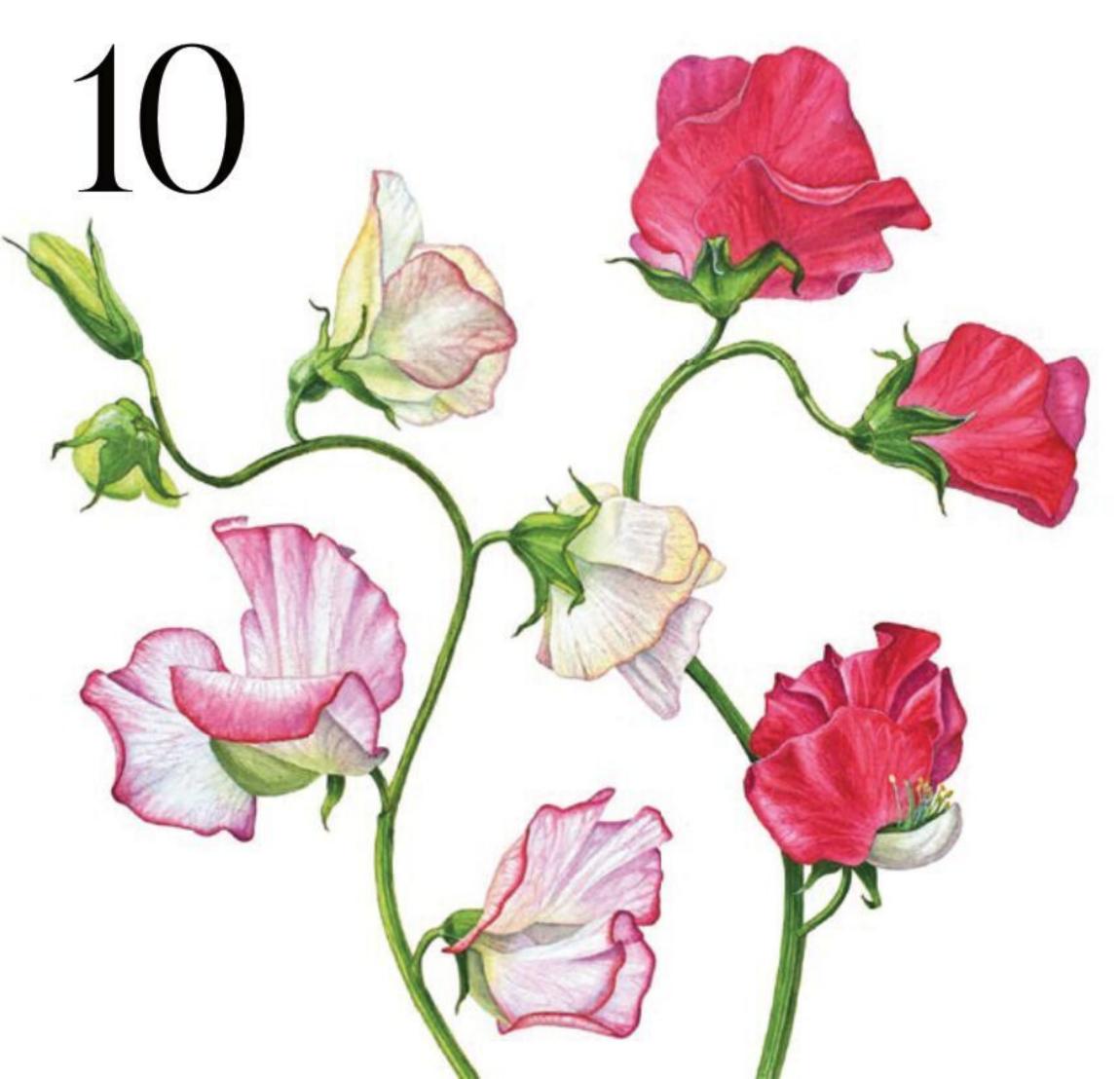












Blend and Connect

Knowing how and when to join together elements in a watercolour painting can be a very useful skill for creating a more painterly finish as **GRAHAME BOOTH** explains



We tend to think in terms of objects. If we see a coffee cup sitting in a saucer resting on a table, we think of this as three individual objects. When we paint, however, we must think in a slightly different way.

Instead we should look for shapes, specifically ones that connect together. Using the previous example, we should be trying to see a cup connected to a saucer connected to the table – one single, rather abstract shape. As artists, we should paint it as a single shape, using soft, blended colour between the three.

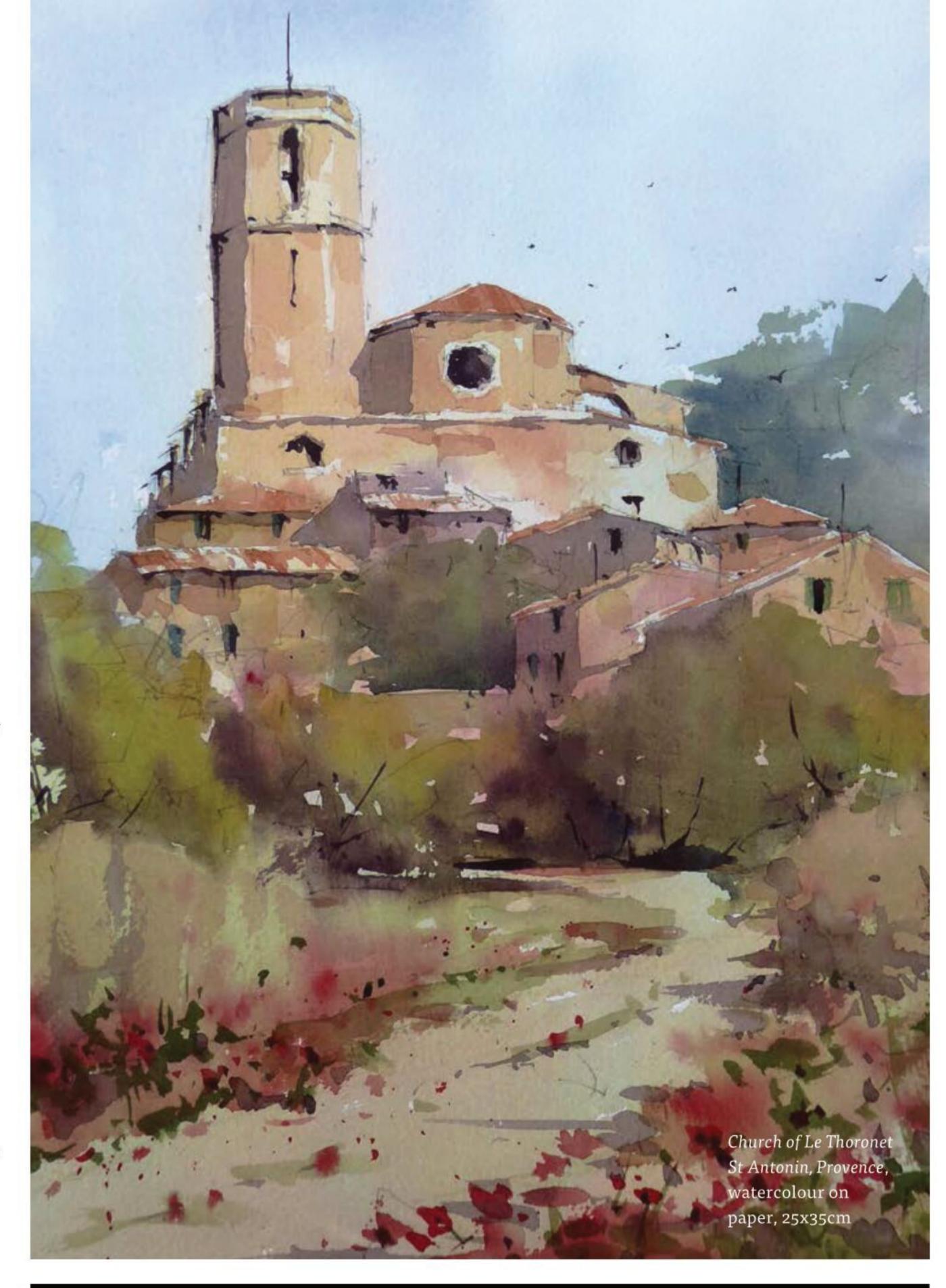
As a rule of thumb, if two objects physically touch you should be thinking of creating a soft blend between the two and if they don't physically touch then a hard edge would be indicated. Using this advice will help you to fill your paintings with a small number of interesting interlocking shapes rather than with many separate, less interesting shapes and paradoxically this helps to both simplify your subject and at the same time make it more interesting.

So how can we achieve this? At a most basic level, when you encounter a physical connection simply continue painting. Allow the building to blend into the road or the tree to blend with the earth. These connections give stability and solidity.

A building painted with a hard edge at the bottom will look temporary, a little like a toy that could be removed at any time.

As with all things in art there are exceptions. Often a soft edge between two connected shapes may literally blur things too much, making it difficult to work out the structure of either. In this situation, indicating a little of the edge is required; just enough to specify the boundary without completely separating the two. Indeed, this can help make an edge even more interesting. A slight softening of a hard edge or a slight hardening of a soft edge also gives variety without compromising the basic idea.

What if you are not sure if an edge should be soft or hard? In this case, it is very straightforward: if you are unsure, keep the edge soft. It is much easier to harden a soft edge than vice versa. Remember also that a hard edge suggests a structure whereas a soft edge does not. Soft edges give you options and possibilities, whereas hard edges are pretty much set in stone. In watercolour painting as in life, buying yourself some time to think is always a big help. ▶



Separate or together?

In the first image, the three simple tree shapes have been painted separately, leaving space between them with a half-hearted ground line below.

We read this clearly as three separate trees, albeit with a static, rather boring appearance. In the second example, I have allowed the tree shapes to combine with each other and the ground below as I painted them to produce a single, more dynamic shape.

Thinking of groups of objects together and painting them as such can help to avoid the temptation to paint them as single isolated shapes.



HOW TO... BLEND AN EDGE

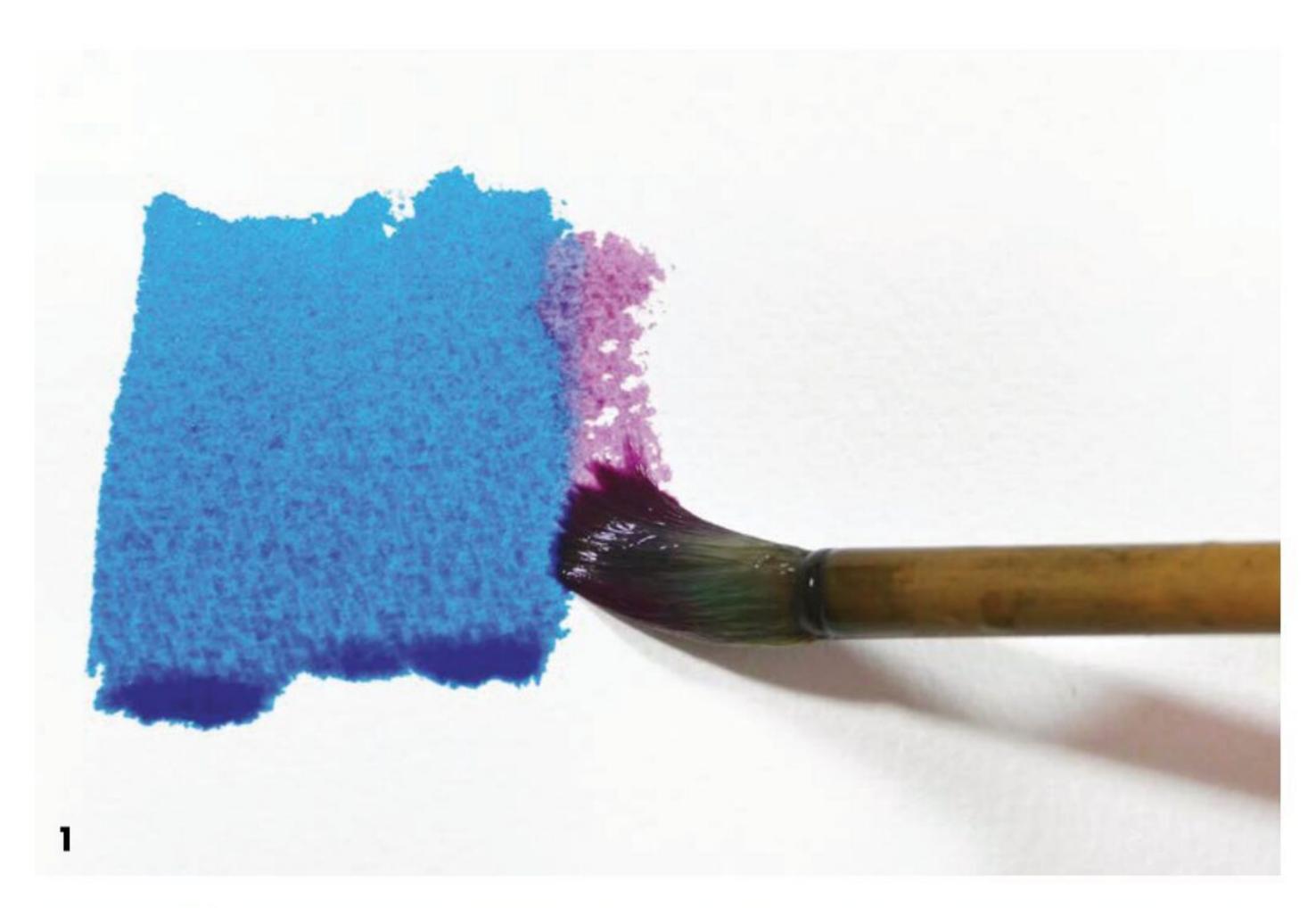
The blend is the simplest form of edge softening and entails painting one wash into the next while the first is still wet. As always in watercolour we can get tripped up by the simplest tasks so to ensure success try to make the strength of both washes fairly similar. When this is the case the two washes will blend but not intrude appreciably into each other. On the other hand, if there is a significant difference in strengths, the weaker wash will tend to flow into the stronger one, leading to an interesting effect at best - and an unfortunate cauliflower at worst.

Begin while the existing area of paint - in this case, the blue area - is still wet. Work over the edge you want to blend with a brush loaded with a second colour.

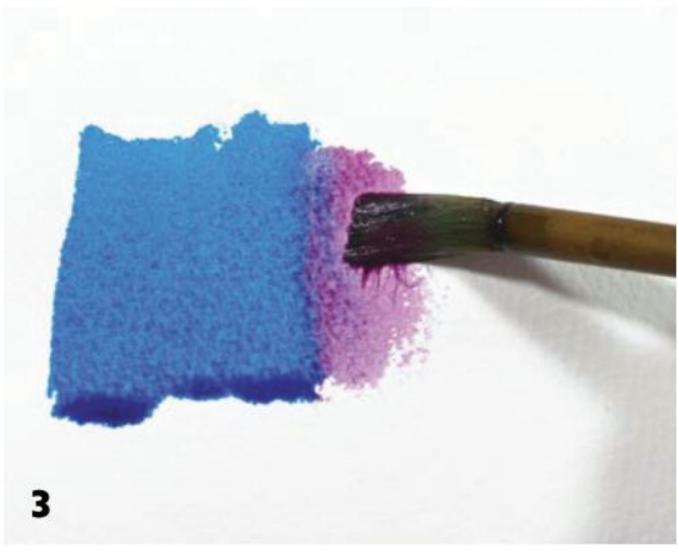
Work the brush along the edge of the existing colour with your new colour.

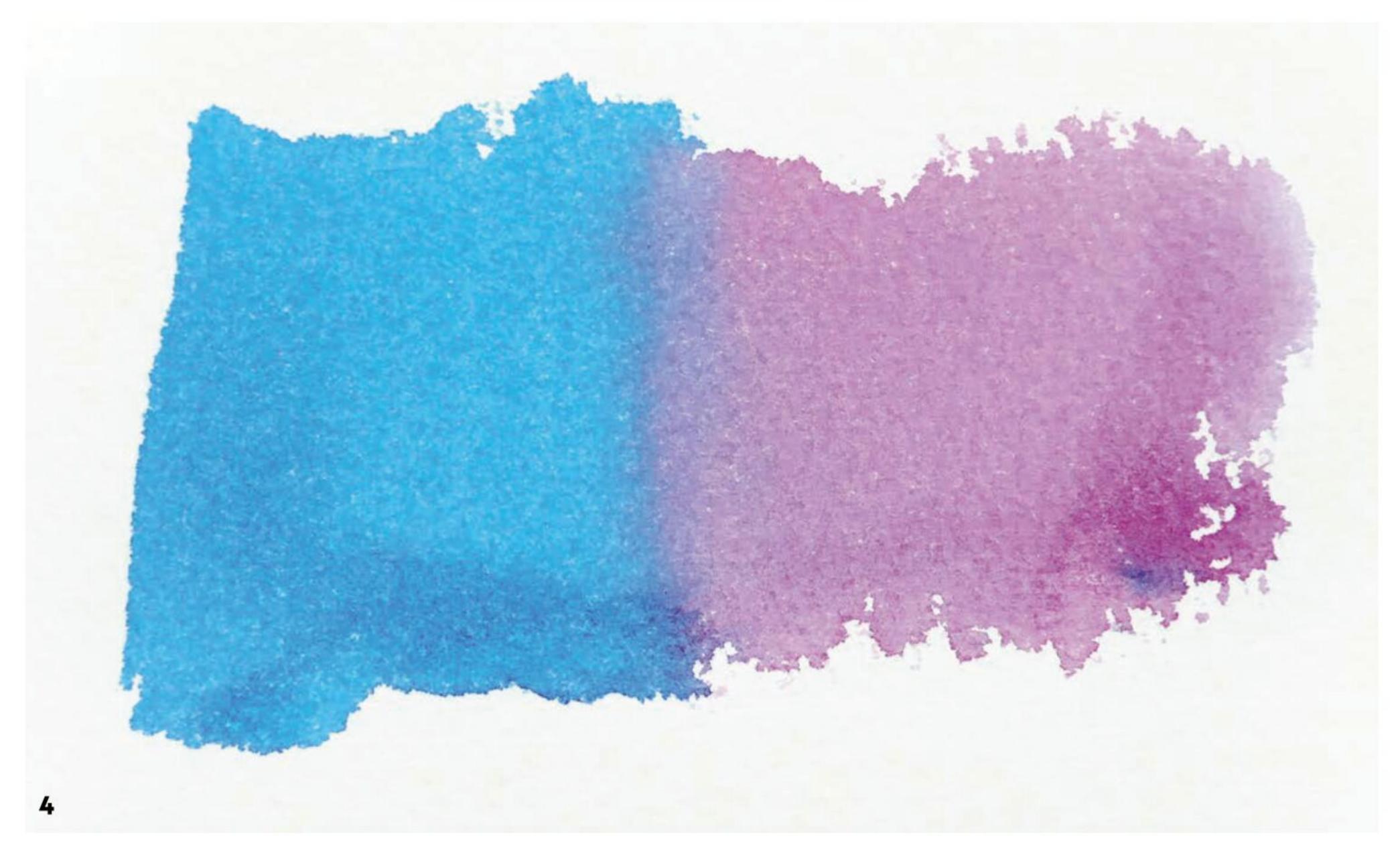
Keep working the brush outwards, trying to keep the colours even.

Once the blended section is complete, you can continue to paint the rest of the second colour.













HOW TO... SOFTEN AN EDGE

There are many times when you need to soften a wet edge of a wash without blending it into another wet wash. This technique is similar to the blend, but using water instead of the second wash. This is slightly more difficult because of the tendency of the water to rush into the first wash but with a little practise this can be controlled.

Rinse your brush and shake or blot it to remove any excess water.

The brush should be wet but not dripping – we need enough water to blend with the edge but not so much that everything gets out of control. Place the brush on the paper a little distance from the wet edge.

Keeping the brush on the paper, move it to the edge and move it along to create a soft edge. If there seems to be too much water, press a little harder with your brush as this action will suck some of the water back into the brush. Pressing too hard will produce too dry an edge with insufficient softening.

Still keeping the brush on the paper, move it away from the edge and only then lift it. When you lift a wet brush a droplet of water or paint will be left behind and if this is left on the edge it will likely cause a runback. This also explains why dabbing with a brush directly on the edge won't work – the drops of water created each time the brush is lifted will cause multiple runbacks.

Finally, rinse the brush, give it a good shake and squeeze out any drips. With strong washes you may need to repeat the process a couple of times as your softening brush will quickly take on the colour of the wash and prevent the fade to nothing.

wash and prevent the fa







CONSISTENT LIGHT

Natural light changes fast, which might result in a loss of consistency when you are painting over an extended period of time. This is where the tone study comes in. It allows us to observe and put down the tones quickly, without worrying about aesthetics or neatness of stroke. Whether working in natural or artificial light, a tone study gives you a consistent reference in terms of both timescale and accuracy of tonal placement throughout the subsequent painting.

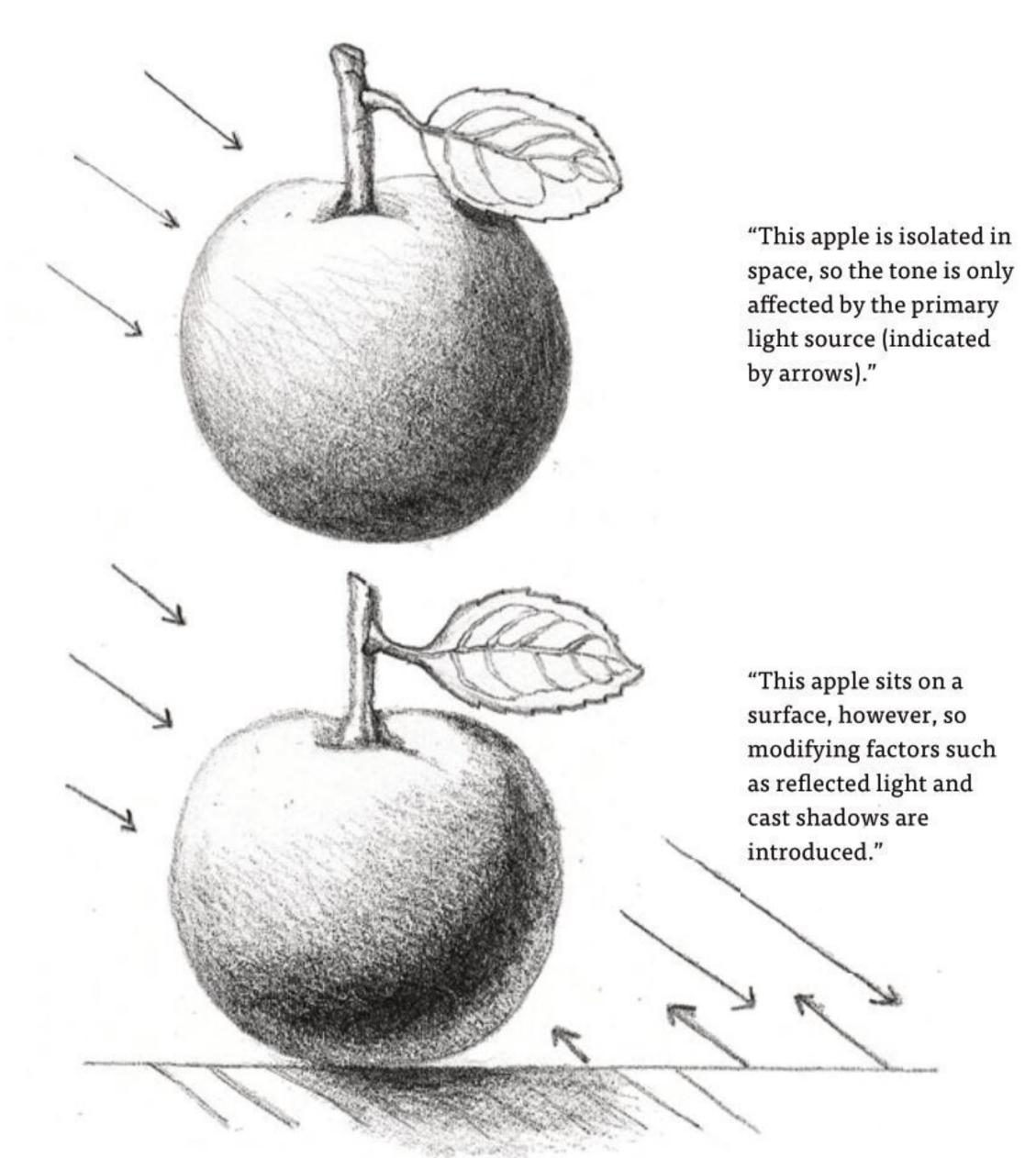
The primary light source is the beacon that guides the artist through the meanderings of light and dark. When working outdoors in daylight, that primary light source is the sun. Depending on the weather, it can be pronounced or hidden. But even when clouds obscure the sky, there is always a dominant light direction. When working indoors, the primary light source can come from anywhere and multiple sources can be used to create a less natural environment. It doesn't matter how you set it up, as long as it stays consistent.

While the primary light source dictates the main tonal zones, other factors modify these and influence the tone study. The first of these is reflected light. No subject is truly isolated in space. Light bounces off objects and structures, which create areas of reflected light on the main subject. As some of the light is absorbed and only some of it bounces back, reflected light is never as light as the main highlight.

MODIFYING FACTORS

Cast shadows are another modifying factor. If something is on top or in front of a subject, it casts a shadow that darkens the tonal zones created by the primary light source.

The local colour of any subject also affects the tonal scale. The shadows on a pale primrose are lighter than the shadows on a velvety dark rose, for example. The texture of the subject is another influence. The highlight on a glossy white porcelain jug is lighter than a highlight on a red brick wall. These modifying factors are just some examples and no doubt you will meet others as you explore different subjects.



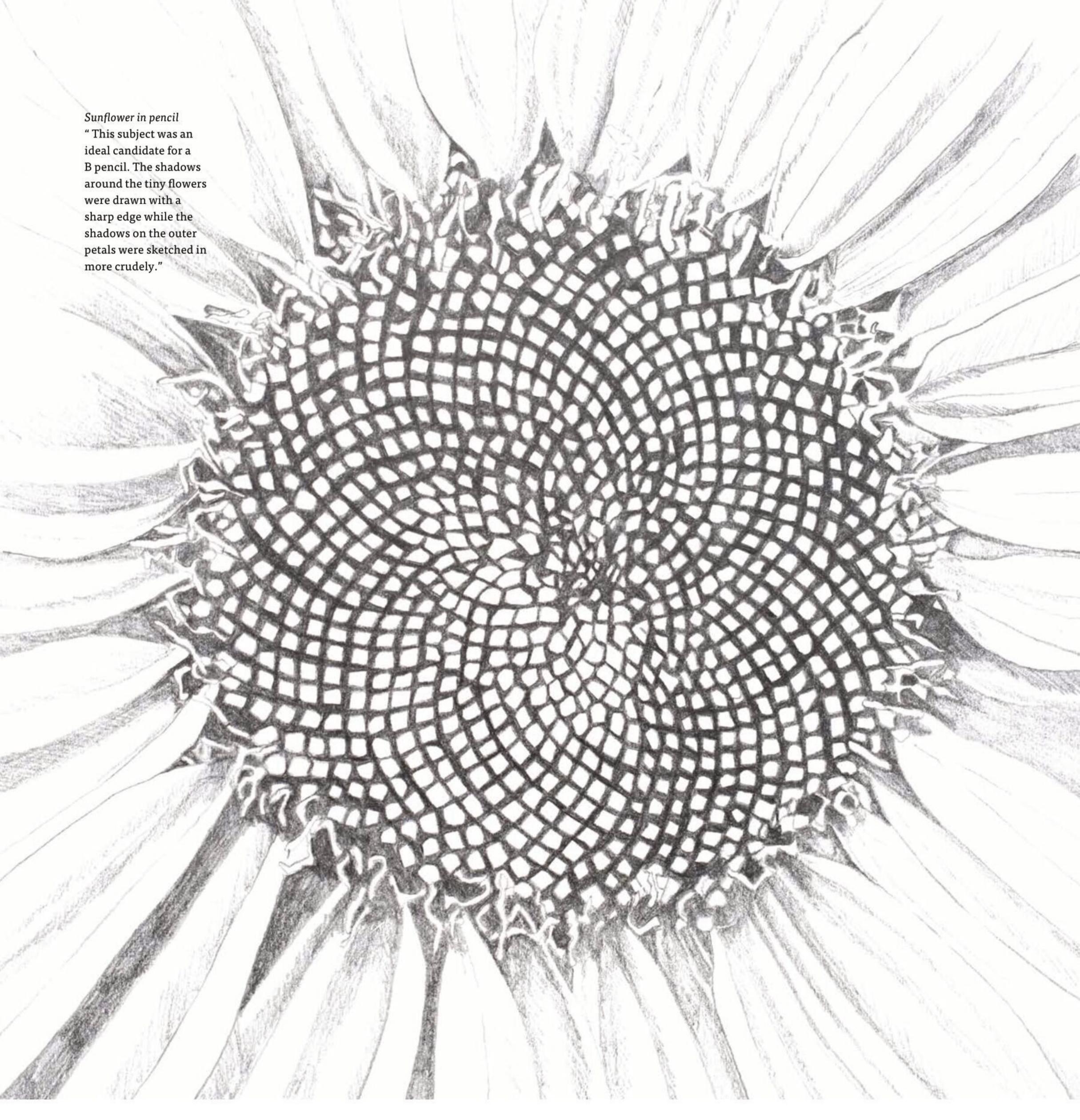
ESTABLISH A SCALE

Highlights **Mid-tones** Shadows Standard scale Subject in full light? Brighter highlights, high contrast Subject in dim light or shade? Darker highlights, low contrast Light local colour? Brighter highlights, low contrast Dark local colour? Darker highlights, standard contrast Glossy dark subject? Brighter highlights, very high contrast Velvety/textured dark subject? Darker highlights, high contrast

ESTABLISH A SCALE One important principle for a good tone study is to alternate areas of light and dark. Before starting your study, creating a simple tonal scale [left] is an efficient way to get a handle on the primary light source and the effects of the modifying factors. If the composition contains many different subjects, it is possible to create a quick tonal scale for each of the main ones. These tonal scales do not need to be sophisticated.

A tone study is not a finished piece of work but a tool to help build one. Identifying three tonal zones for each part of the subject is enough: highlights, mid-tones and shadows. All tones in between will develop naturally when painting the final work.

WORK FAST Do not spend too much time on the tone study. The whole point of the exercise is to take a s napshot of the light before it changes. Think of it simply as a quick map of light and dark areas. The medium used has to be fast as well as appropriate for the situation and the subject. ▶



CHOOSE APPROPRIATE MEDIA Once your drawing is ready for the tonal work, make

sure you select your medium carefully. Different media are more appropriate than others, depending on the subject and the working conditions. There are three in particular that I like to use for my tonal studies and not all of them work equally well in all situations.

Below I have laid out the pros and cons of those media in relation to various subjects. In each case, these drawn examples helped with creating great tonal maps to follow when the time came to work on the final paintings.

A. PENCIL

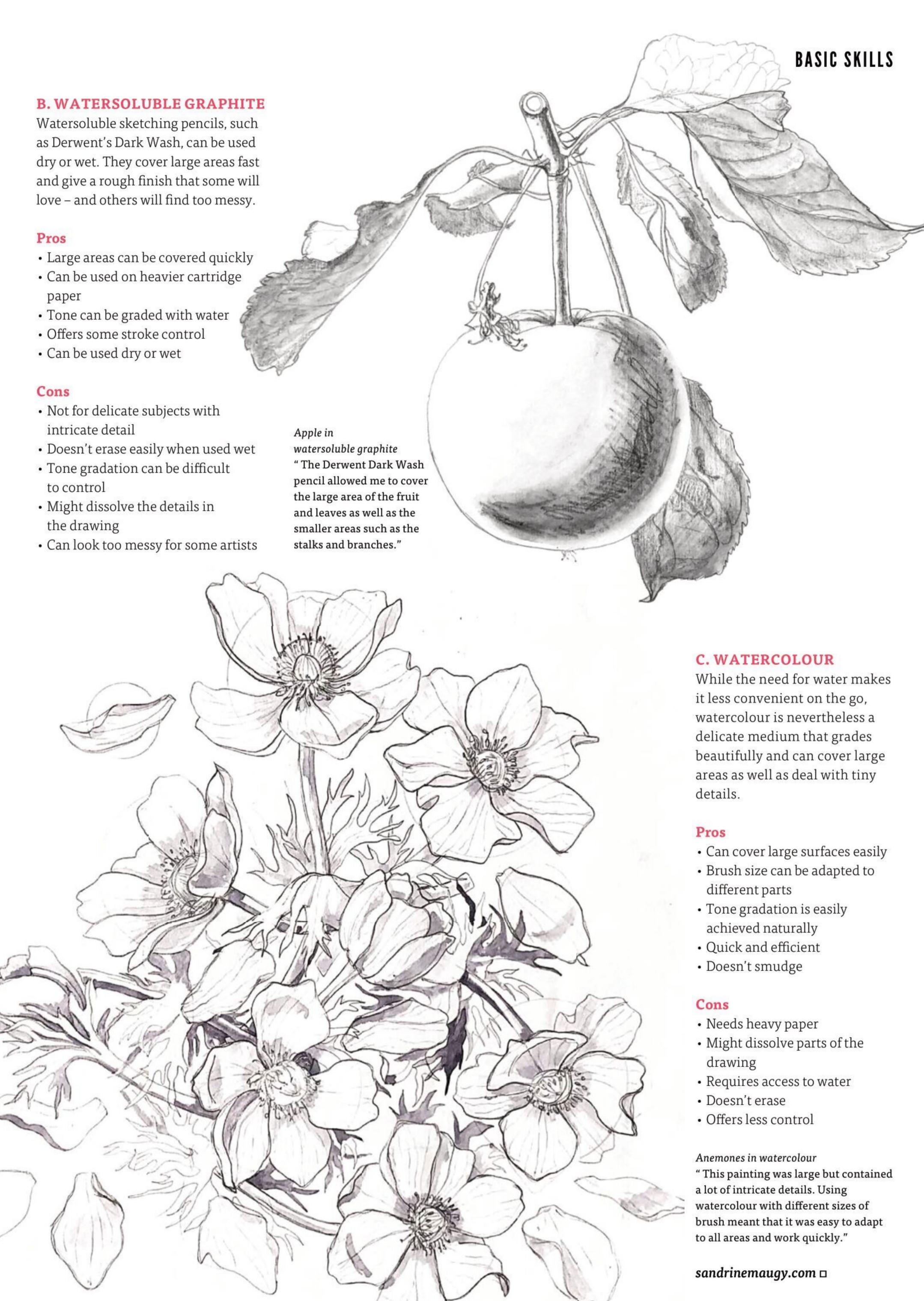
From the precise HH to the chunky 6B clutch, pencil is a convenient medium for tonal studies.

Pros

- Portable and ideal in the field
- Good range of tones
- Allows for greater detail and accuracy
- Erases easily
- Gives complete stroke control
- Can be used on any paper

Cons

- Time consuming on more than a small sketch
- Doesn't grade naturally from one tone to another
- Can smudge



Simple Streets

HASHIM AKIB

shows you how simple colour choices can provide a clearer focal point and why your brushes have a big bearing on the outcome











HASHIM'S MATERIALS

Paints

Amsterdam Standard acrylics: Azo
Yellow Lemon, Azo Yellow
Medium, Pyrrole Red, Primary
Magenta, Ultramarine Violet,
Permanent Blue Violet, Brilliant
Blue, Cobalt Blue (Ultramarine),
Phthalo Blue, Greenish Blue,
Prussian Blue (Phthalo), Phthalo
Green, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna
and Titanium White

Brushes

Daler-Rowney Skyflow large flat brushes, sizes 1/2", 1", 1.5" and 2"

Support

Stretched cotton canvas, 60x75cm

Kitchen roll

White plastic tray

Water pot

APPLY A BASE COLOUR

Painting a street scene in acrylics can be tricky, as you contend with rapid drying times and trying to capture too much detail. If your pictures look flat or confused, try to remember that acrylic suffers if you excessively blend or layer it, and that overly diluting the paint can also flatten the colour. Confidently placed brushstrokes are the goal, made with neater, thicker combinations of pigment.

Try using larger flat head brushes instead of smaller round ones. It might take time to get used to working with them, but you will be rewarded with an ability to quickly block in areas initially, while still allowing elements to be defined at the latter stages.

I used them to apply a very thin base colour of Brilliant Blue, Burnt Sienna and Titanium White to my canvas and left to dry.

brush to establish the main forms. My aim

2 SKETCH THINGS OUT
I made a very simple sketch with a 0.5"

was to familiarise myself with the elements and make mental notes about tones, colours or moods I wanted to convey. I used fairly neat paint for this but I also lightly dampened the brushes to avoid paint drying on them and to provide some lubrication when applying paint to the canvas.

Using the 2" flat brush, I mixed a range of greys from blues, violets, Phthalo Green and Burnt Sienna, adding Titanium White to soften the tones. With these subsequent mixtures of dark greenish greys and mid- or soft blues, I described a few figures.

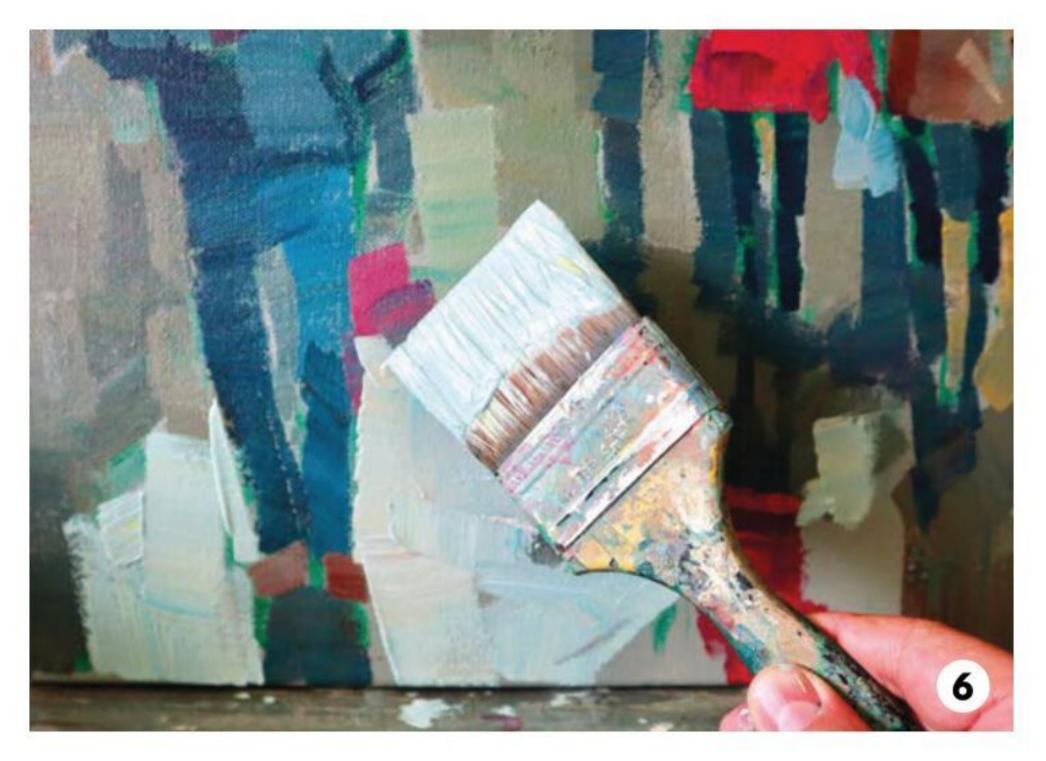
TELAX YOUR ARM

These early stages are painted with what I like to call the "floppy arm" technique: big brushes are loaded with plenty of paint and direct marks are applied in various directions while avoiding the arm firming up.

Not allowing yourself multiple layers of paint to correct things is a good way of encouraging yourself to focus on accurately judging the quantities of paint and the ▶

BASIC SKILLS









pressure applied in each stroke. I added more Titanium White, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna and Azo Yellow Medium to my greyish mixes for the pavement, making sure I left space to drop lighter and darker colours in later.

SET THE SCENE

Things can look drab once areas are filled with these earthy and bluish-grey pigments, but keep in mind the vibrant colours and highlights that are coming. When describing the buildings behind, I applied large blocks next to each other. The columns were more distinct, so I made more effort to pull them forward.

PICK OUT COLOURS

In keeping with the palette used so far, I introduced brighter mixes with small amounts of grey. In a change to the photo, I used a purple-red mix for a few figures' jackets, leaving the pulsating red for the central figure only.

I used the 0.5" and 1" brushes to shape the figures. There was almost no blending or feathering of the colours as my preference was to place a block next to or on top of

another block. Variation in tones and tints instead created the modelling effect.

BE CONFIDENT

I mixed plenty of Titanium White with small quantities of Brilliant Blue, Burnt Sienna and various yellows and applied this to the foreground light area with the 2" brush. The width of the brush can be tricky to navigate in small areas, but the marks are much more interesting. Try to be confident with these applications as more layering with acrylics will dull the strength of colour.

It's worth noting that even these lighter tints will dry darker, so compensate for the colour accordingly. These areas of light also provided interesting abstract shapes in the foreground.

DON'T OVERDO DETAIL

Although the reference photo contained other subtle tints in the pavement, I chose to leave these out to avoid too much clutter. The larger shapes helped to concentrate the eye on the smaller marks, as does the contrast of earthier colours against the brighter ones.

I used my smaller brushes for the intricate

parts of the figures and the details in the background. I was also careful not to paint right up to the edges of each element, which allowed some of the green outline and base colour to remain visible. This also prevented the final painting from looking too neat or too clinical.

BALANCE THINGS UP

Once all elements were in place, I added more definition to draw out particular features and underplay others. On the buildings I used a mix of Titanium White, Azo Yellow Lemon and Azo Yellow Medium and small amounts of Burnt Sienna, blues and violets. I then used a 1.5" flat to block in certain parts and drag the brush further to break up harder edges.

Additional lights (Titanium White with touches of Azo Yellow Lemon and various blues) were added to certain figures on the forehead, shoulders and creases in clothes to create more interest. I also spent some time popping the light in the pavement with tints and applying crisp directional lines to break up the verticals.

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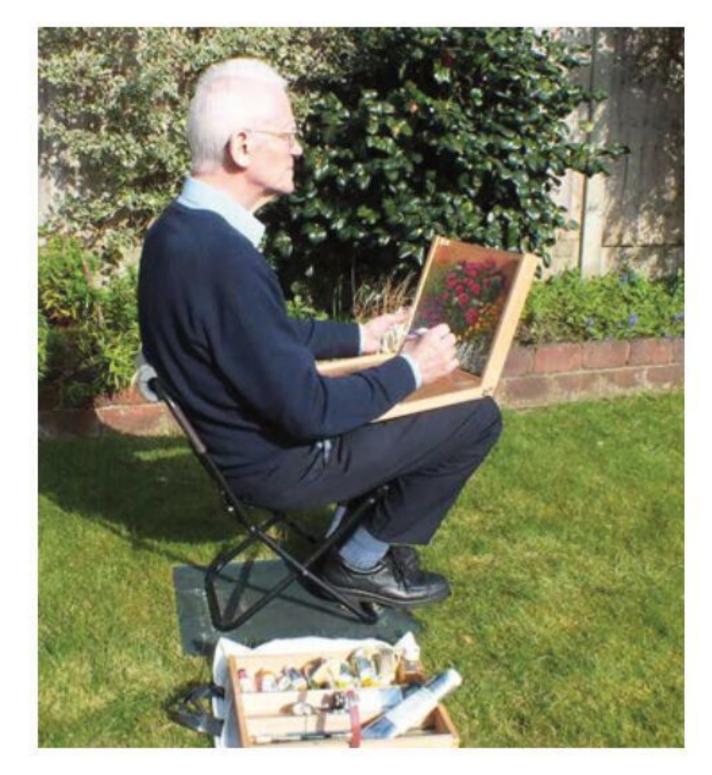


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DENIS JOHN-NAYLOR is known as "The Man that Paints the Park". Here he shows why a local green space is all you need to get to grips with painting outdoors this summer



as anywhere for the landscape painter. My local park has everything I need: sky, trees, water, fields of grass and other foliage.

The sky can change frequently, sunlight continually moves altering highlights and shadows, and seasonal changes significantly alter the scenery. Un-mown summer fields are a gift to the artist. I could paint a different park picture every day.

Painting outdoors – or en plein air – challenges our ability, creativity and perception of the world around us. We need to look for what we can actually see not what we think is there; interpreting what we see into a painted image in our own unique way. React to the light and try to forget about local colour (the colour which we know an object to be). Bright light can warm and brighten local colour, whereas shade will cool and darken it. Look carefully to judge where these changes have taken place.

Painting outdoors is a spontaneous and personal experience; every session presents different challenges. I never fail to find a subject because I will just paint anything. This gives me an experience I may never have had. Your goal should be to paint like you – not like me or anyone else. In meeting this challenge, you will then create original works of art through your own vision.

All plein air painting is a compromise.

From the time you select your subject to the moment you begin painting, the light will have changed the appearance of the scene.

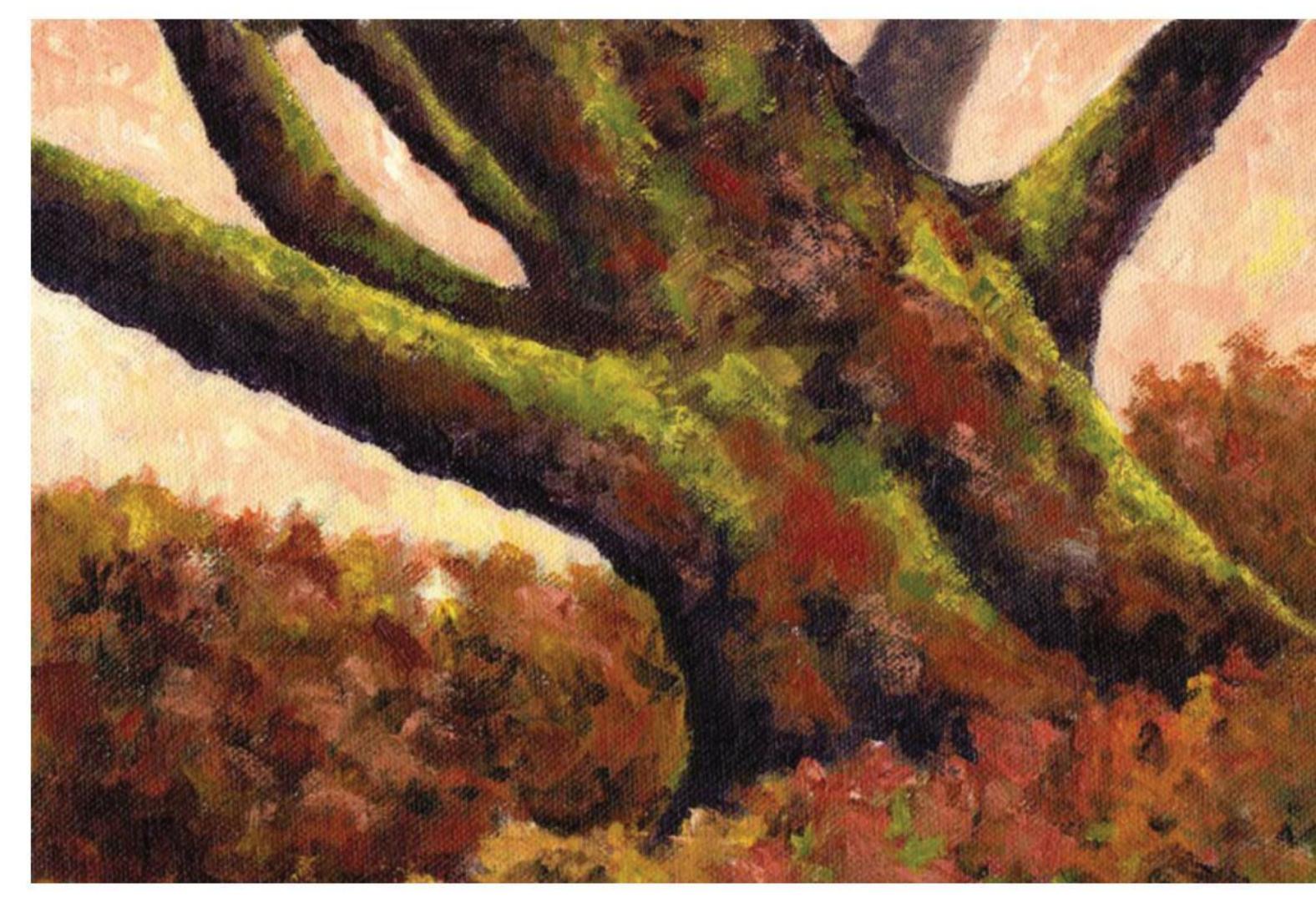
Try to think of it simply as making marks; marks in an arrangement that suggests the subject. I use all sides and edges of my brush to maximise my mark making abilities.

GETTING STARTED

Most of the pictures in this article were painted plein air with alkyd oils in my local park and took about two hours each.



Sunlight and Shadow, oil on panel, 20x25cm "Sunlight on grass can make it appear warmer and brighter. Cast shadows such as this one should be rendered approximately and rapidly."



Bole Study, oil on panel, 20x25cm "Park painting requires comparing contrasts in texture, colour and tone, then interpreting what you see into mark making. Loose, exaggerated strokes suggested light falling here."

To remain focused for the duration of your session you will need to be comfortable and organised. Parks being public places, you will need to deal with inquisitive people. Be polite and you might even find a new buyer for your work.

I paint seated using a pochade painting box. A pochade box is an easel and palette all in one; all other equipment can be by your feet in the box's detachable base. Everything you need should fit into a backpack, leaving one hand to carry your seat and one hand free.

Limiting your colours not only gives less to

carry, but also unifies your painting and simplifies mixing. One of each primary colour – red, yellow and blue – will create most basic mixes. I also use Olive Green as a base green, Burnt Sienna for mixing greys and dull oranges, plus a cool yellow (I prefer the Cadmium Yellow Lemon from Jackson's), to aid recession.

I like using alkyd oils for park painting as it speeds the drying time and helps avoid muddying the mixes when painting wet into wet. Smaller panels are a good way to start – maybe 20x25cm. If you make small paintings, don't use small brushes though. ▶

Larger brushes will encourage a more painterly approach and stop you fiddling with details. I like to use size 4 or 6 long flat brushes.

ASSESSING THE SCENE

Plein air painting is all about the light so observing and assessing a scene is important. Skies are normally lighter overall than the land. Light illuminates horizontal surfaces more than vertical surfaces. Note the tonal changes in the sky overhead compared to the sky at the horizon.

Clouds change the mood by continually crossing in front of the light, calling for compromise. Do not ask yourself what colour is the sky, ask how many colours are there? Where are the lightest lights? Half closing your eyes reduces detail and simplifies the pattern of lights and darks. Reducing contrasts and subduing colours as the picture plane recedes, gives depth to your painting. For effective contrasts, I prefer a painting position where the light is coming from the side, rather than facing or directly behind me. Shield your eyes and head with a hat.

Knowledge of linear perspective is not necessarily required, simply look, measure, compare and check alignments instead.

MIXING COLOUR

Your palette is where you can compare new mixes with past mixes. Sometimes the quickest route to a new mix is to modify an existing one. Avoid just using white to lighten a mix, look on your palette for another lighter colour that might work instead.

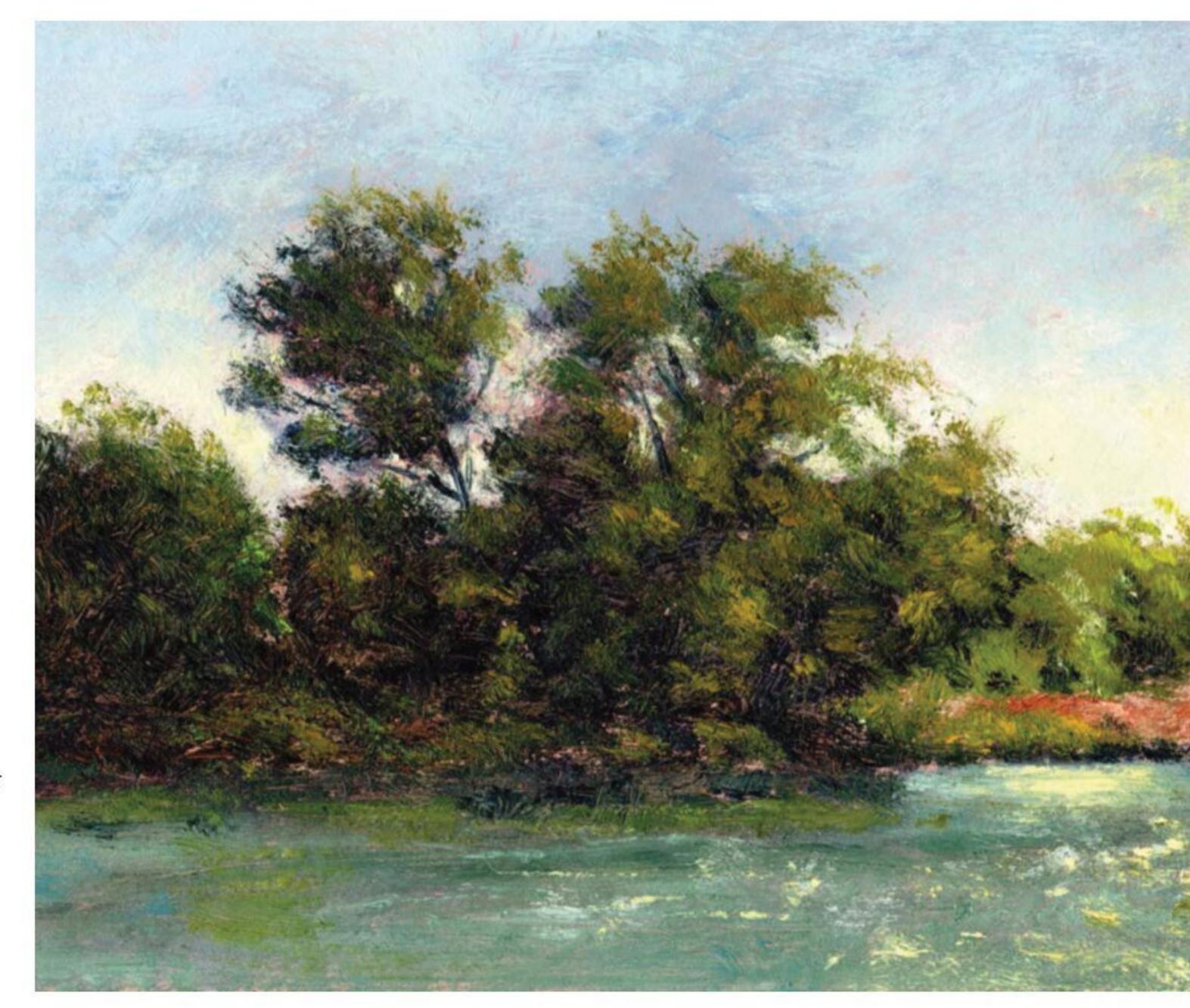
Remember warm colours mixed together will not tend to grey, neither will cool colours; only a warm and a cool colour mixed together will make true greys. Lay out two spots of white paint: one to mix with warm colours, one for cool colours. Keeping different brushes for warm and cool mixes will keep colours cleaner too.

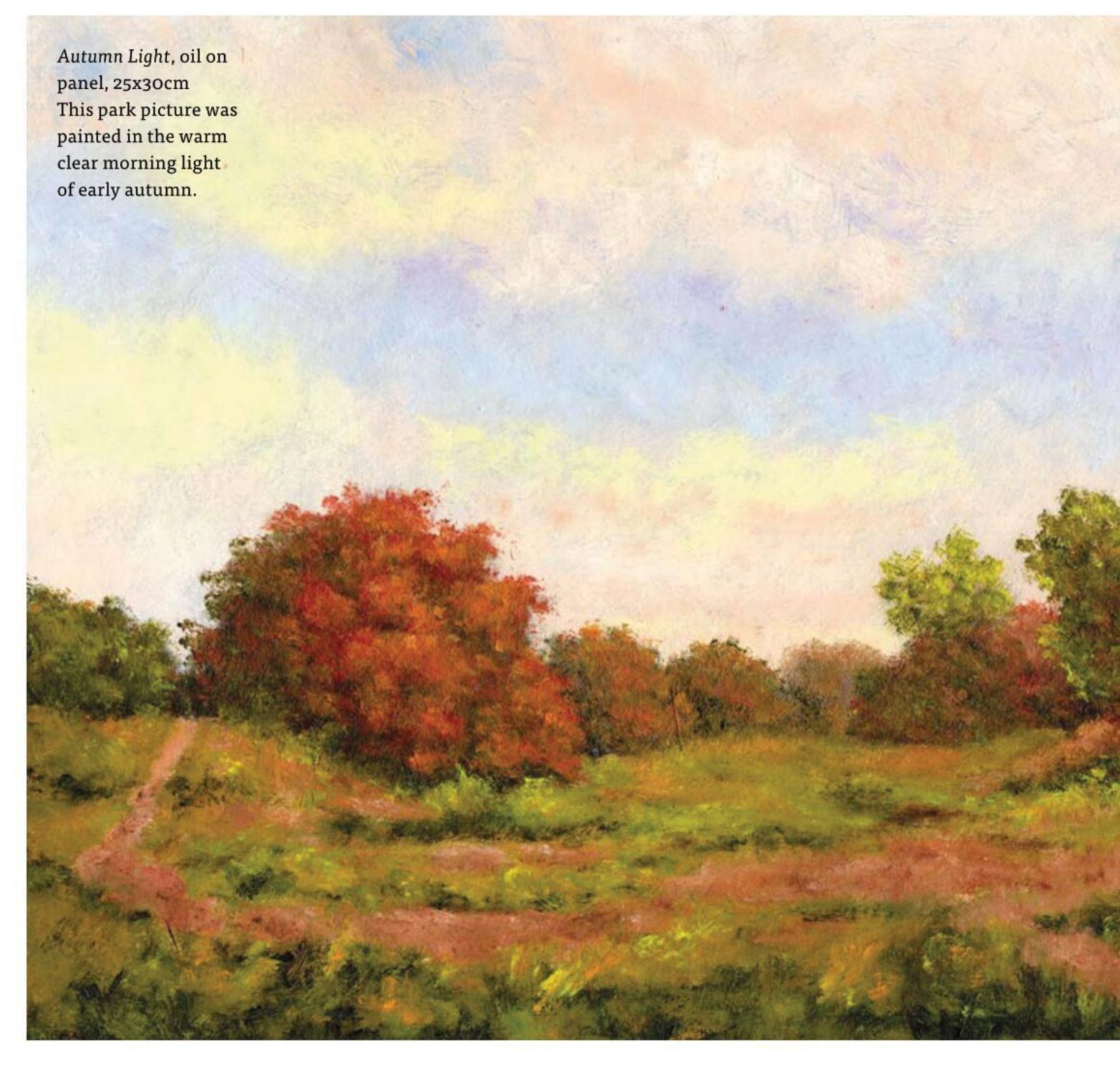
Mixing can also take place on the picture, as you pull and push paint to blend passages or soften edges. Pull unwanted paint from your brushes with a rag rather than washing it with thinner – this saves time and keeps your paint stiffer.

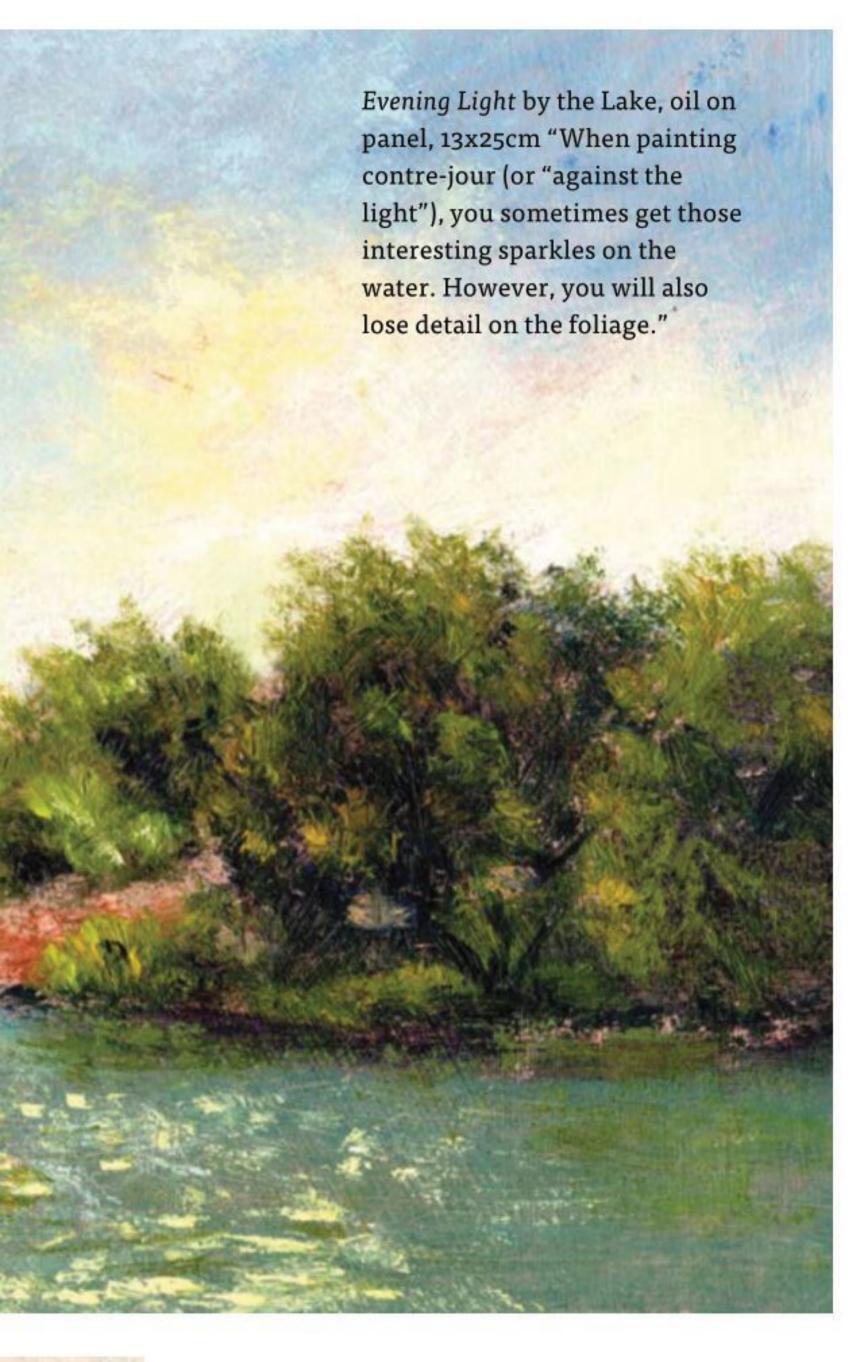
PAINTING IN PROGRESS

Make yourself a viewfinder by cutting an aperture into a piece of card. I paint on 8x10" panels (25x30cm) so I made a 4x5" viewfinder – exactly half the size.

After selecting the subject, use your viewfinder to draw a border in your sketchbook [see top right]. Inside this









Walking the Dog, oil on panel, 25x30cm "Here you can see three stages of a painting. Pathways aided the composition, creating a lead into the scene. I noted individuals as they passed by to record their size and position in space."

border, sketch your subject and apply shading to register the light effect. Tonal variation throughout your painting provides major structural elements so get this stage right.

When happy with your sketch, scale it up to your panel, drawing with fluid Yellow Ochre and a small soft brush. Now scrub in the shaded areas with a varied dark fluid wash (oil paint mixed with thinners). I used Olive Green and Ultramarine Blue, loosely, applied with the flat of a size 6 bristle brush.

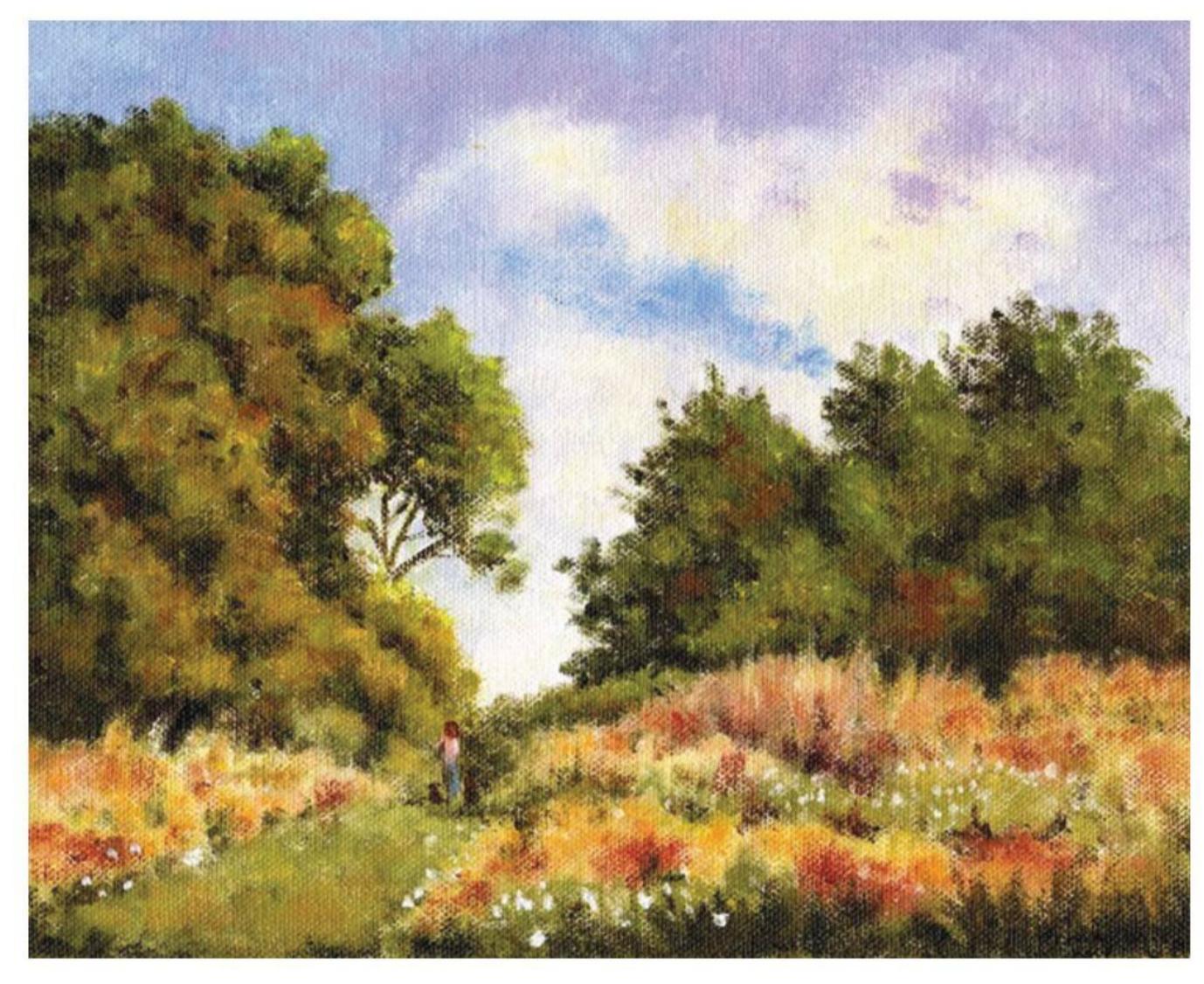
Start assessing lights and darks around your point of interest and lay down patches of colour to judge comparisons. Continue this process across all passages of your painting. I usually paint the sky colours just short of the tree block-in, then finish the trees by extending broken edges into the wet sky. Show texture where a change in tone takes place. Blend colour patches and soften shapes at the picture's edges. High contrasts or a figure can draw further attention to the focal point.

Spend more time looking than painting. It can also be a useful practice to take photographs before and after each session to compare the changes in light.

Denis' book, Drawing Trees and Flowers, is co-written with Margaret Eggleton and published by Search Press.

harrowlodgepaintings.blogspot.com





Everyday art advice

MARTIN KINNEAR'S 31 bitesize ways to boost skills will put you on the right path





INSPIRATION

3 LET THERE BE LIGHT

Painting and drawing requires you to work in good light. Whether you prefer that to be natural or artificial, give yourself good access to it and your work will be better for it.

I know pink or lime green smocks look arty, but if you're serious about reflected light hitting your work, wear dark blue or black. Dress down before you



INSPIRATION

6 REMEMBER THAT A LENS DOESN'T SEE

Humans see things. A camera simply records what was there. Photographs can be a great aide but don't be a servant to them.

Value is the dominant force in human vision and therefore art. If you have an artwork that you feel isn't working, introduce stronger values.

B People often say that artists see more than other people, as if they have a superior kind of eyesight. Experience tells me the difference is not what I see but how I choose to see it. Artistic vision is about looking harder with your imagination than your eyes.





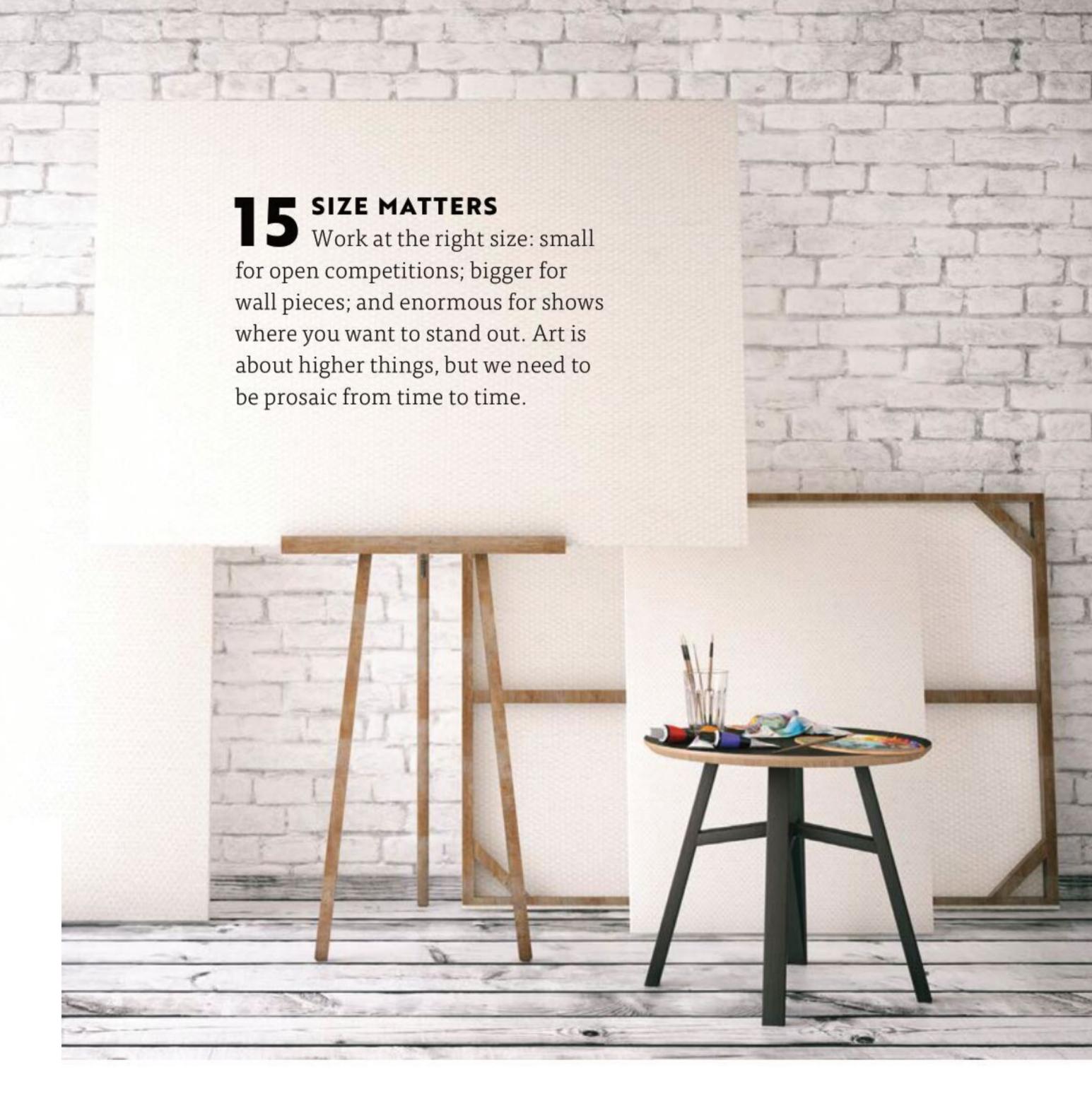


12 MAKE SELF-PORTRAITS
Oscar Wilde observed that all
art created with feeling, whatever its
ostensible subject, is a self-portrait of
the artist. Put yourself into your work
and, by definition, it will be honest.

Surprise Yourself
Kandinsky was stopped in his
tracks by a painting that seemed to be
like his, only more cohesive and
finished. Then he realised it was his
but, stacked against his studio wall in
shadow, it looked different. Away from
his easel with his mind on other
things, he could see structure with
fresh eyes. Make opportunities to see
your work afresh.

YALUE ISN'T COST
It's easy to spend money on rare pigments. But before you buy that tube of Lapis Lazuli check that you wouldn't do more, and more often, with a huge tube of French Ultramarine.





We all value original thinking, but new ideas in painting are usually just recycled ones. Picasso knew the idea of chronological progression was nonsense and freely helped himself to the past. Take the good stuff from the closet of art history.

TIME IS A MATERIAL
Overworking kills art just as surely
as dashing it off, so manage your time and
exposure to your work. If you tend to
overwork, set yourself a time limit. If you
are a dasher-off of works, then set an alarm
and work until it says it's time to stop, and
then reflect.

8 BEWARE OF VISUAL INFORMATION

What could be more natural than turning what you see into a painting? Great artists rarely paint exactly what they observe: their inputs vary from recollection to poetry, music and serendipity. What was there to be seen can only ever be a point of departure.

19 GO TO SHOWSGallery shows are a brilliant source of career advice because you'll often see a wide range of an artist's work and be able to see how they developed, innovated, took steps forward and managed change. Step back and see the big picture.

20 BE FOCUSED ON YOUR PATH

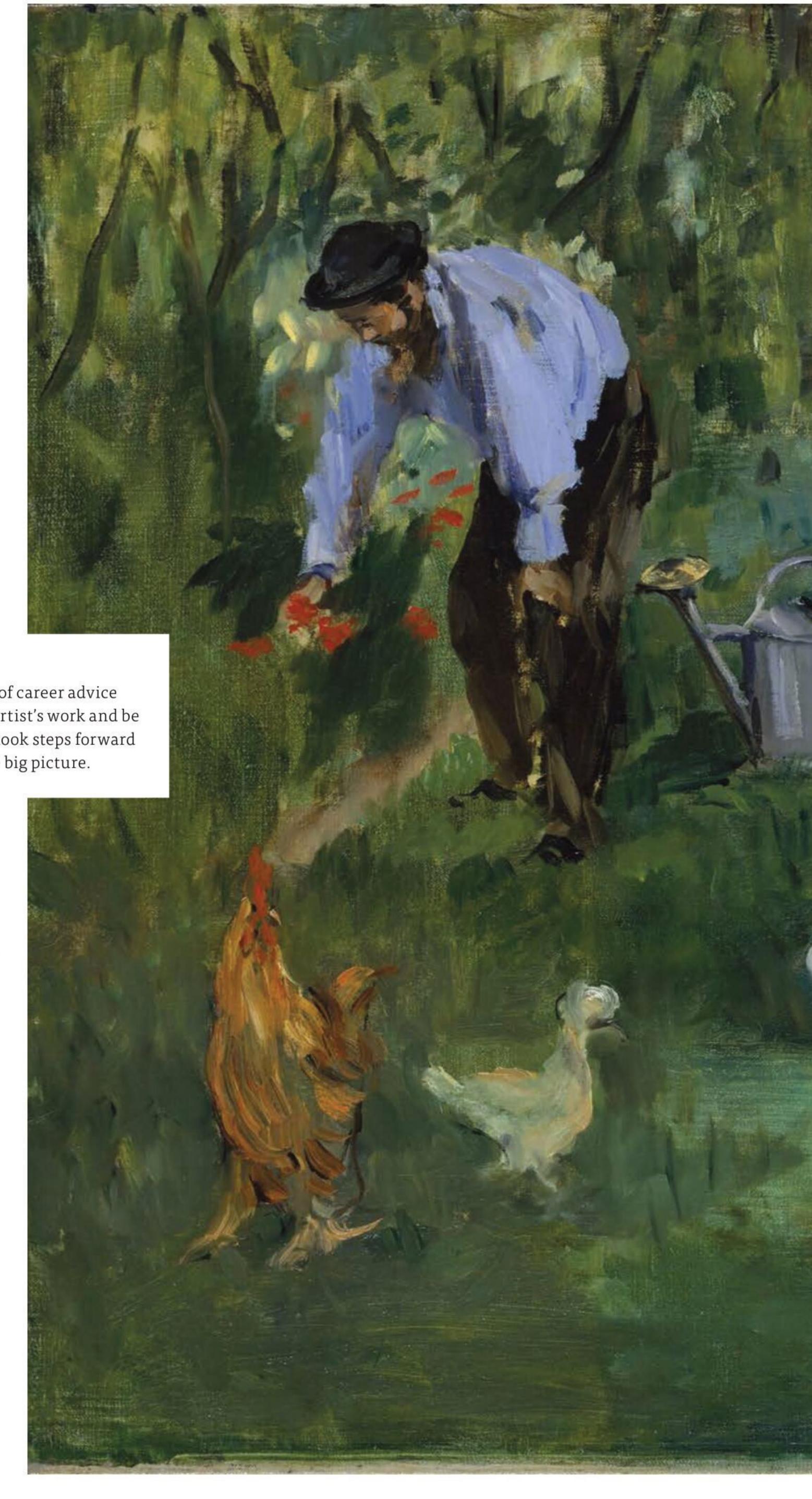
Avoid prevarication by setting yourself projects, and then scale them up as your skills improve. Start by painting enough to join a mixed show, then do a four-person show, then share half a show before hosting a solo show. If you can't find gallery space, do it as an open studio event.

21 SAY YES, BUT ALSO SAY HOW

Take everything on offer but on your terms. Commissions only work if you are allowed to do the work: if the client could do it you wouldn't have been asked.

2 TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER
Persistence is lauded and rightly
so, but don't waste your time and energy
knocking on doors when you should be
making more work.

23 GET ONLINE
Exploit the internet as a means of sharing images and ideas. Creativity grows with the distribution of it, so share your ideas freely. You'll get a lot more back in return.



INSPIRATION



INSPIRATION

24 DON'T POLISH BAD HABITS

Practice good skills. It's easy to acquire poor technique. If in doubt, find a tutor. Taking advice and being collegiate are good habits to have before you set off to be a singled-minded artist.

25 INVEST IN CHANGE

Once you get good at something, park it and move on. Art is about amassing visual capital – keep investing in new ideas and you'll develop a rich variety of skills.







29 COPY CAREFULLY
It's natural to be
influenced by great artists,
and inevitable that some
painters will be moved to copy
their work. Copy their more
accessible imitators – but do
so with caution.

30 WORK WITH

Galleries are businesses. If you want to work with them remember you are the expert in your product. Respect and cooperation are the key.

Forget any advice that you have tried and not found useful. Art is a personal dialogue: don't limit yourself to enacting a third-party script.

Martin Kinnear is an oil painter and course director at Norfolk Painting School. makinnear.com; alizarinblog.com; norfolkpaintingschool.com

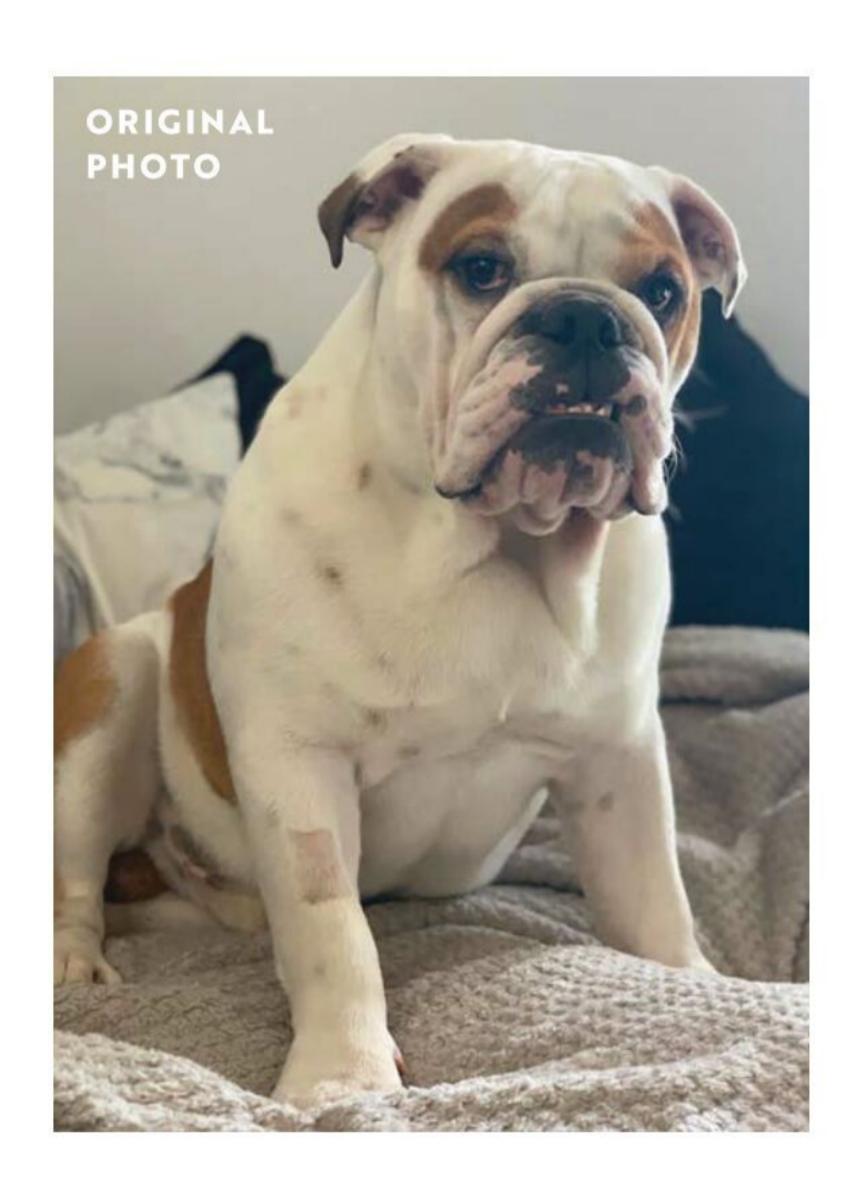


THE WALTER H. AND LEONORE ANNENBERG COLLECTION, BEQUEST OF WALTER H. ANNENBERG, 2002/METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK



Photo. Portaits

A pet portrait can make a wonderful gift. MATT JEANES shows you how to overcome inadequate reference photos and produce a layered masterpiece



EING ASKED TO PAINT another person's pet can be very flattering, yet it can also prove to be a double-edged sword. When selecting a reference image for our own paintings, we can judge what gives us the best and most interesting subject. Yet when faced with a photo of a beloved pet from an outside source that may not contain the information needed, the results can be less appealing and can often trip us up. I find the best way around this problem is to ask for a selection of images, then explain why you have chosen your particular view.

Painting an animal portrait from a compromised reference photo is fine for pleasing a doting owner, but if you want the resulting painting to appeal to a wider audience, the reference image has to contain information that will give your work a wider appeal.

Look for an image that has attitude or humour, nice lighting and composition or an interesting colour palette. Try to avoid anything with too much background information – you want the animal to stand out and be the star, just like Bear in this example opposite.

matthewjeanes.co.uk ▶

MATT'S MATERIALS

Paper

Fabriano Artistico Traditional White 300gsm watercolour paper, 45x61cm

Paints

Winsor Violet (Dioxazine), French
Ultramarine, Antwerp Blue, Cobalt
Blue, Cerulean Blue (Red Shade),
Cerulean Blue, Manganese Blue Hue,
Naples Yellow, Naples Yellow Deep,
Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Indian
Red, Potter's Pink, Perylene Maroon,
Burnt Umber, Indigo, Payne's Gray,
Neutral Tint, Ivory Black, Lamp
Black, Davy's Gray, all Winsor &
Newton Professional Water Colours;
Permanent White, Winsor &
Newton Designers Gouache

Brushes

ProArte Prolene Series 007 round brushes, sizes 1, 3, 5, 10 and 20; ProArte Prolene Series 008 flat brushes, size 1"; Royal Sovereign taper-pointed colour shaper, size 2

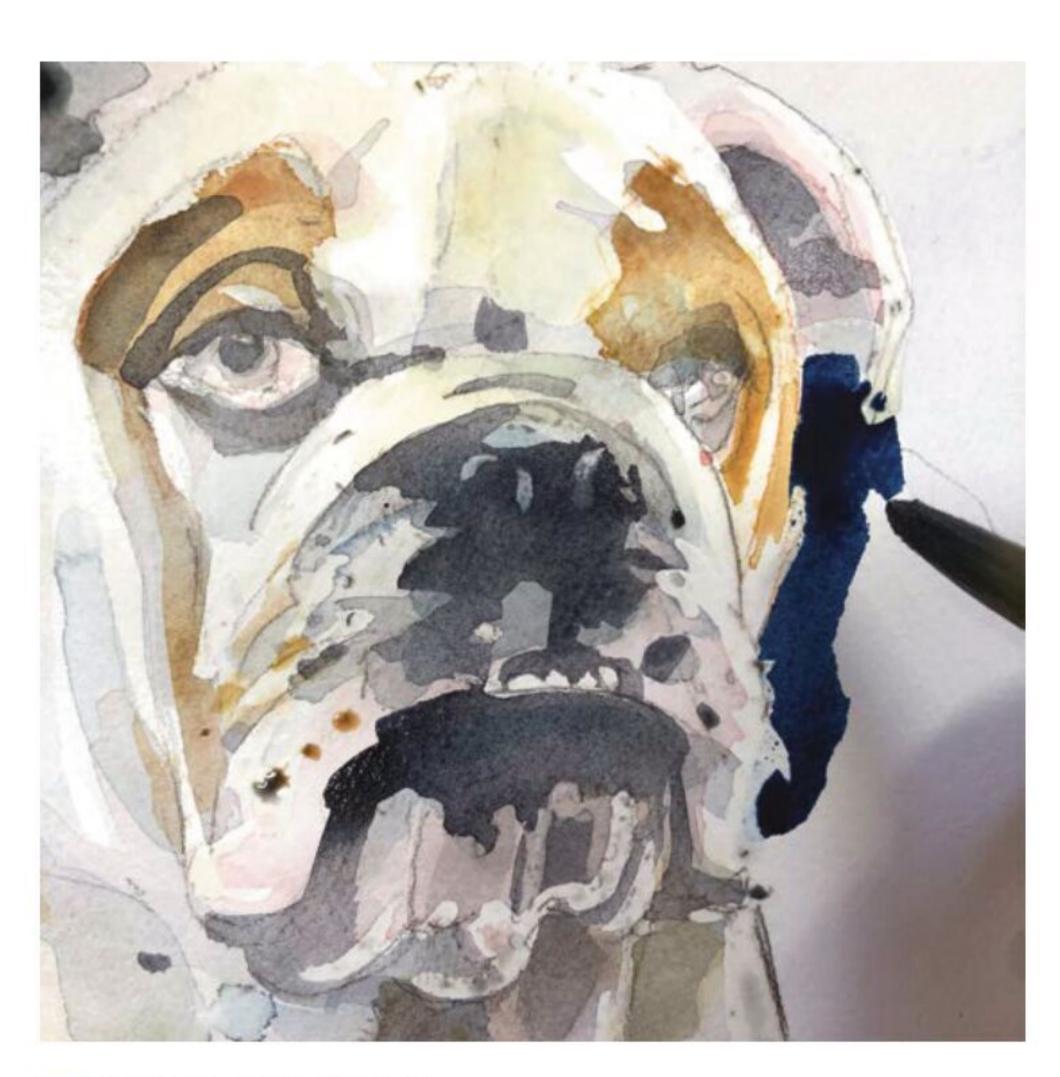
Masking fluid
HB pencil
Coloured pencils
Putty rubber

STEP BY STEP



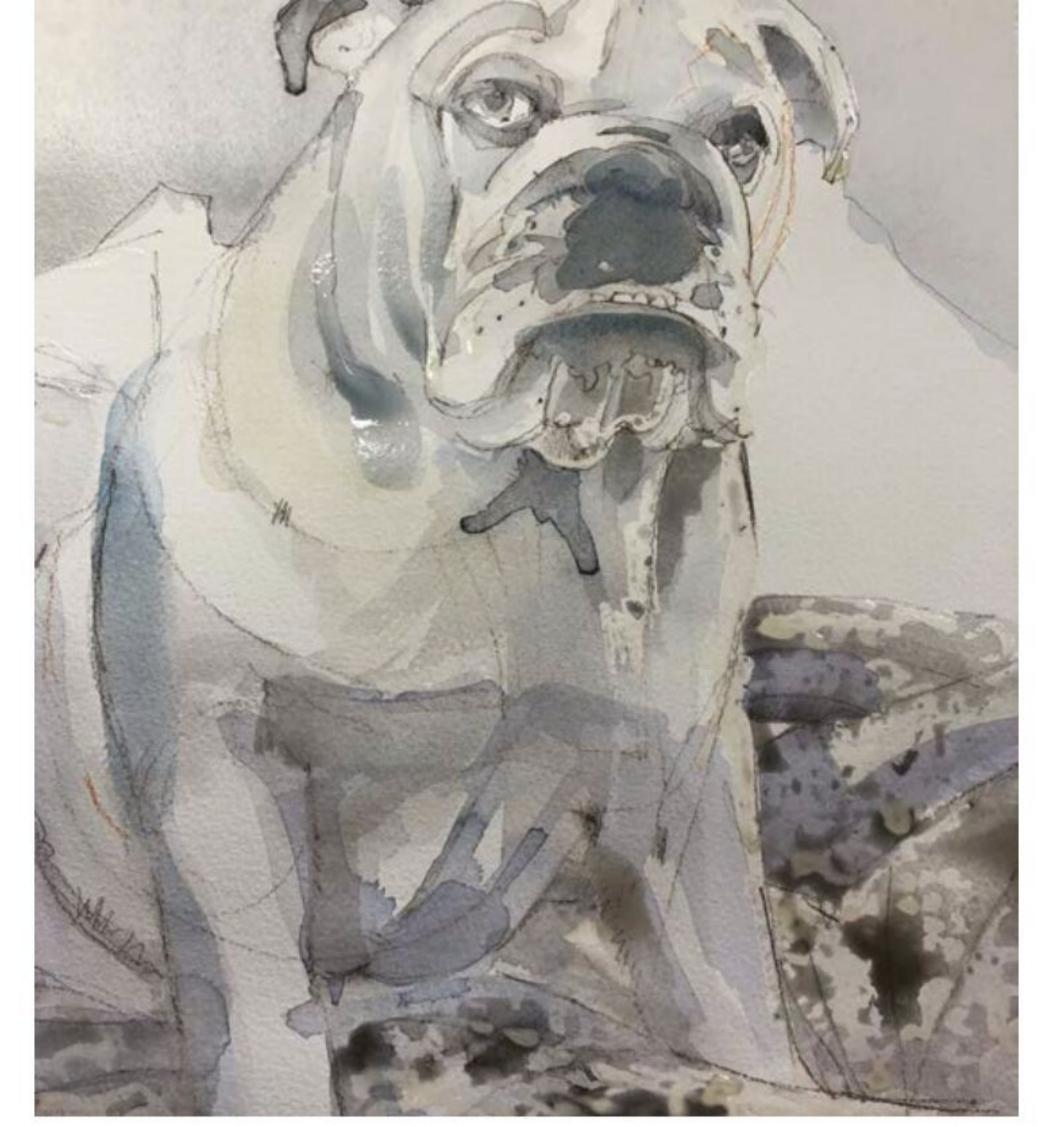
SKETCH THE COMPOSITION

I lightly sketched out the dog with a soft 2B pencil, using a light brown coloured pencil to add some of the markings. Graphite can discolour a wash so once I was happy with the drawing, I used a putty rubber to erase most of the drawing, leaving only faint lines. I then used masking fluid to reserve the highlights, including the eyes, teeth and fur markings. Next, I applied a wash of Davy's Grey, along with some suggestions of detail in Payne's Grey, Indigo and Ivory Black.



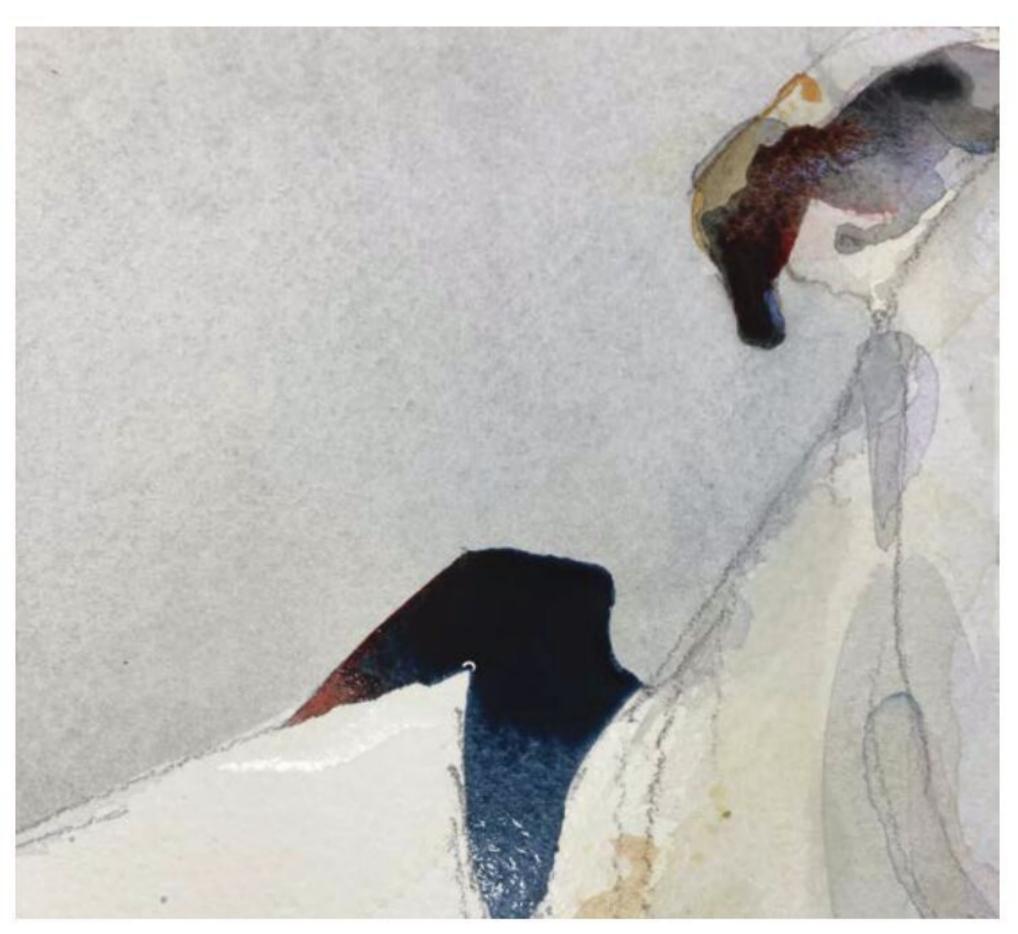
BUILD UP LAYERS

I continued to build the painting, following the previous steps of adding washes and layers of masking fluid. The more times you repeat these stages, the more refined your image will become. I continued to use a larger brush for this - a size 5 or 6. It's best to let each step dry thoroughly before adding more paint to both avoid colours bleeding into each other and preserve those lovely hard edges that define an image so well.



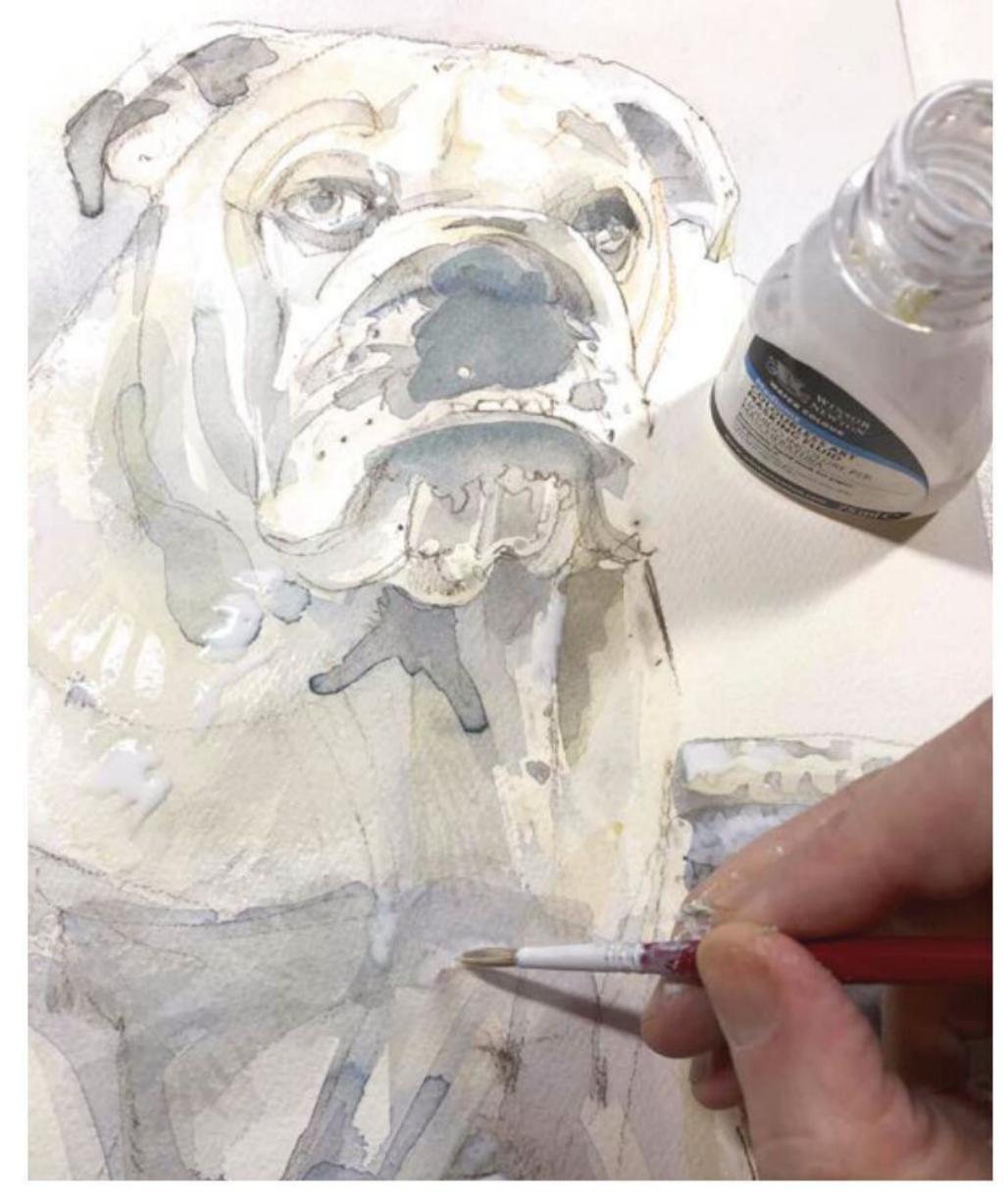
APPLY WASHES

Once the first washes were dry, I added another layer of masking fluid, this time to the blanket. Rugs, blankets and baskets can add an interesting texture without over complicating the image. Having previously added blues and greys, I was looking to warm things up by adding a creamy wash of Naples Yellow. When dry, I added a further layer of Payne's Grey and Lamp Black to the dog and the blanket. Aside from the odd final detail, I normally avoid black in watercolour painting as it can dominate a painting. However, used lightly, I find Lamp Black has a pleasingly warm quality that works well for a subject such as this.



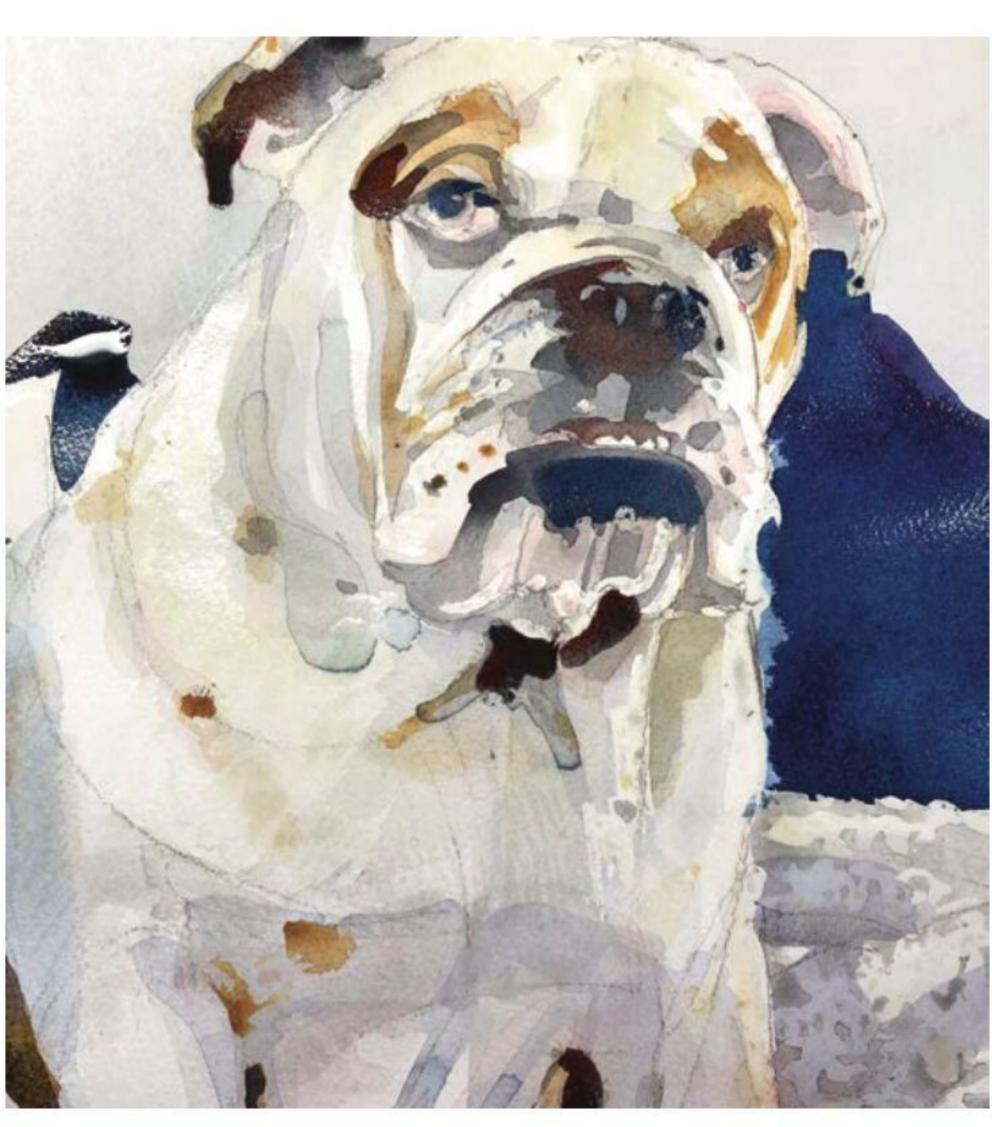
WORK WET-IN-WET

I started work on the dark cushions around the dog, using as few strokes as possible to create these areas of colour. Having previously avoided the colours bleeding, I now decided to use the wet-in-wet technique to create a few smoother transitions. I used a wet brush to apply a strong Payne's Grey mix. I let the colour puddle a little on the paper and very lightly added a hint of Indigo to it. Likewise, on the dog's ear, I added a puddle of Indigo with a touch of Perylene Maroon dripped on at the end. Don't mix the colours with your brush, just let the wet pigments blend naturally. Let them dry and see the magic happen.



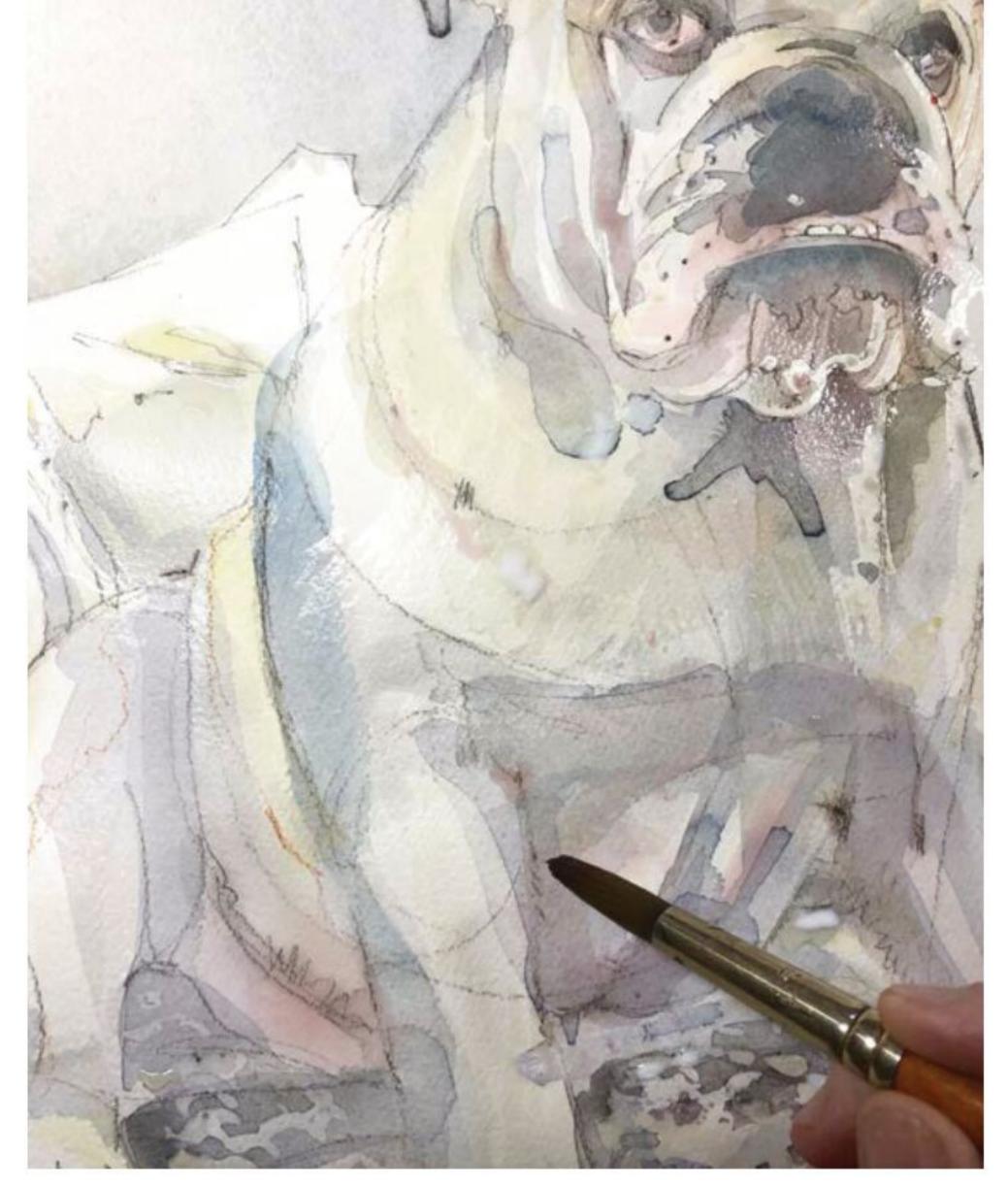
ADD TEXTURES

I waited until all the previous paint work was thoroughly dry before starting to add more texture with a further layer of masking fluid. Applying it very roughly is a great way to achieve the texture of fur. I used an old brush with splayed and broken bristles to brush on a variety of shapes and rough lines that gave the impression of fur. I was trying to let the watermarks show here, creating bold shapes and strokes that compliment the strength of the dog's image.

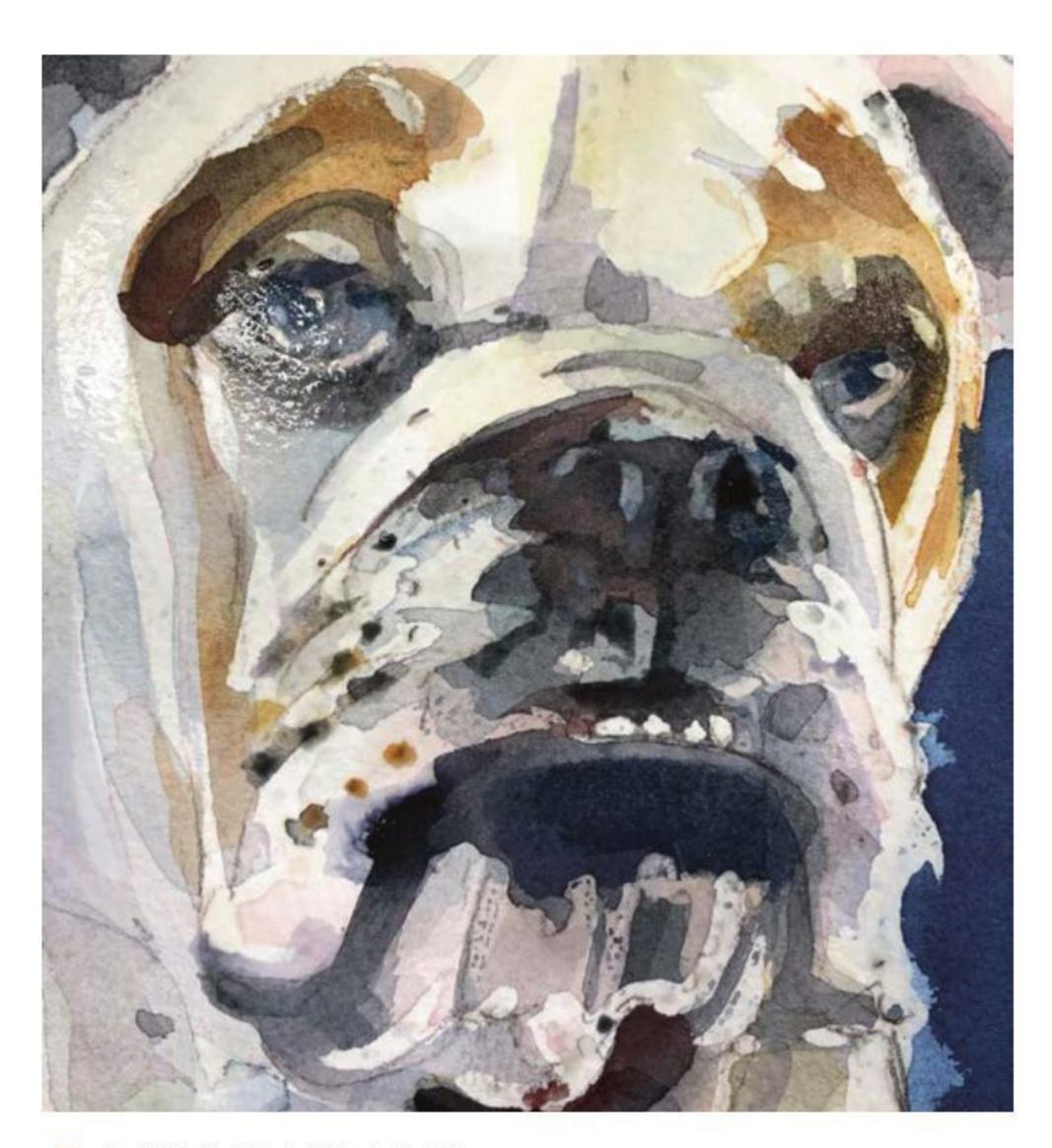


ADD BOLDER COLOURS

I started to add some bolder colours to the painting here. I was still not looking to refine the painting yet, but rather continue to apply interesting layers of colour. I use my size 5 brush to layer up areas of French Ultramarine, Antwerp Blue, Perylene Maroon, Burnt Sienna, Lamp Black and touches of Winsor Violet.

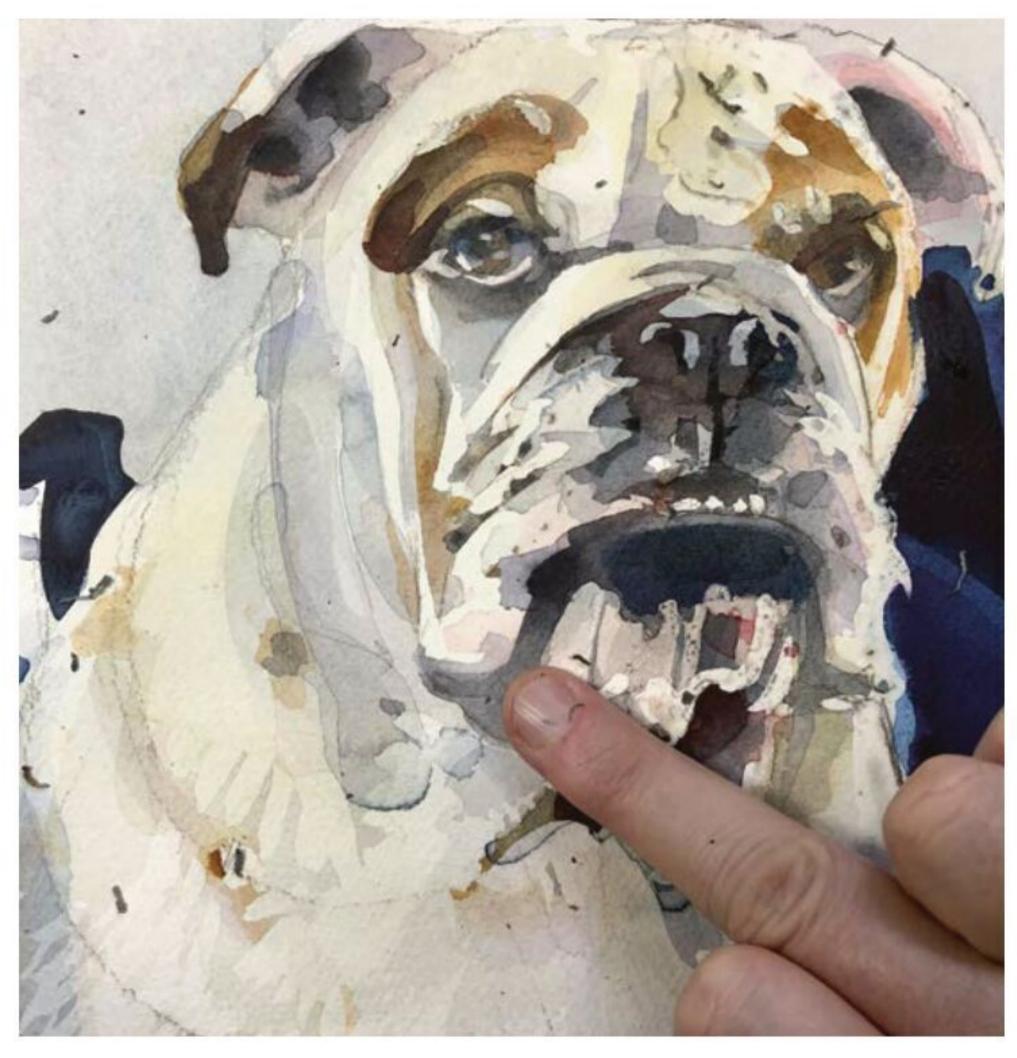


Before I went any further, I took a moment to look very closely at the original photo. It's very easy to just see the basic colours: blue eyes, brown fur and so on, but if we look deeper we can see all manner of unexpected colours such as pinks, lavenders and ochres all hiding in plain sight. Once I'd identified these, I added some Scarlet Lake, Winsor Violet, Burnt Sienna, Manganese Blue and Antwerp Blue into my washes to reflect these other hues.

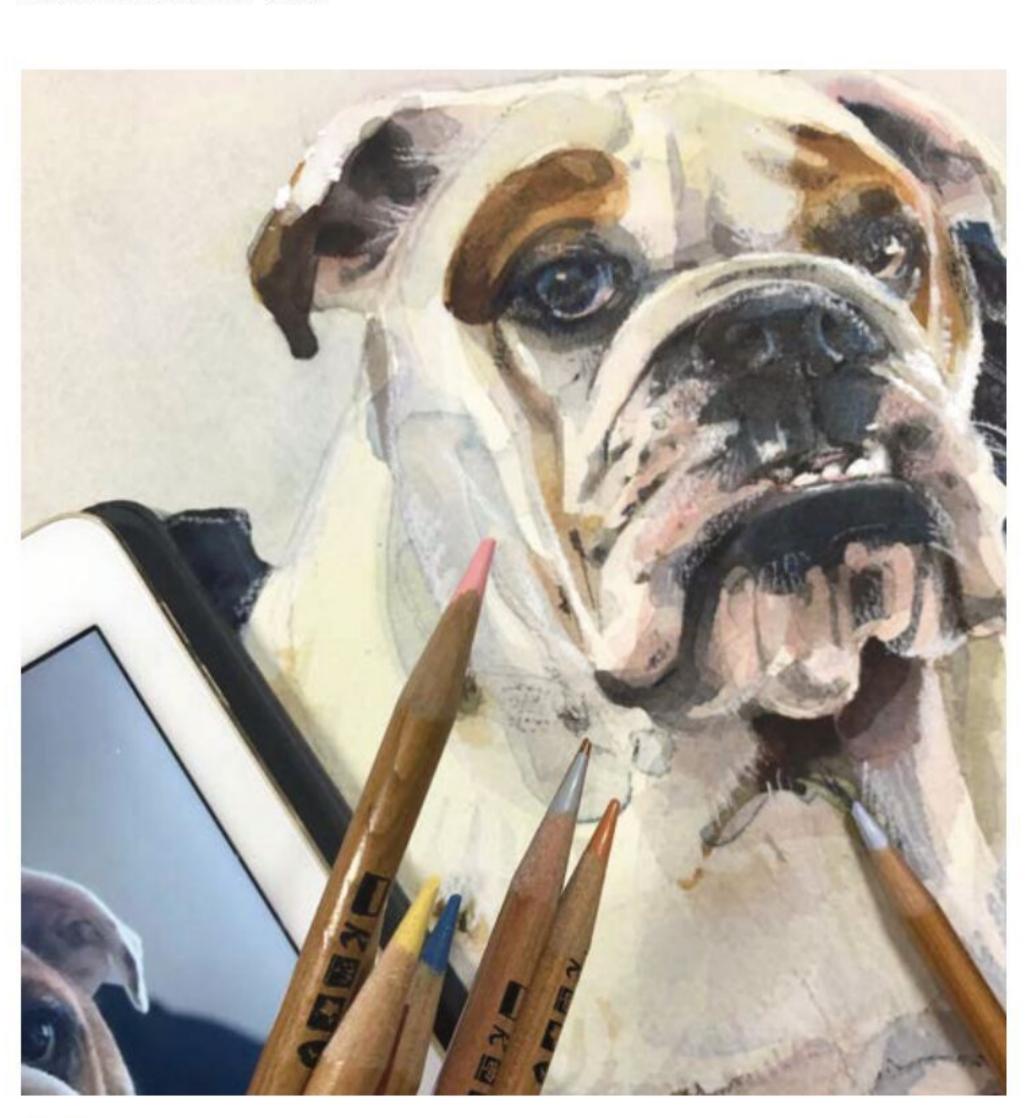


BEVELOP THE FACE
With the masking fluid in place, any work on the highlights will look dull at this stage. Keep washes loose yet small instead, and focus your efforts on chipping away at the various tones to get them right. For the best results, let each small wash dry completely before applying the next one. ▶

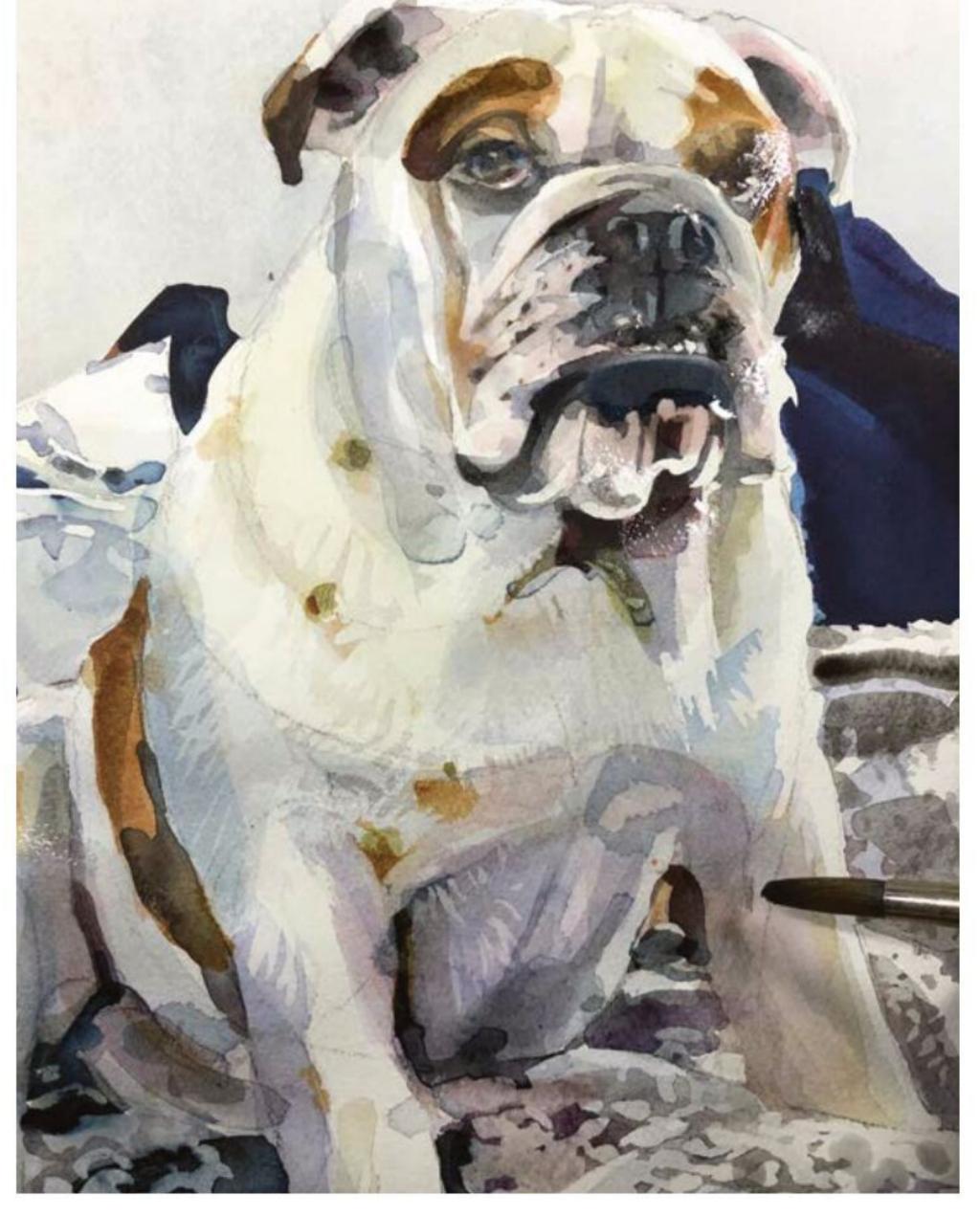
STEP BY STEP



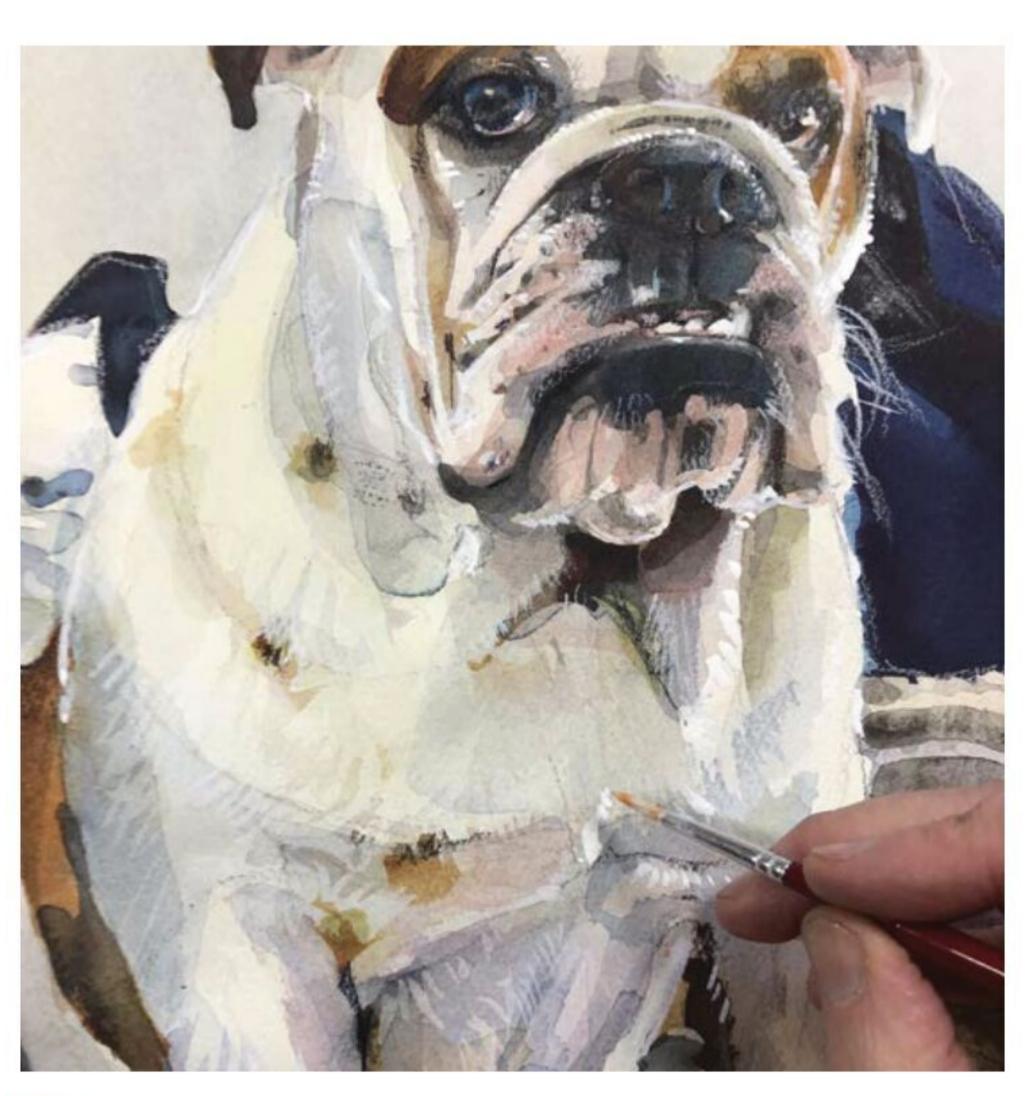
REMOVE THE MASKING FLUID When I was happy with the washes and they had fully dried, I removed the masking fluid. You can use a putty rubber for this, but I find that a finger is better as it gives you more control. Take your time on this stage and peel away the rubbery solution very carefully. If you have applied plenty of washes, the paper's surface may be delicate and can tear.



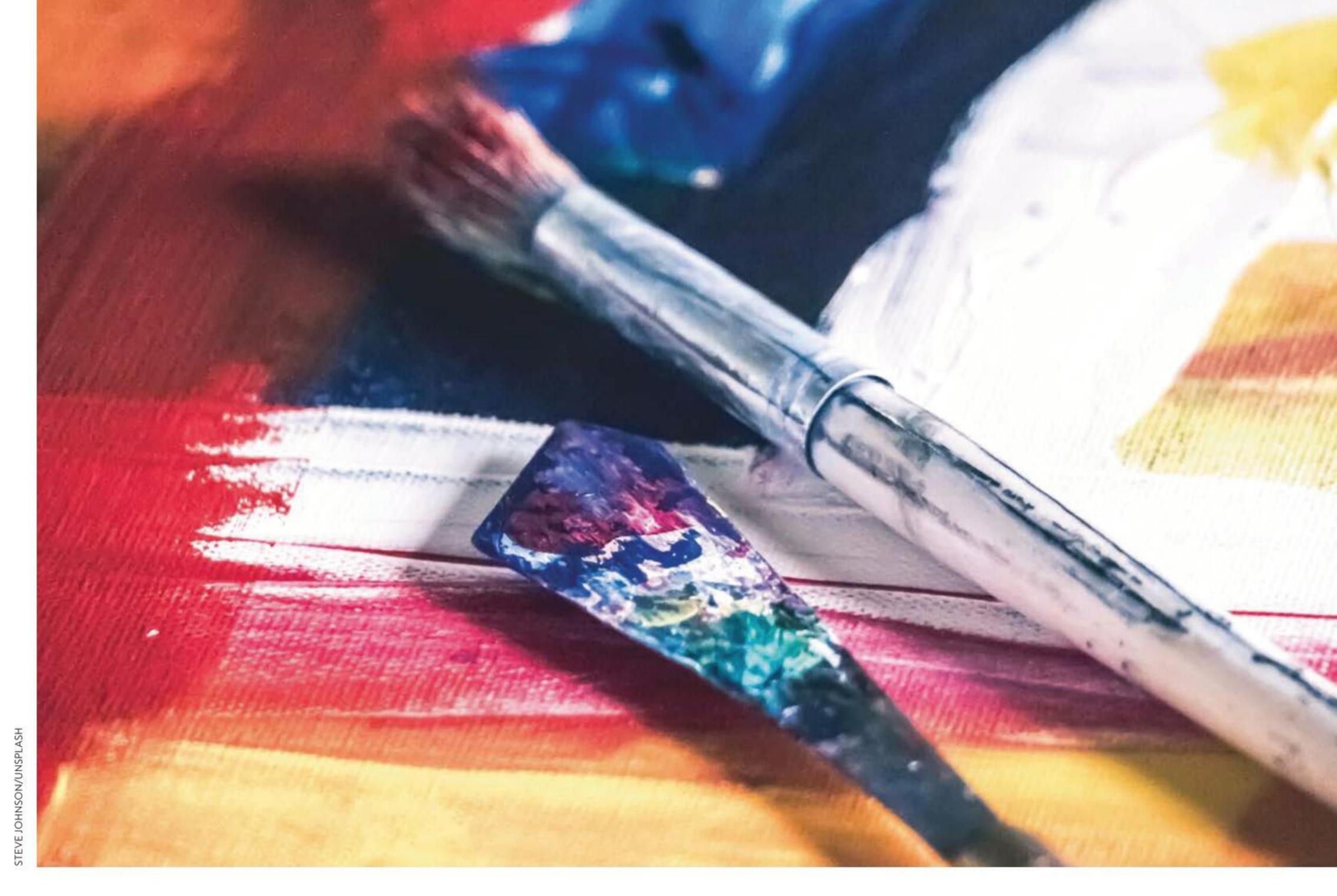
REFINE THE EDGES When masking fluid is removed, it can leave some rough edges and even painting over them later won't always get rid of them entirely. When I was happy that the main areas were finished, it was time to refine things. I added a touch of coloured pencil to tidy up those edges. Darker coloured pencils can help to lift details on the features of the animal, while crude highlights can be blended.



REVIEW YOUR PROGRESS This is the home stretch and the most exciting part of the painting. Once the masking fluid was removed and I could see the previously protected areas, I could make a decision on which areas to be either left alone or over-painted (such as the blanket). This was also the time to start adding finer detail, including deepening the tones on the nose and the eyes, which all helps to bring things together.



HIGHLIGHT TO FINISH I added some highlights with Permanent White gouache this is an opaque water-based paint that will sit on top of watercolour and give an extra sparkle where needed, such as the eyes, the nose, and anywhere the sun was hitting the dog's fur. If you need to add some extra detail in the fur you can also add a little watercolour to the gouache to create an opaque tint perfect for those final touches. \square



Simplify your painting habits

Reignite your creativity with our suggestions for simple artistic goals

QUIT YOUR FAVOURITE COLOUR

When you are mixing paint, do you always find yourself reaching for the same few tubes of colour? Choose a favourite colour and ban yourself from using it on your next painting. This will force you into mixing up the same hues in different ways, which in turn will help you learn more about the properties of the lesser-used colours on your palette.

GET IN GOOD HABITS

Art is a lot like exercise; you need to practise regularly to improve. There isn't always time to settle down to complete a painting either, so resolve instead to do little and often. Carry a sketchbook with you and find 15 minutes every day to draw from life. If you're busy,

sketch people on your commute or during your lunch break – any chance to stretch those artistic muscles.

GIVE YOURSELF SPACE

To be truly creative, you need to find a comfortable space in which to work. Try to establish a corner of a room that you can devote to your art. Arrange materials in an easily accessible way. Let nothing stand in your way of just picking up a brush or pencil whenever the mood takes you.

PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE

If you're lacking in self-confidence, the prospect of other people seeing your work can be mortifying. It is easy to overlook the

benefits though. Share work on social media and be proud of what you have made, the feedback can be encouraging. Set yourself the goal of entering an art competition – you'd be surprised how many award-winning artists say they almost didn't enter...

TAKE A CLASS

While Artists & Illustrators makes a great companion to creativity, nothing beats some in-person tuition. Book yourself a workshop to focus your creativity. Go with an open mind, listen to your tutor, and ask questions at an appropriate point if you don't understand. Talking to fellow students can also prove useful – and fun. \Box



Fresh FOWERS

Faced with a bunch of newly-cut blooms, ANNE-MARIE BUTLIN wanted to capture some of that freshness and optimism in the way she painted them – here's how she did it



Y RECENT WORK has been inspired by gardens and garden flowers, and reflects the movement towards more naturalistic, seasonal planting. I signed up to receive a monthly bucket of flowers from an organic, sustainable local cutting garden, Wolves Lane Flower Company, and my very first delivery was unexpectedly lovely - a glorious tangle of spring blooms.

There was a nice simplicity to this composition. I just felt

really compelled to capture the beautiful flowers in front of me as quickly as possible.

Those first flowers of spring had a certain symbolism: new growth, fresh beginnings, and hope for the future. I wanted my painting to convey a sense of this optimism and energy. They also had a rather old-fashioned look, which tied in quite well with my painting style. I really liked the idea of very traditional subject matter painted with a modern sensibility.

anne-mariebutlin.com

ANNE-MARIE'S MATERIALS

Paints

Lemon Yellow Hue,
Cadmium Yellow, Permanent
Rose, Rose Madder Genuine,
Alizarin Crimson, French
Ultramarine, Cobalt
Turquoise, Terre Verte,
Prussian Green, Sap Green,
Olive Green, Naples Yellow
Light, Naples Yellow, Yellow
Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Raw
Umber, Davy's Gray, Indigo,
Payne's Gray and Titanium
White, all Winsor & Newton
Artists' Oil Colour; Lemon
Yellow, Michael Harding

Support

Bird & Davis primed fine linen canvas, 70x70cm

Brushes

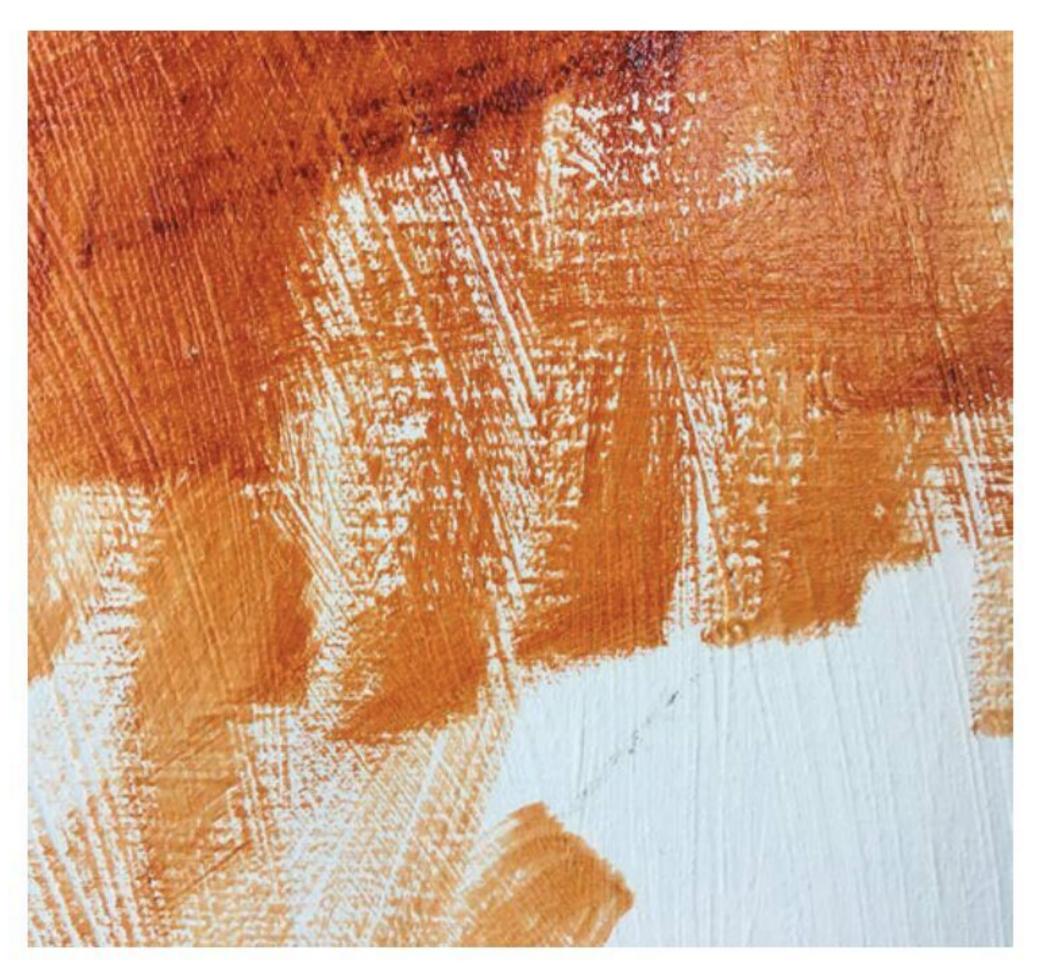
ProArte Series 32 Polar Nylon flat brusges, sizes 1/4", 3/8", 1/2", 3/4" and 1"; a decorator's paint brush, 1.5"

Winsor & Newton Galeria

White Gesso primer

Zest-it Oil Paint

Dilutant



COMPOSE CAREFULLY

I began by taking photos of the arrangement in my house. I used the square-format option on my phone's camera as I played around with the composition. I then worked in my studio, drawing from both the photo and directly from life, taking the best bits of each.

I painted my primed linen with a fairly thick layer of acrylic gesso to give it some tooth. Once dry, I used the large decorator's brush to apply a thinned down layer of Burnt Sienna as a ground.



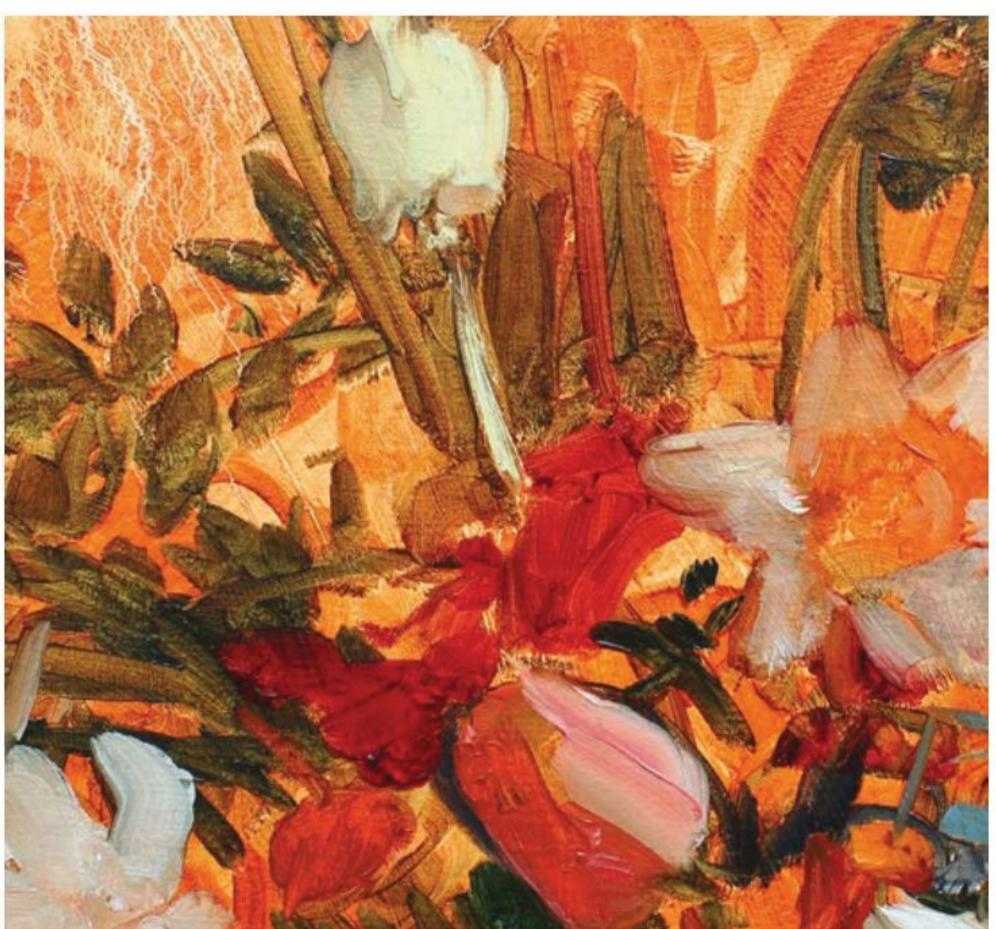
SCRUB IN THE BASICS

I used a thicker mix of Burnt Sienna to loosely draw out the composition. My plan was to work really quickly so that all subsequent layers of paint would merge with the wet ground and give the whole piece a feeling of warmth and unity. I also wanted to leave little patches of this underlying colour showing through the subsequent layers to give the painting a glow, though I took care to ensure that these patches were balanced across the canvas and didn't overpower.



DEVELOP THE COMPOSITION

I felt the dark panel to the left of the flowers and the rounded tabletop were key parts of the composition, so I added those in. I also vaguely suggested the shadow, exaggerating the tone, as this simple shape provided a foil to the complex tangle of foliage. The shadow consisted of a subtle mix of greys and echoed the small amount of blue in the flowers. Burnt Sienna proved itself to be a good choice for the ground here, as it mixed effectively with all the applied colour to give the whole piece a feeling of warmth.



KEEP IT LOOSE

At this point my left hand was juggling brushes loaded with the key colours. I kept the paint thin in this initial drawing stage and used fairly large brushes to keep the marks loose and gestural.

I wanted to capture a general impression of the tone of the flowers here and often I don't move much beyond this early stage of the drawing. Sometimes an initial response can't be improved upon so tightening up the drawing is not particularly helpful.



PIN DOWN THE DRAWING
Olive Green is a rich, neutral colour so I used it to pin
down the various elements. Drawing freehand gives the painting
a sense of energy and I can make small adjustments if necessary.
I worked from my photo, but also looked carefully at the
arrangement in my studio, adding and moving flowers to make
the best possible composition.



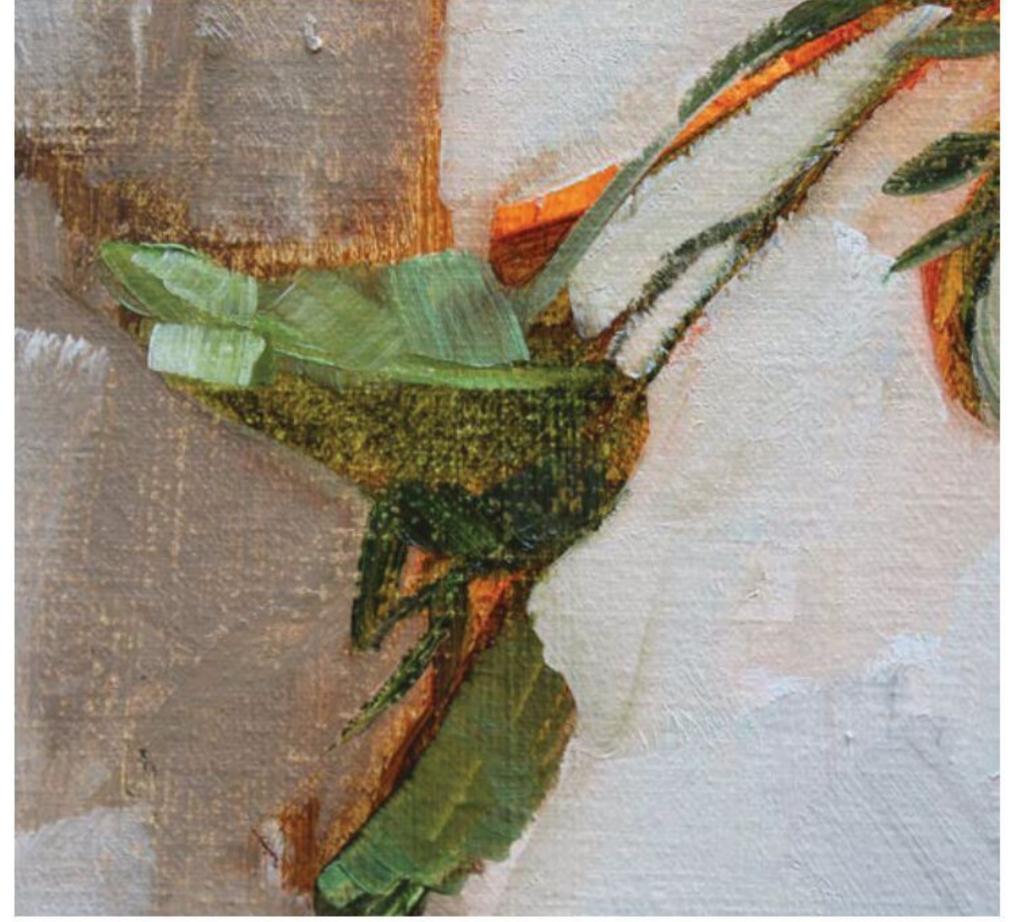
BLOCK IN KEY COLOURS

It had become difficult to see the marks clearly, so it was helpful to put down some blocks of colour that would provide a structure to work around.

The white of the narcissi was a good initial focal point. With that in place, I was then able to pitch other colours against it. I also established the darkest pink of the wallflowers from which I could then work up to the lightest pink. By contrast, the greens were kept really dark at this stage.

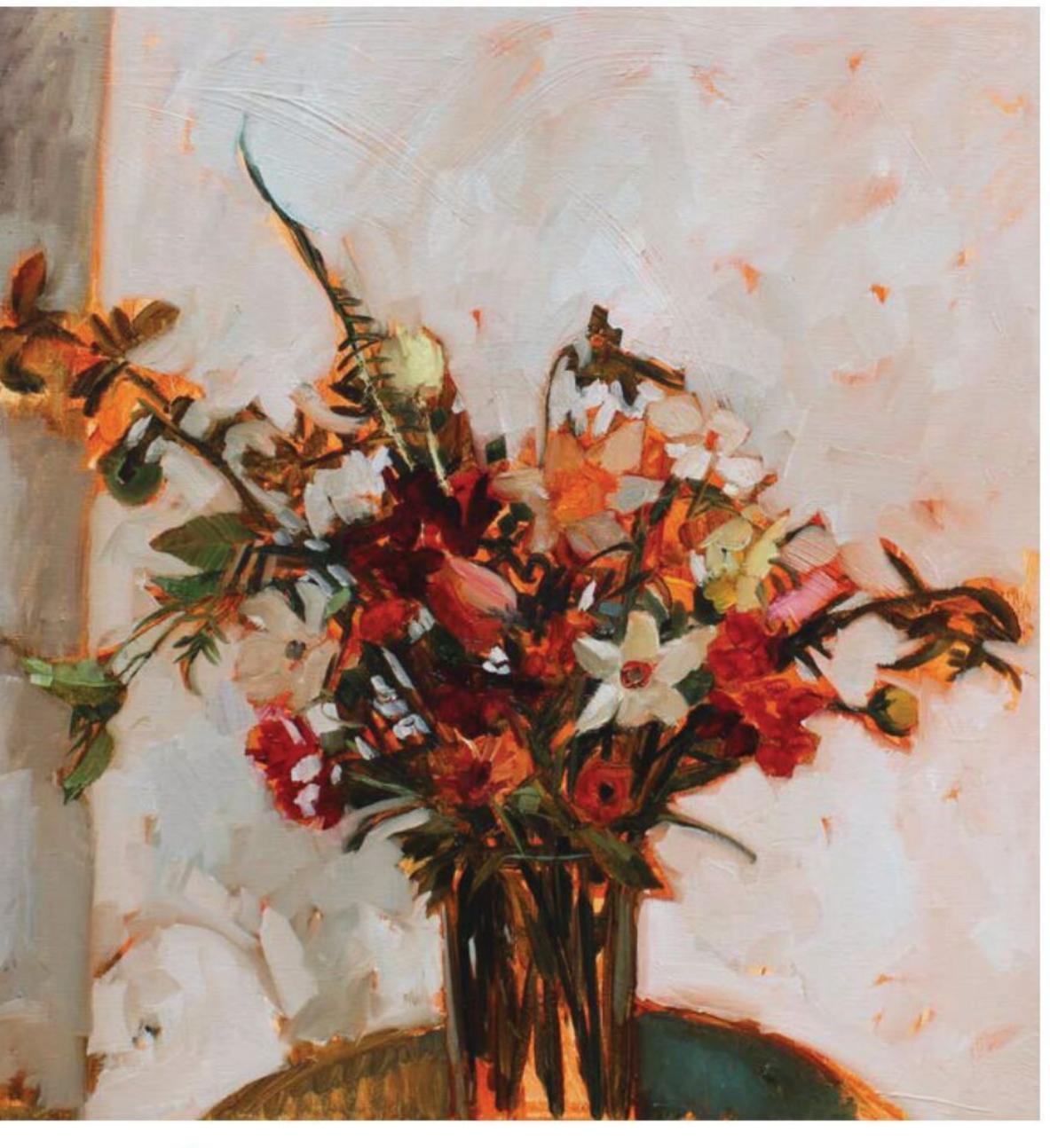


7 REFINE FROM THE BACKI was keen to contrast the pattern of the foliage with a distinctly lighter background, so I carefully mixed a light grey with Titanium White, Davy's Grey and Yellow Ochre for warmth. I used the 1" brush to roughly apply the paint in different directions and continually remixed the colour, slightly differently each time, to give a sense of depth and movement to this area. I also used this as a chance to refine the drawing of the gorgeously intricate shapes of the leaves and flowers on the edge, and most satisfyingly, all the little gaps in between.



I focused on accurate colour mixing here. It's taken me a long while to find ready-made greens that work best for me: rich Prussian Green; brilliant, translucent Sap Green; opaque, blue-tinged Terre-Verte; and deep, cool Olive Green. I mix many colours with them. Indigo is useful for dark areas; Naples Yellow Light and the very pale Michael Harding Lemon Yellow for lighter leaves.

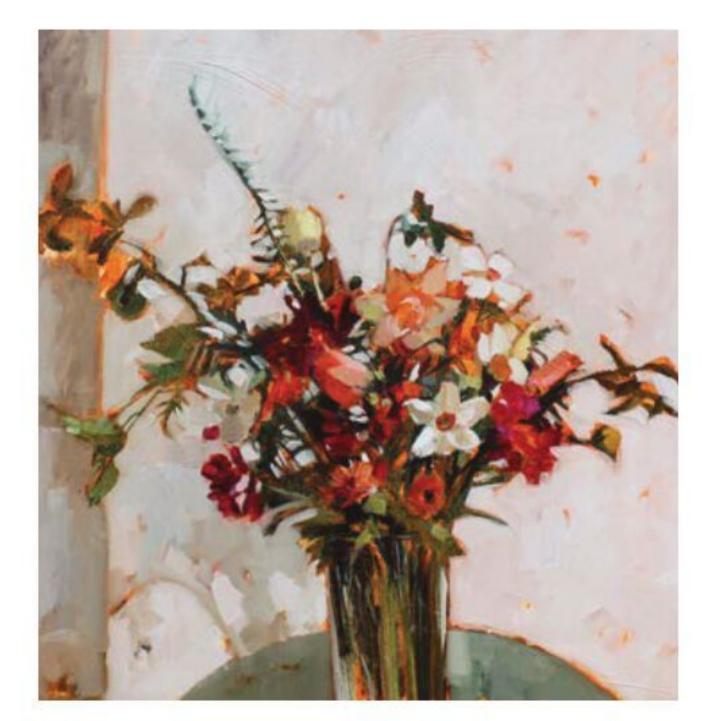
STEP BY STEP







BLOT THE PAINTING The paint got a bit thick in places, so I used newspaper to blot much of the painting. This can create some lovely effects and squash the colours together while bringing out some of the ground beneath. It also picks up the grain of the linen or the brushmarks of the gesso primer. I find this method works particularly well with my greens, which are translucent and glow nicely when thinner.



FIND A FOCUS Parts of the painting needed to be in tighter focus, while a few flowers would be more effective if left much looser. I carefully worked on the most prominent of the Pheasant's Eye narcissi which felt like a key focal point. This flower was painted using a range of soft greys, Titanium White mixed with Davy's Grey plus hints of Lemon Yellow.



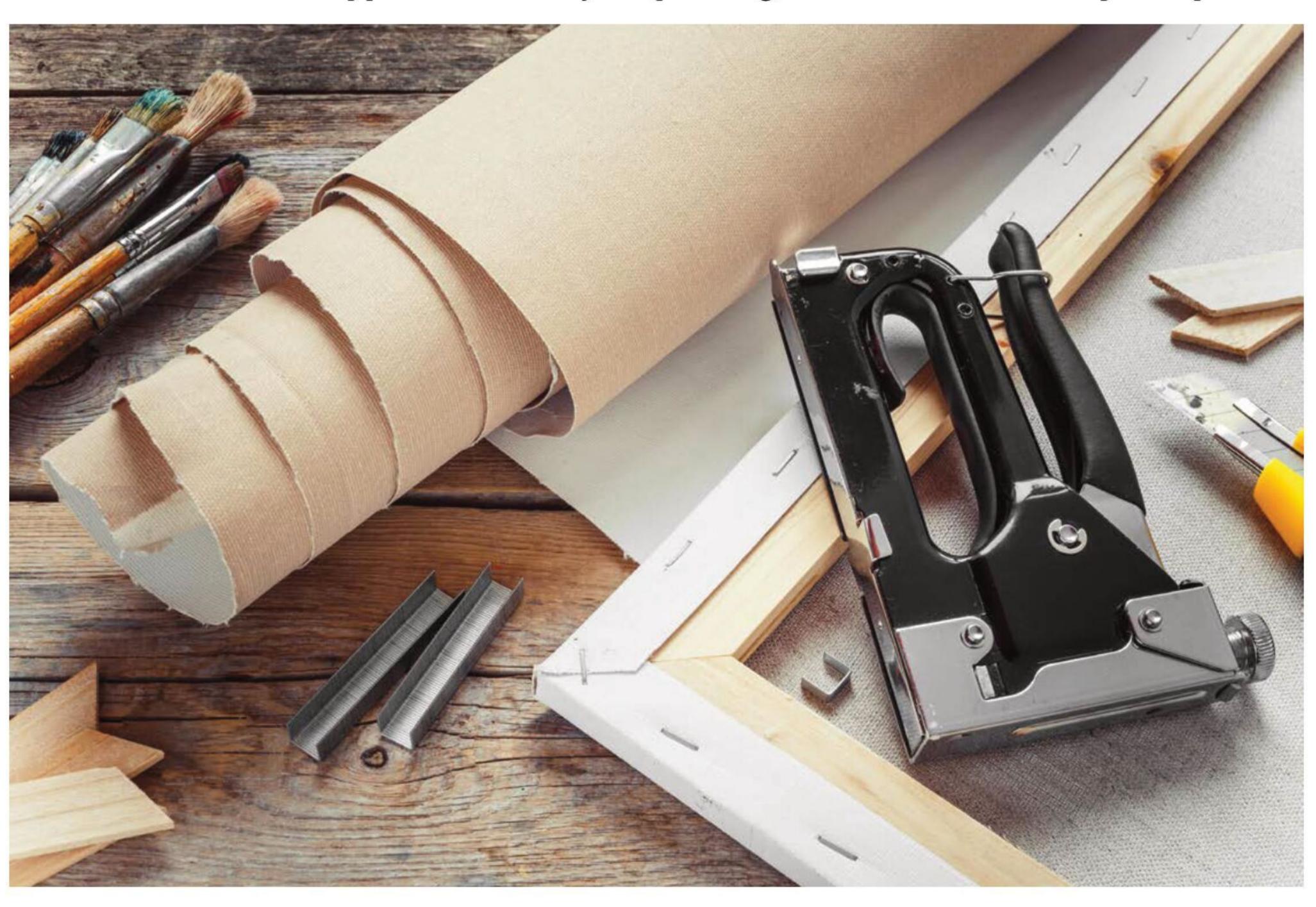
ADD HIGHLIGHTS I gradually added all the lighter tones, building up to strong highlights that refined the drawing of the flowers. I added blues and greens to take out the sweetness of the pinks and to describe the shadows. Rose Madder Genuine added tinges of brownish pink and Naples Yellow Light worked very well to describe the daffodil and tulip highlights.



KNOW WHEN TO STOP I took time to paint the flower stems in the glass jug. I simplified the shapes, leaving carefully blotted areas and some ground showing through, and then applied lighter greens and strong white highlights on top. I then forced myself to stop, resisting the urge to tighten up the drawing in order to maintain a feeling of spontaneity.

your self when choosing your next support

Unsure of what support to use for your painting? Follow these five simple steps



STOCK

ROLLED?

For many artists starting out, a stretched canvas is the easiest way to get painting. However, if you want to create a picture in an unusual format or have greater control over the paint surface, consider buying canvas off a roll. When calculating the size, don't forget to allow plenty of overlap to go around the bars at the back.

2 COTTON OR LINEN?

These are the two main types of artist's canvas on the market.

While linen is more expensive and harder to stretch, it was the choice for many Old Masters as it is far more durable thanks to its stiffness and longer fibres. Cotton by contrast is the more economical option, while also being easier to stretch.

3 WHAT WEIGHT OF CANVAS DO YOU NEED?

The weight of a canvas refers to the amount of fabric in a fixed area (either grams per square metre or ounces per square yard), so it varies according to the weave, finish, fibre thickness and material. So, while a heavier canvas implies a surface that will take rougher treatment, there is no exact science here.

THE CANVAS PRE-PRIMED?

Artists using acrylics should look for unprimed supports, as the paint won't adhere otherwise.

An oil painter should 'size' – or seal – the canvas first though.

Pre-primed canvases save time here, but experienced artists may wish to apply the size themselves for greater control.

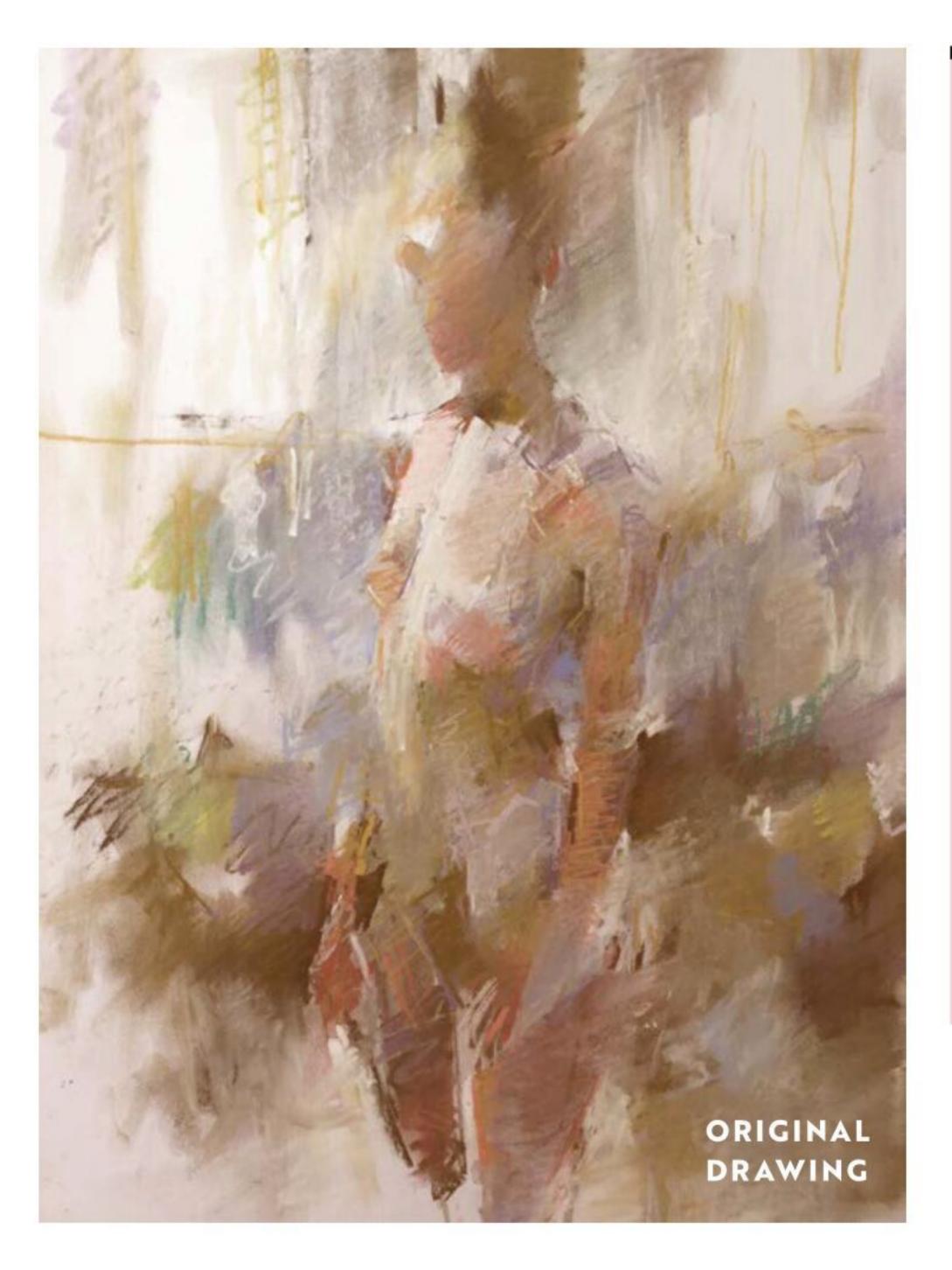
5 WHAT FINISH DO YOU REQUIRE?

The weave of a canvas has a profound effect on the finish of a painting.

A pronounced weave will result in a rough surface that will snag unexpected touches of colour, whereas a fine linen gives a smoother finish with minimal texture, ideal for either photorealist painting or portraiture.

MOICSIVE

Royal Institute of Oil Painters member LUIS MORRIS shows how working from a sketch and mixing up a range of colours early can allow a more creative, painterly finish



LUIS'S MATERIALS

Paints

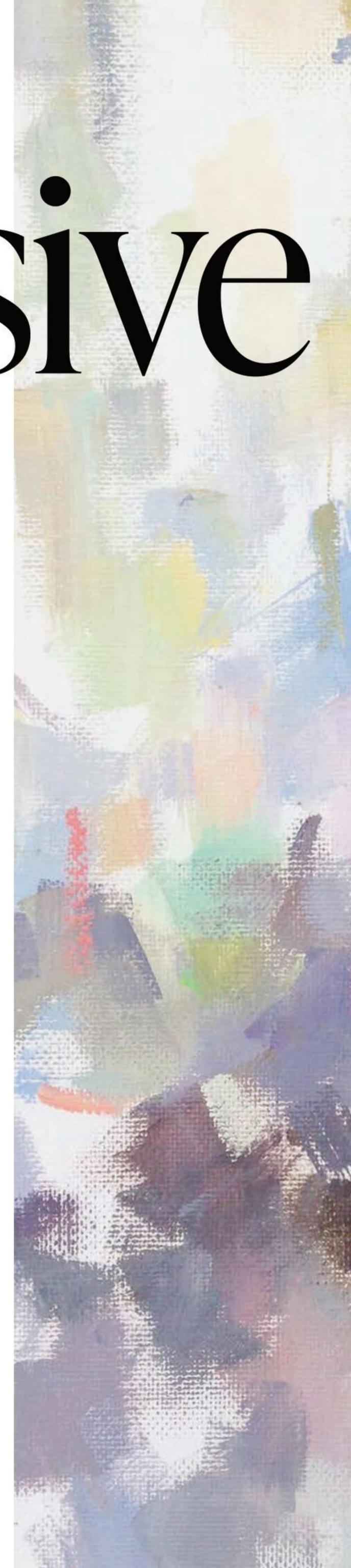
Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, French Ultramarine, Viridian and Titanium White, all Winsor & Newton Artists' Oil Colours

Brushes

Pro Arte Sterling Series 201 short flat brush, size 4

Support

Colvin & Co stretched cotton canvas, 30x23cm Low odour thinners Palette knife WypAll Industrial Wiping Paper

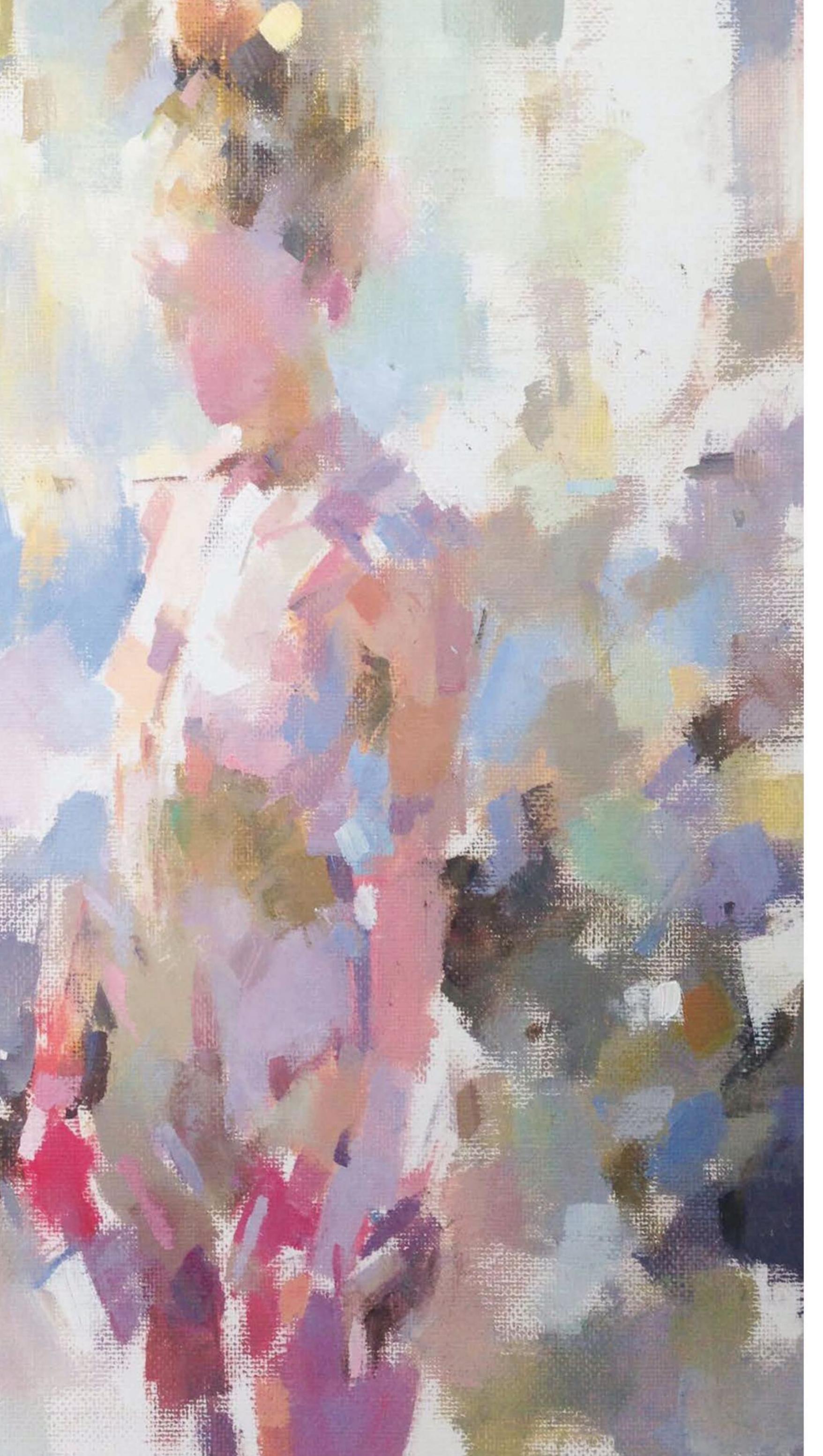


STEP BY STEP

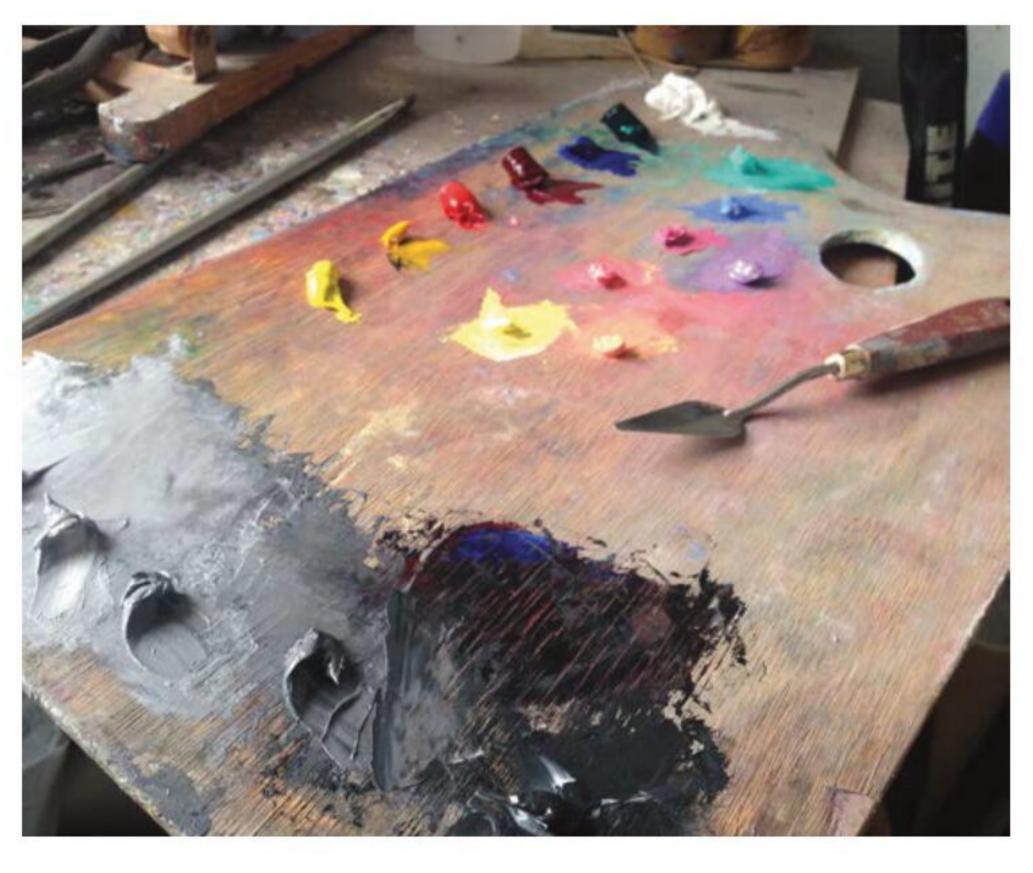


As with a lot of my figure studies, I am looking to capture something of the essence of the form using a minimum of detail. I do this by shedding bright light on a few selected areas and allowing the rest to be cloaked in shadows. I want my figure drawings and paintings to have a certain mystery about them. For all the abstraction and stylisation, the end result needs to have a sense of warmth and animation if it is to be successful.

It is important that the reference sketch has an essential quality that can be brought out in the final painting. The challenge then is to make sure this chosen quality doesn't get trampled on during the course of making the painting. In this case I felt my initial sketch [pictured far left], made in pastels across a 90-minute session, had an overall sense of calmness and poise. I was also very happy with the colour relationships I'd found in the body and was keen to enrich those in the painting [pictured left] to create a more vibrant picture that celebrated the way natural light bounced off a human body. ▶



STEP BY STEP



MIX ON THE PALETTE

For me, the palette is the oil painting's driving force. I started by mixing each of my colours with Titanium White to form bright, saturated tints. I then mixed a black from Ultramarine, Alizarin Crimson and Cadmium Yellow, which I then mixed with white to give shades of grey. These greys in turn helped create more subdued versions of the highly saturated colours.

My first mark on the canvas was a patch of warm golden brown. This light vertical swipe was my first guess at where the central axis at the front of the stomach belonged.



BROADEN THE SPECTRUM

I continued setting out extremes of colour by adding patches of fresh, clean hues of widely varying temperatures: a patch of French Ultramarine mixed with Titanium White to go behind the upper arm, and a hot pink transitioning into an orange for the model's right arm.

Against these strong chromatic colours, I added a silvery ochre mix, made with a pale grey and Cadmium Yellow, to redefine the left hip bone. I also scraped and drew with my fingernail and the edge of the brush to find the collarbone and the angle of the right arm.



LET COLOURS VIBRATE

From here onwards, all other colours, shapes and marks must relate to that first keynote. The next hue added was a pinkish lilac to represent light reflected from the left hip and thigh. I chose a tone similar to the golden brown and felt these two initial colours vibrated together in a pleasing way.

I also used my fingernail to reiterate a line for the front central axis of the body, with its gentle backward slope, as well as a vague indication for the back of the ribcage.



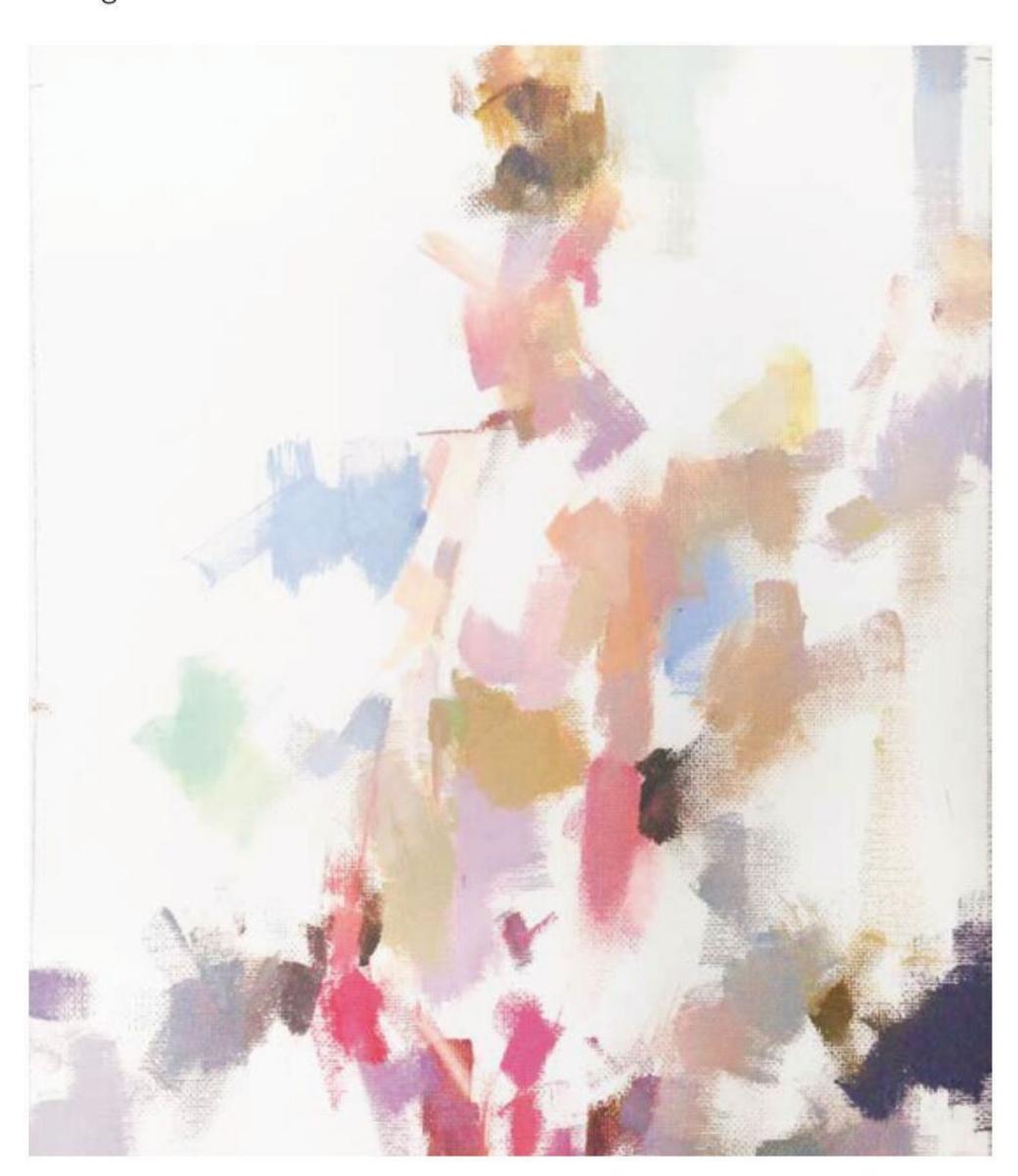
FIND THE HEAD

I had really started to find the figure on the canvas and needed to make a decision about the placement of the head. I drew a light line that sloped gently from below the ribcage to the collarbone, in order to continue that central axis up the front of the body.

I drew some of the essential angles of the head and neck using a combination of warm ochre, hot pink and cooler purple mixes. I also added more background colours in the bottom corners to further connect the figure with the edges of the canvas.



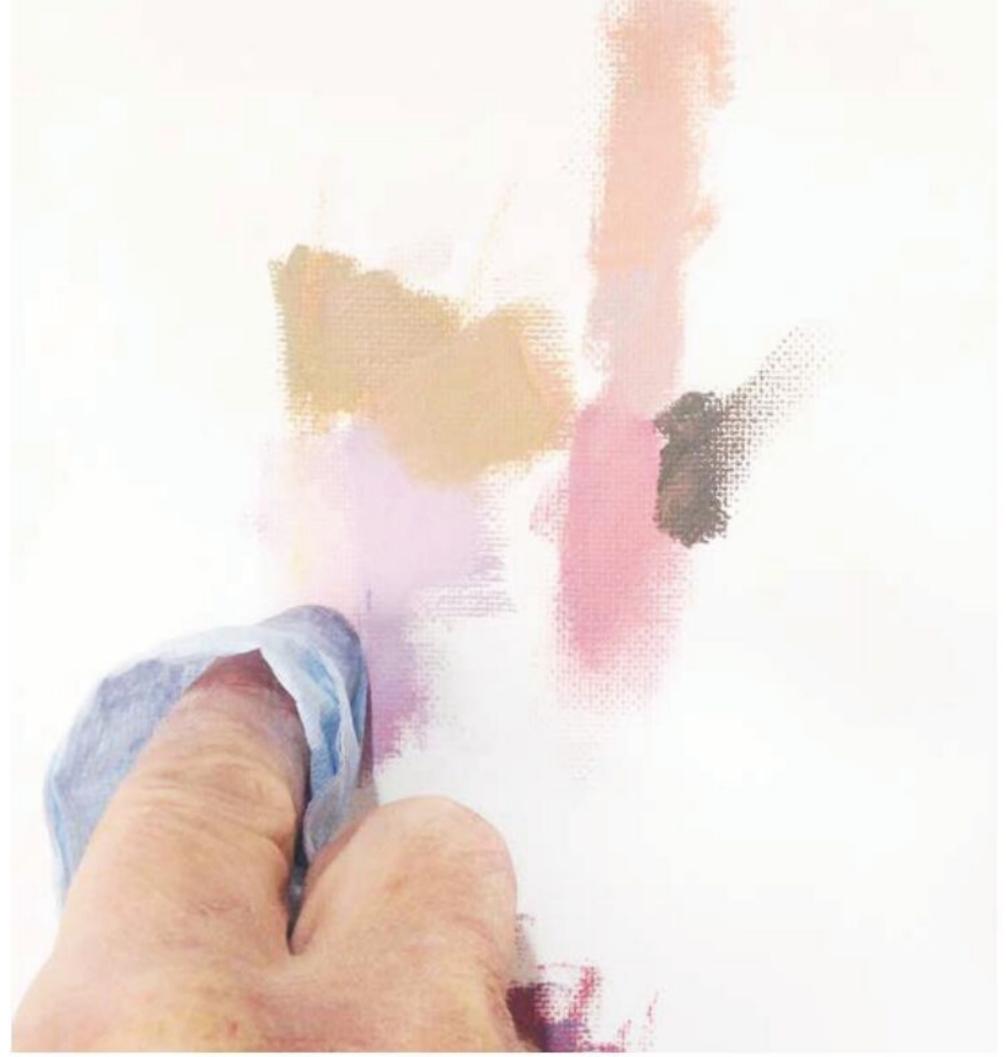
With two mid-tone colours down, it was important to find extremes. I traced the line of the left arm using a warm pink and a dull orange separated by a warmish grey for the lower bicep. The darkest colour then denoted where the arm ended and the background began. I also ran the left thigh to the bottom, anchoring the figure within the canvas.



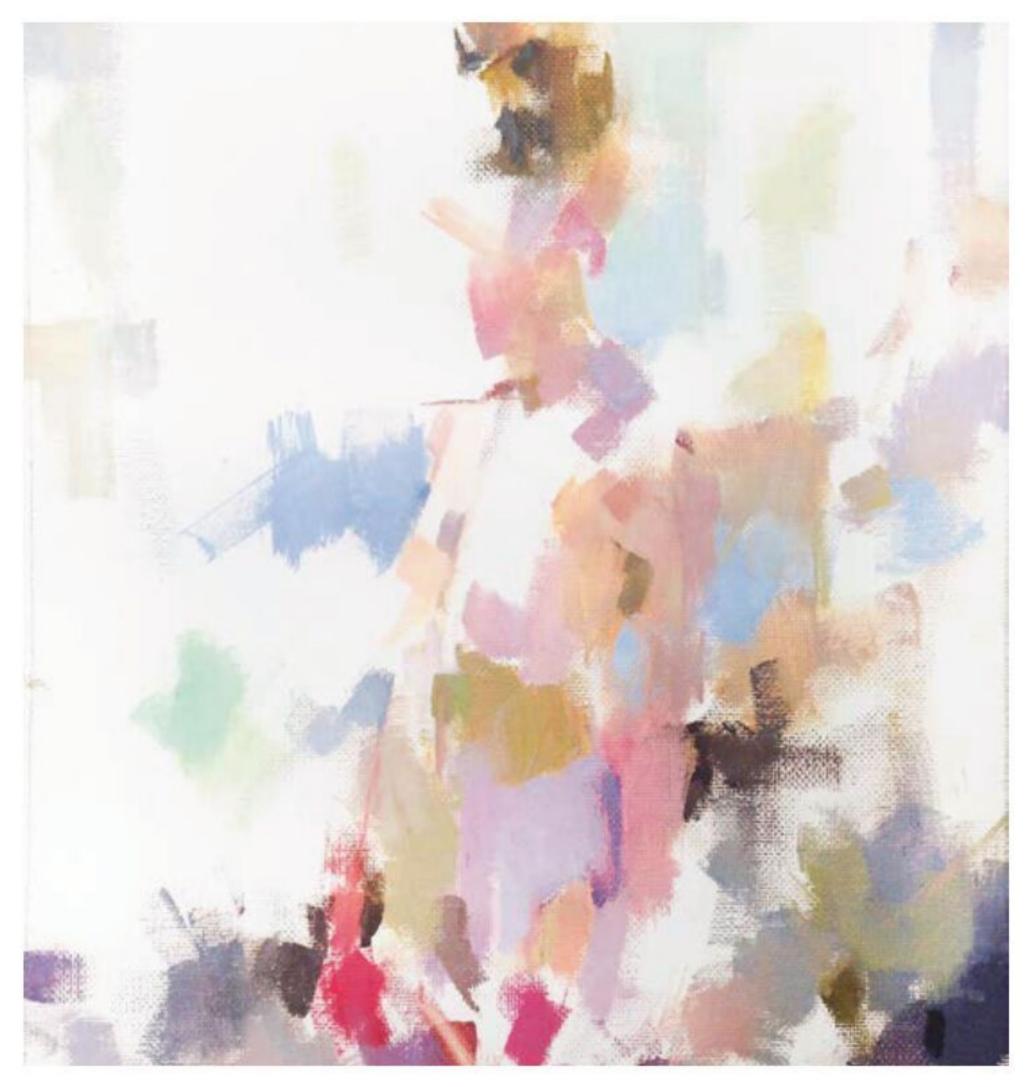
TAKE IT TO THE TOP

Using the axis line as a guide, I added light orange for the right breast and a deeper salmon pink for her right shoulder. These shapes were given definition by a patch of blue similar to the one behind the figure.

Parts of the hair were made as dark as anything else on the painting and then wiped off the top edge of the canvas to complete a pleasing, symmetrical composition. I also drew some simple vertical shapes to hint at background pillars and window elements.



A tutor once described the process of painting as a search "for where one colour ended and another colour began". When one sees a painting as a set of abstract marks jostling for position on a canvas, one doesn't get so attached to an individual mark. This makes it a lot easier to rub them out and reposition them. Using a piece of blue WypAll paper dipped in low-odour thinner, I pushed back the line of the model's left hip, allowing a new colour to be introduced.

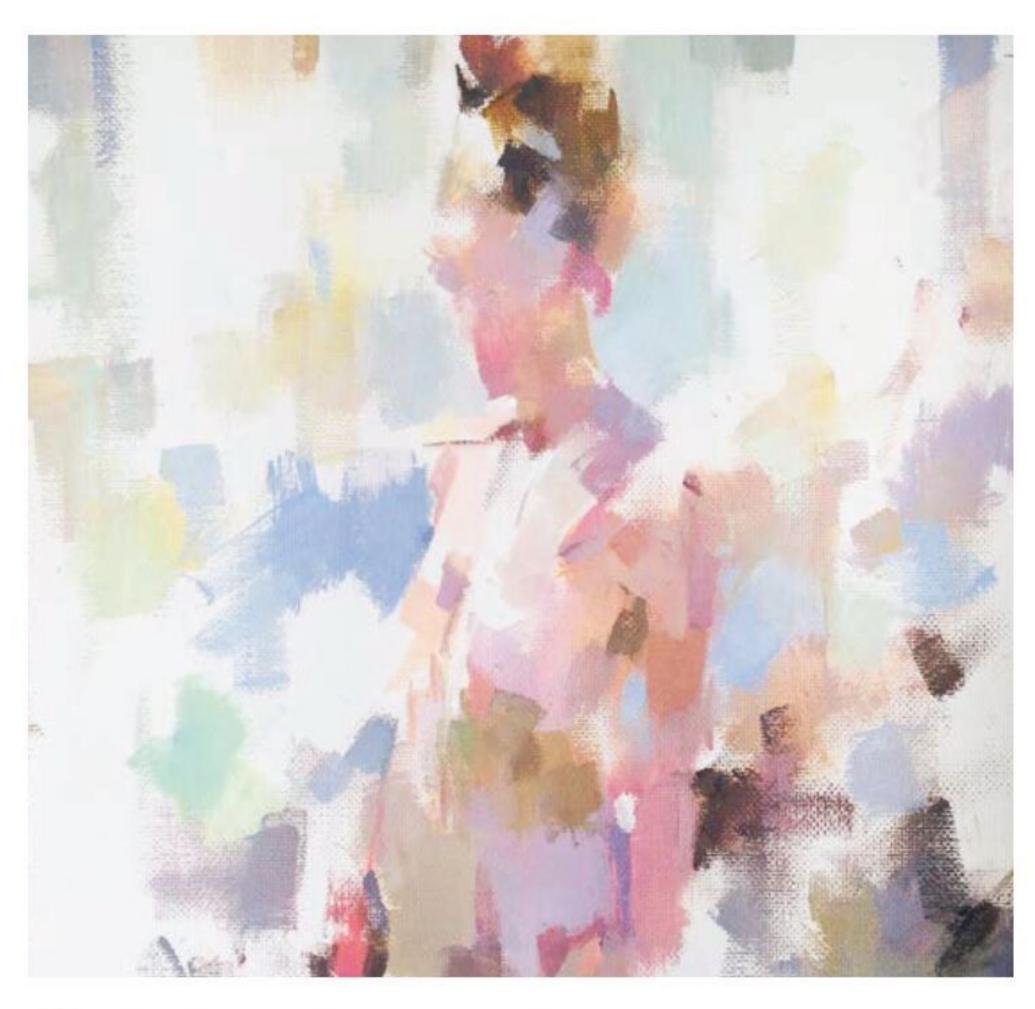


MAKE ADJUSTMENTS

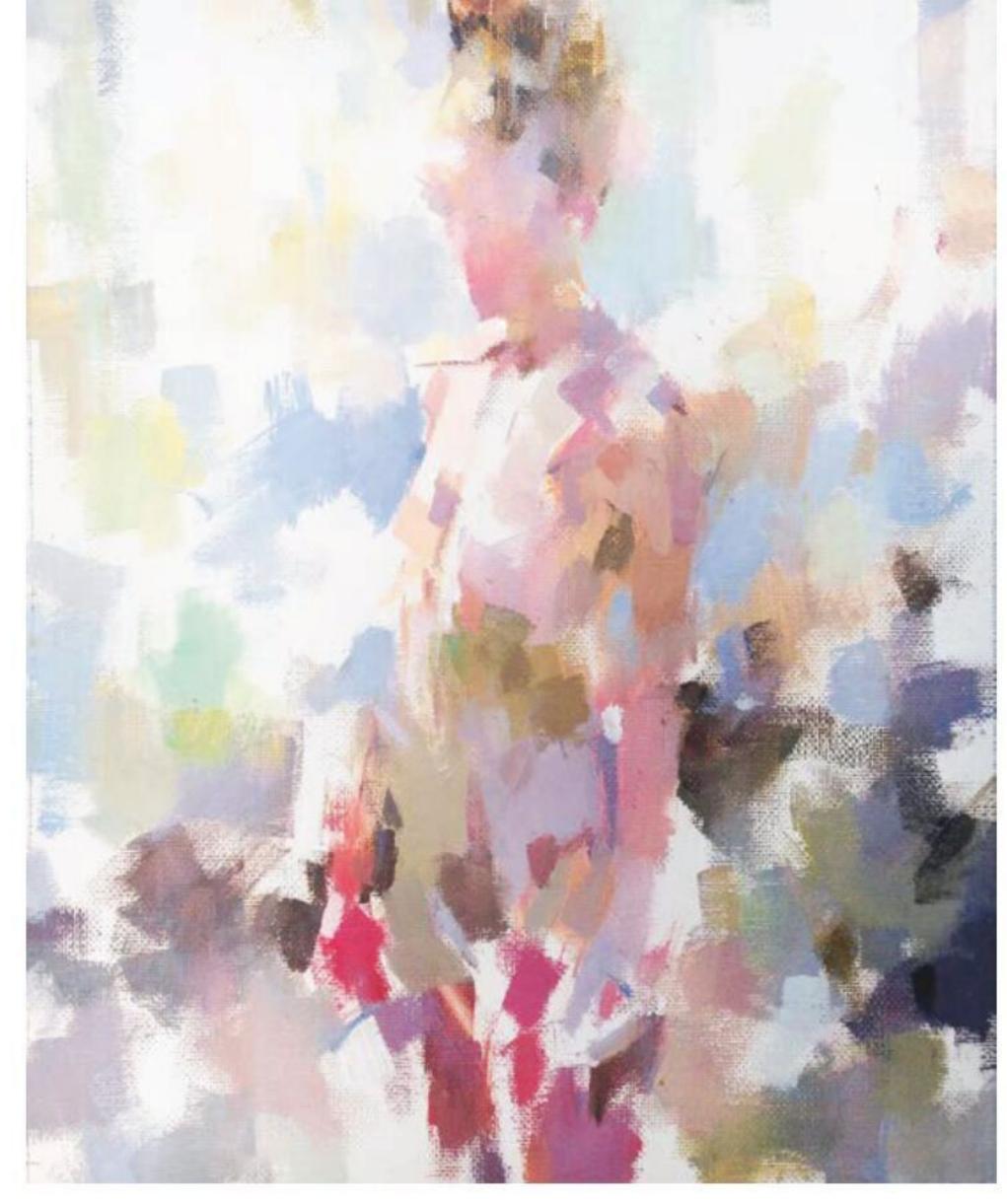
I realised the shoulders and upper torso were too narrow, so I began repositioning the basic shapes around the model's left shoulder and ribcage to make her shoulders appear thrown back and her upper body more substantial.

I used a small tick of dark olive green to define the armpit, the front of the upper arm, and the shadow on the ribcage. Similarly, I used a vertical line of deep purple to define the front of her left forearm. A constant process of checking and readjustment is required so that the drawing and painting happen at the same time. ▶

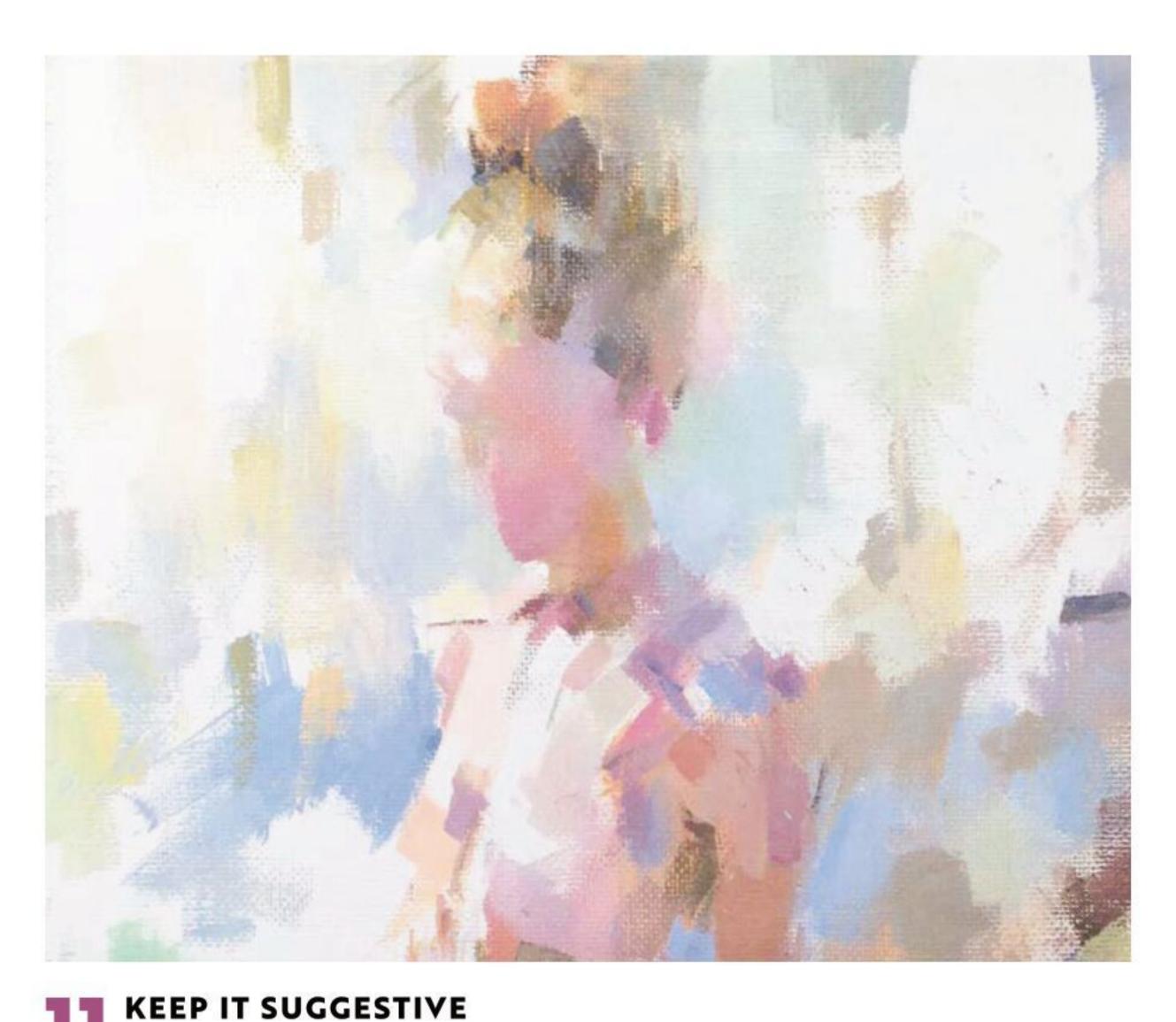
STEP BY STEP



LEAVE LIGHT AND SPACE I wanted to leave a lot of white canvas showing to create the feeling of daylight flooding through large windows behind the subject, illuminating the figure in some places and casting shadows in others. It was important to suggest this while keeping the background at least as abstract as the figure itself, so that the painting of the model could stay pleasingly abstract without looking unfinished.

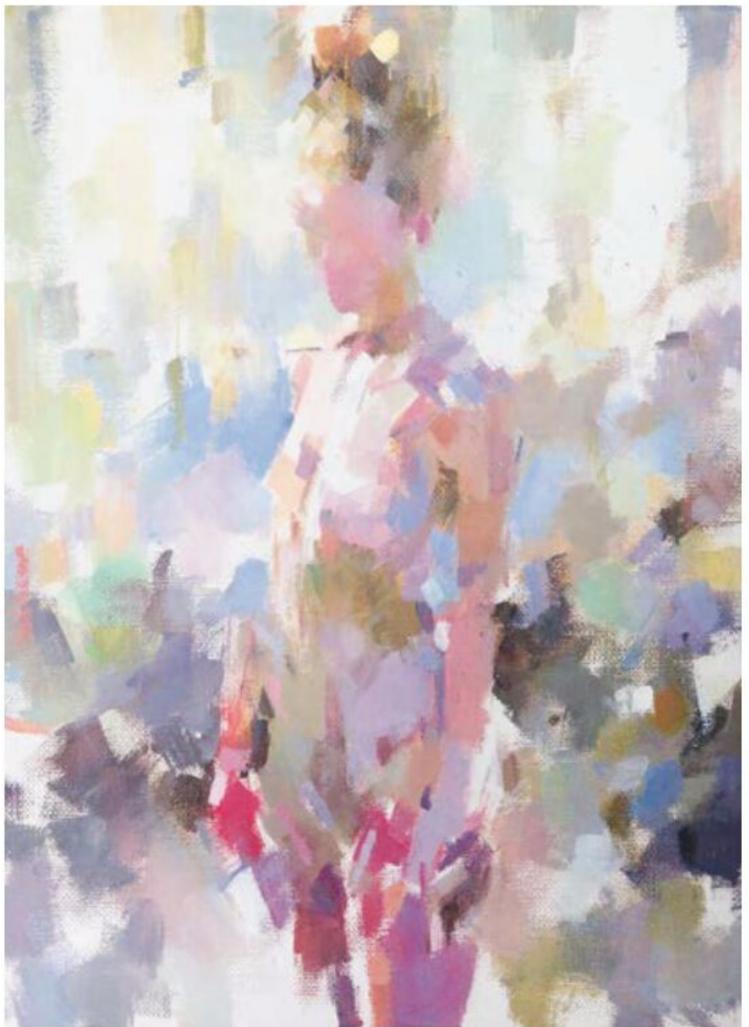


DEVELOP THE DRAWING I made some basic adjustments to the overall shape of the figure here. For example, I moved the edge of her right hip slightly to the right, which helped to accentuate the overall curve of her body. I also added a little more mass to the lower half of the painting, meaning that the majority of pure white canvas was now in the upper half of the picture.



I made a few refinements, including a little more work on the head. Although it needed to be convincing, I wanted the head to be painted as simply as possible so as not to be out of keeping with the rest of the figure.

I hoped that the figure as a whole might convey something of the personality and bearing of the model, without having to make a detailed study of her face. To this end it helped that the head was, for the most part, silhouetted against the light of the windows.



KNOW WHEN TO STOP KNOW WHEN 10 310.

Knowing what you wanted to achieve – the statement you wanted to make or the feeling you wanted to convey - helps you to know when to stop painting. In this piece I had wanted to capture the light and space in the studio, and the calmness and poise of the model. I felt I'd achieved this economically so it was time to put down the brush.

□

10 MINUTES WITH

Soraya French

The Society of Women Artists (SWA) president on mixed media, bold colour and gender imbalance. Interview: *Rebecca Bradbury*

When did you know you wanted to be an artist? It wasn't my plan to be an artist. At school I concentrated on academic subjects. My art career has been built quite organically, through having a furious hobby and sheer determination.

Are you self-taught? Self-taught in as much as I didn't have formal art training. Part of it was my own discipline and practicing hard, but over the years I've worked with some really outstanding artists and mentors.

What is your favourite subject to paint?

Anything that allows me to indulge in playing with shape, colour and texture. Figurative art has been my favourite, but my students wanted me to teach landscapes and seascapes, and I've come to love these too.

How did you develop your mixed media style? I was a watercolour painter for a number of years and worked in pastel too.

Then I went onto acrylics. Having tasted each one individually, I found that mixing them and adding in collage was a really liberating

way of working.

What is the one art product you can't live without? My acrylics. I am known as a mixed media artist, but acrylic is my main passion. I exclusively work with Golden Artists Colors and I'm proud to be their UK working artist.

Do you have any tips for choosing colours? I don't discriminate when it comes to colour, but I tell my students not to confuse themselves by having a palette of many colours. With the warms and cools of each primary, plus white, you can mix pretty much anything.





'I am known as a mixed media artist, but acrylic painting is my main passion'



How can an artist be bolder with colour?

It's a combination of knowing a little colour theory and using your instinct. Don't just go colourful because you think it's a trend; be true to yourself.

What are the main aims of the SWA? Its

primary purpose is to promote and celebrate the outstanding work of women artists. The president and the council also curate an annual exhibition at the Mall Galleries.

Do gender imbalances still exist in art?

Unfortunately they do. It is a better situation than it was when the SWA was founded in 1855, but if you look at the lists of artists represented at the main galleries, the number of men generally still outweighs the number of women.

Who are your books for?

They are for artists who want to push their work a little further, who want to learn more and get further inspiration. It's not just about technique, but also about attitudes to the creative process.

What advice do you have for budding artists? Being an artist is not a 9-to-5 job. When you're not making art, it's still occupying your mind. You're still thinking about different methods, browsing the internet or magazines or books, and the

learning process never, ever stops.

sorayafrench.com

My wometown square. the gry commul square

Squares are public spaces commonly found in the heart of a traditional town used for community gatherings. Other names for town square square, prazza, plaza, and town green.

Squares are one of the most important places in a city since Romans they stablished them as places where people gather, people meet, people discuss, people get information, Everybody has got a square in their life, everybody has got a square in their dulatown I first saw this place with the city council

building and a wonderful playground under the strade of huge, enormous, pine trees.

Urban sketcher ISABEL CARMONA ANDREU shows how adding texts and setting themes can improve the usefulness of your drawings

WRITING IN DRAWINGS

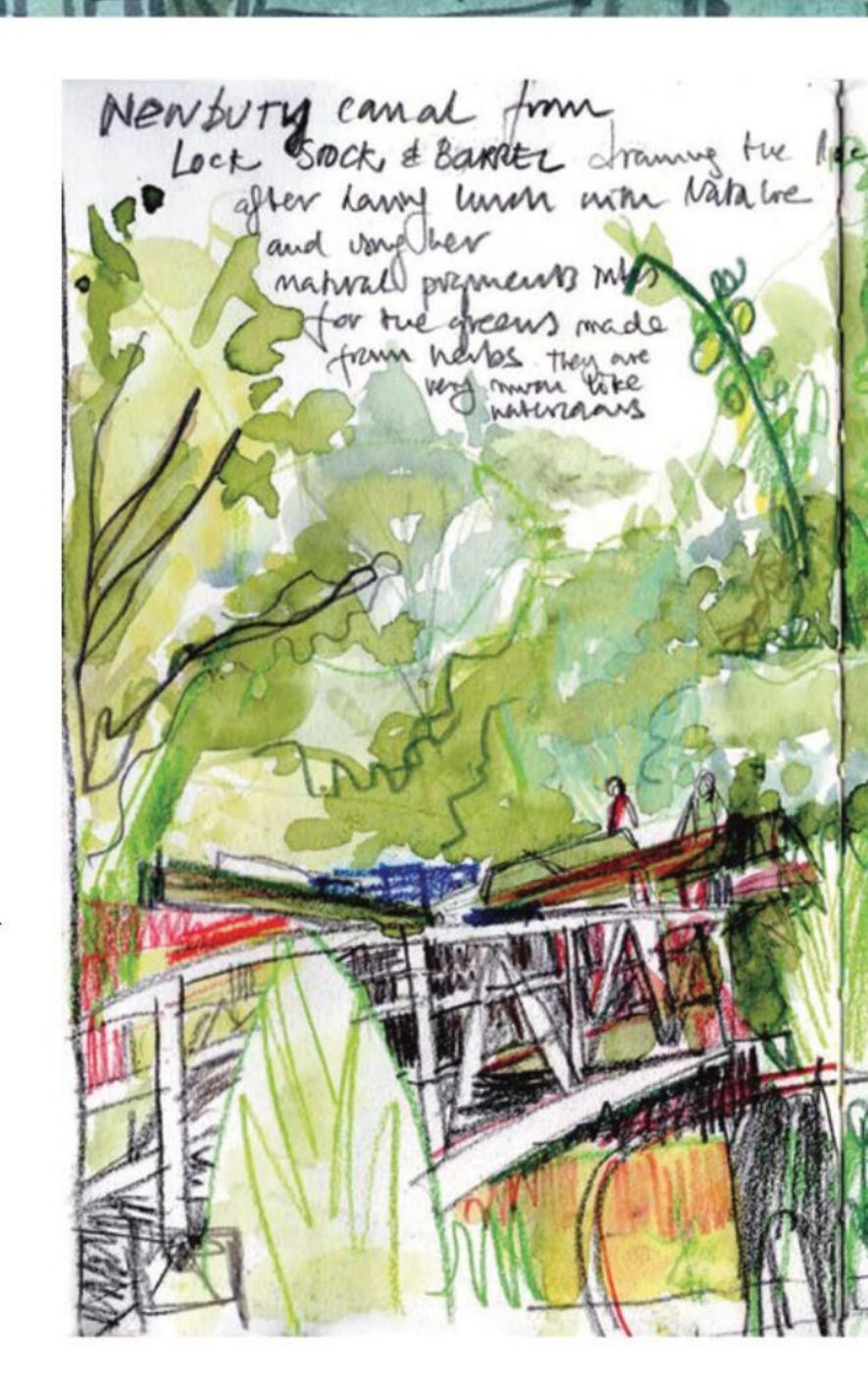
There are various ways in which writing on an urban sketch can complete the information given by the drawing itself. Firstly, it can help writing up expectations (before) and reflections (after) the sketching takes place, pointing out where there might be changes between them, highlighting any surprises that were noticed whilst drawing.

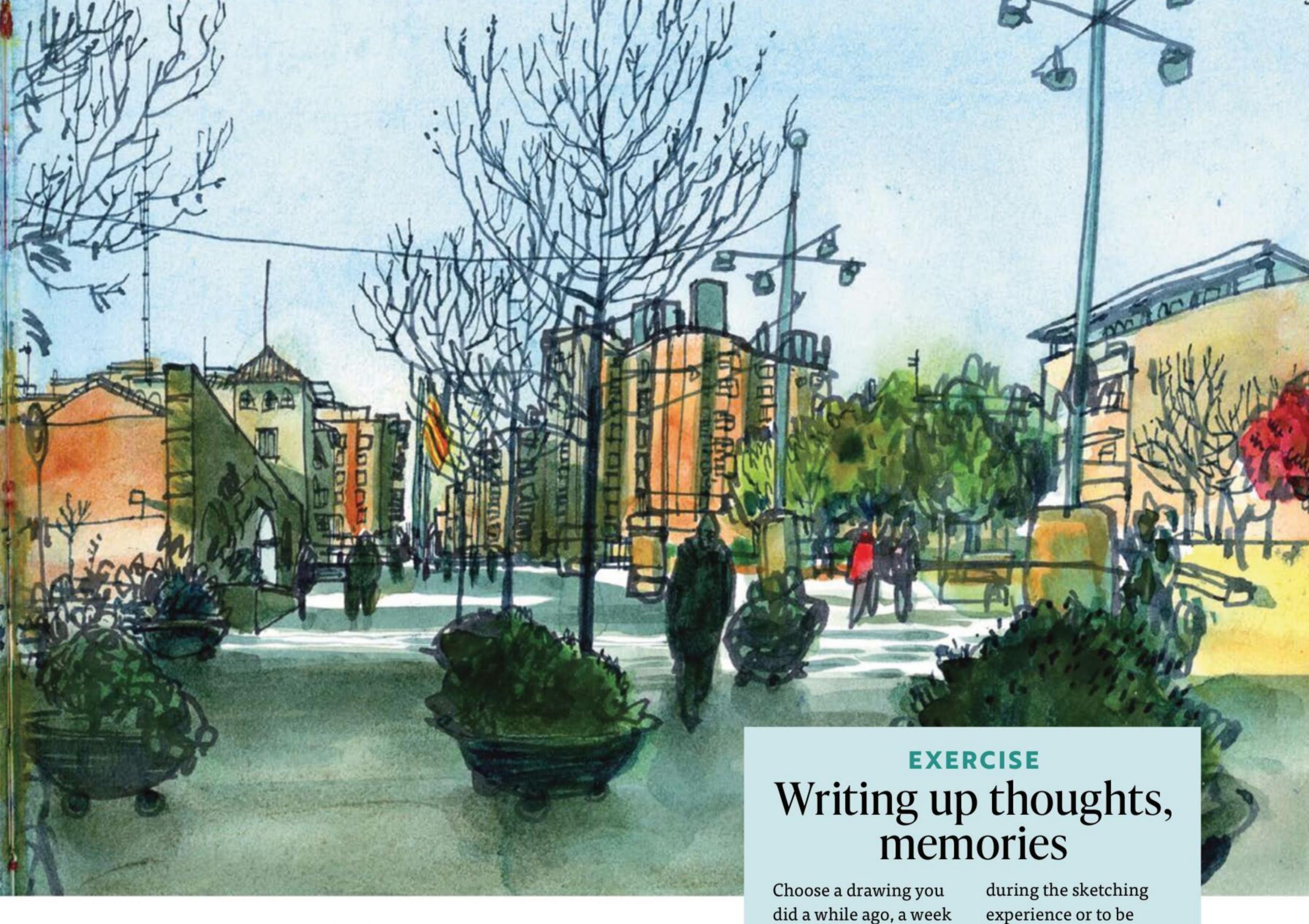
Secondly, it can complete the drawing, capturing non-visual signals such as sounds, conversations, smells or other multisensorial experiences, tastes or tactile

sensations, in a way completing the visual recording of the event witnessed.

Thirdly, writing can be part of the story recorded, picking up on urban graffiti or other written text as the main part of the drawing.

Finally, writing notes and thoughts about a drawing, before, during or after drawing, links the act of drawing with the thinking process, distils memories and emotions that the drawing itself evokes and communicates them to the viewer alongside the image, enriching the meaning and adding complexity.







TOP Victor Swasky, My Hometown Square, Barbera del Valles, pen and watercolour on paper

In this sketch, Victor presents a feeling of weather and cold in the shadow over his hometown square. The trees are also bare of leaves and there is a large, blue winter sky. Consciously, he left a space on the page to write about squares and what they represent as communal spaces, personal thoughts that make the drawing and the square his.

LEFT Isabel Carmona Andreu, View from the Lock Stock and Barrel, watercolour, pigment and colour pencil on paper

The blank space was perfect for adding a short story about how the sketch came about. It enriches the drawing, helping to remember aspects like company and method. Now the memory is stronger, it is easy to remember we took cover from the rain here and enjoyed trying out the natural pigments.

or a month is sufficient. Look at it and remember the story. Write a few notes evoked by the drawing about things that were not drawn up. It could be a person that you remember, or how it felt to be there, or what mood you were in.

If there is space on the page add your notes, there or on the opposite side of the page. Leave the drawing aside a few more days and look at it again. Now reading your notes as well as looking at the sketch does the writing complete the story?

As noticed opposite, writing can be part of the drawing process and as such, if desired, space can be left blank or set aside for writing

completed afterwards.

Sometimes it pays to give one's thoughts some time before putting them down, allowing the memory to settle a bit before remembering it. This way writing is also a little creative and not too analytical, losing its stiff, factual nature and becoming part of our creativity.

There are various ways to develop your own writing style on a drawing. Your lettering, the practice of writing will be very personal. Some sketchers write a neat version of their own handwriting, others do a few scribbled notes, and some develop their own lettering for the purpose. ▶



THINK OF THEMES

A way to gather ideas and research on any topic of interest is to present them as a collection of urban sketches, focused on a theme.

Complexity in a themed sketch can be explored in many ways, for example by varying the focus while spending time in a space and sketching various aspects of the same scene in smaller drawings, creating a series of vignettes of the space. In a big space, or a big city, storyboarding may be a useful technique to explore different viewpoints of the same scene quickly.

The same space or experience can be explored in various ways; a long-view sketch can give you the moment in time, whereas a more fragmented series of vignettes, put together as a storyboard, can add information at other levels, from architectural details to action details (what else was happening?) to companions' portraits

(who is there?). The effect is much more dynamic. Our minds read the time that it took to make the sketches, like in a film, and the mini stories complete the long-view sketch.

The world is a complex environment and so is the urban sketcher's mind, where thoughts and memories are triggered by the act of drawing. Complexity also derives from the diverse feelings that any situation can produce and that want to be communicated by drawing, such as elation and energy, fun and surprise. The exploration of that complexity through repeated drawing on location and communication to others of the findings of the drawn experiments is at the heart of urban sketching.

This is an edited extract from Isabel's book, Urban Sketching – An Artist's Guide, published by The Crowood Press. crowood.com







ABOVE Isabel Carmona Andreu, Warsaw Square (long view), fountain pen and colour pencil on paper

There are many tourists coming and going on the square, learning about the city's demise during the Second World War when Warsaw was completely destroyed.

The buildings here are all reconstructions following the original plans that were miraculously saved. The bar terraces at ground level are now the main source of income. It is a classical urban sketch of a square inhabited by tourists, pretty and complex but static – it lacks some action.

LEFT Isabel Carmona Andreu, Warsaw Square (storyboard), fountain pen and colour pencil on paper

This urban sketch was much more fun to do than the previous sketch. Here, there are only details, salient points, the mini sketches zoom into the action, picking up things of interest, doing a quick portrait, collecting elements of the overall story. It complements the earlier wide panorama of the square with minutiae that inform about the here and now. \Box





tennoera

SUZY ROSE FASHT has the recipes for you

to try this traditional painting medium



THE BENEFITS

Egg tempera is a unique and ancient form of paint. It is excellent for highly detailed work and building up a painting in layers. The finished picture imparts particularly luminous colour with a chalky matt surface and an inner glow. The paint dries very quickly so unlike oil it cannot be manipulated once it has been applied.

This means the composition needs to be worked out in advance, so you know where you're going. The areas of colour are built up with layers of tiny strokes. In this way it is a very calming and grounding way of working as it encourages patience. Once the paint hardens it is very long lasting.

THE PROCESS

Egg tempera paint consists of powder pigment particles mixed with an egg emulsion. Over the next three pages, I will show you how to make the emulsion first, then how to mix up the paint, before a guide to applying it properly.

RECIPE 1

How to make an egg emulsion

For this you will need:

- A hen's egg (preferably organic and as fresh as possible), cooled in the fridge
- Distilled water
- Oil of spike lavender
- A clean jar with a lid
- A bowl or container





Separate the yolk from the white by cracking the egg over a bowl and catching the yolk in the palm of your hand. Discard the shell and white.

Roll the yolk between your hands to remove any bits of white on it.

Gently pinch the yolk with your thumb and forefinger, keeping it intact. Hold it over a jar.

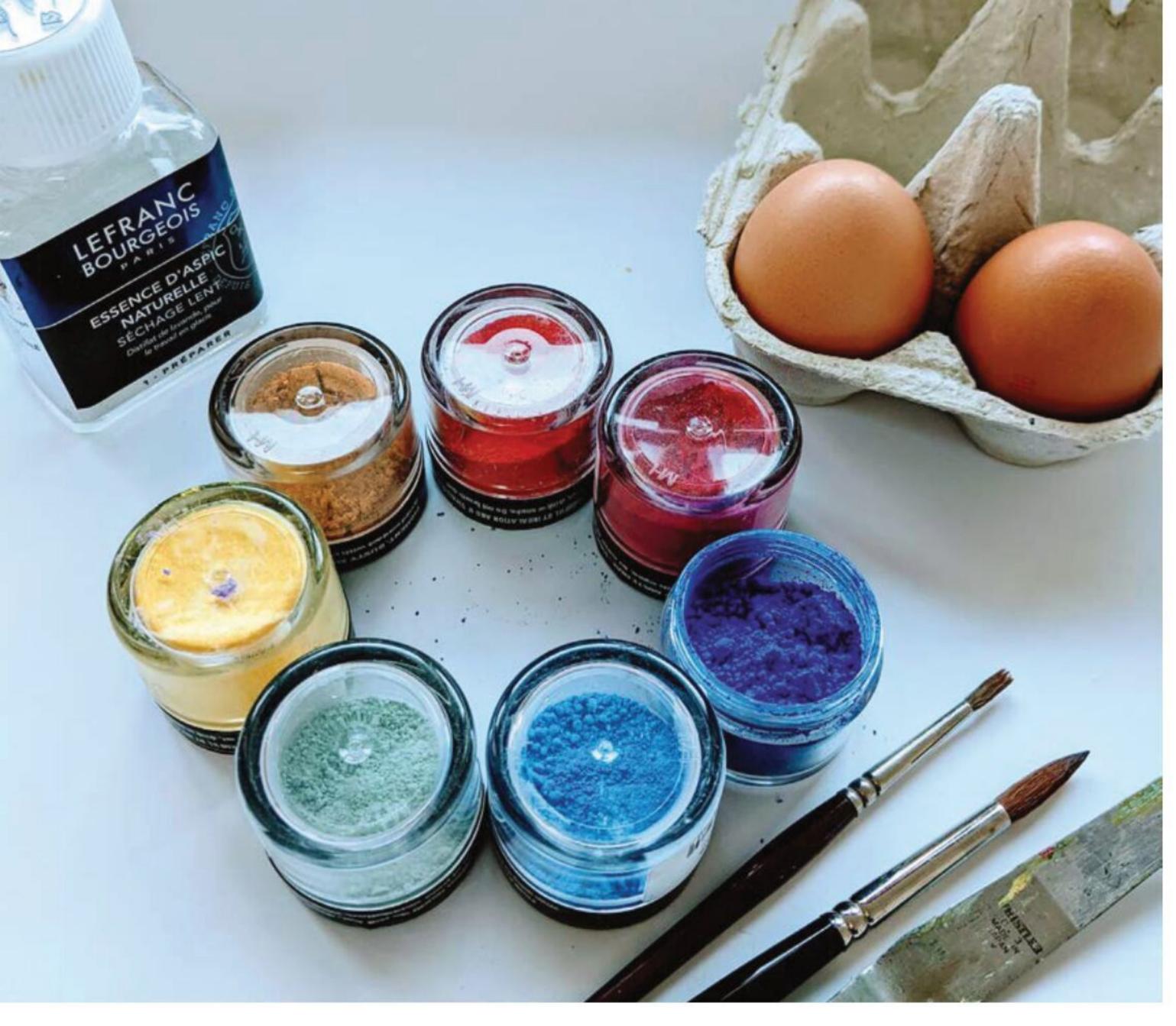
Pierce the yolk sac with the end of a brush and let the

yolk flow into the jar. Take care to keep hold of the sac, which can then be discarded.

Add an equal amount of distilled water to the yolk in the jar.

Add one drop of oil of spike lavender to the egg and water.

Put the lid on and give it a shake. This mixture should last for two days if kept overnight in the fridge. ▶



RECIPE 2

How to make an egg tempera paint

For this you will need:

- A palette (a ceramic tile or piece of strong glass works well)
- A palette knife
- Powder pigments
- Egg emulsion (see recipe 1 on page 53)
- A pipette or syringe
- Use a palette knife to scoop out a little pigment and place it at the corner of your palette.
- Use a pipette to draw up some egg emulsion and place it on your palette.
- Mix the egg emulsion and pigment with your palette knife. Keep mixing until all the pigment particles dissolve into a runny paste which is your paint.

RECIPE 3

How to make an egg tempera painting

For this you will need:

- A gesso-primed board (this should be true gesso, made from a mixture of rabbit-skin glue and gypsum or chalk, not acrylic gesso)
- A selection of soft brushes (I use a size 8 round brush, a size 4 flat brush plus a miniature brush for detail)
- A sheet of paper
- A sheet of tracing paper
- A biro or hard pencil
- A sheet of carbon paper (make your own by rubbing an earth pigment onto a sheet of cartridge paper)

Begin by laying down the ground. Use your brush to add water to the paint (I chose Terre Verte for this example) in order to thin it out. Pick up some paint, dab off any excess on a sheet of kitchen roll or scrap paper first, then begin applying your strokes to the gesso board. Build up your first layer of colour with cross-hatched strokes, lightly feathered across the surface, working from one side across to the other.

Don't try to tidy up streaks on top of wet paint. Instead, wait for them to dry then repeat a second and third layer. I applied a second layer of Zinc White, which is softer and more transparent than Titanium White.



Repeat alternate layers as necessary to create a good mid-toned surface for your painting. Leave to dry.

Next we must transfer our composition. Make a line drawing of your composition on a piece of paper. Place the carbon paper on top of your board, carbon side down. Place your drawing on top, facing upwards. Place the tracing paper on top of your drawing.

Next, being careful not to move the paper layers, use a biro or hard pencil to trace your drawing through the papers and onto the board (check that you're pressing hard enough, and your drawing is being

transferred, by carefully lifting the paper).

When you have finished transferring your drawing to the board, remove the papers and "fix" the lines of your drawing by painting over them with some egg emulsion mixture.

Now you are ready to paint. Decide on your palette in advance and use the previous recipe to mix up your chosen colours. Begin to fill in the main areas of your composition using cross-hatched strokes, building up thin layers until the colours are strong enough. On the opposite page are some examples of my paintings for inspiration.





Examples

Here are two lovely egg tempera paintings by Suzy that show the full possibilities of the medium

ABOVE Magnolia on A Sunny Windowsill, egg tempera on panel, 35x45cm

This still life shows how dark and dramatic egg tempera can be if you choose strong colours in your palette. This palette included earth colours, which gave an opaque quality.

LEFT Beady-eyed Blackbird on the Ted Hughes Poetry Trail, egg tempera on panel, 40x40cm

This painting was inspired by a visit to Stover Lake near where I live in Devon. I started by filling in my main areas of colour with a very limited palette. The detail was added at the end, once I was sure all the tones and shapes were in the right place and correctly balanced.

 $suzyfasht.com \Box$



Paint ret



Shiny and see-through surfaces are a daunting challenge to replicate, so the Pastel Society's LIZ BALKWILL has set an exercise that will help you simplify the process

ANY YEARS AGO, I was set a task that was to accompany my application for a place at art school. I was asked to make a drawing of an apple, together with peel and paring knife, that must be placed on top of a mirrored surface. At the time I remember feeling a little overwhelmed and rather intimidated by the whole idea. Little did I know that decades later I would be making an artistic



lections

career out of painting reflections in their many forms.

Many of my own students are initially daunted when confronted by a still life that contains glass or metal as they often find it too advanced or difficult. However, once they have learnt how to break down and approach the rendering of reflective surfaces, there has been no holding them back – and it is this approach that I want to show you here.

Creating a convincing impression of reflective objects does require careful observation of the subject. The most pleasing aspect when suggesting any reflective surface, is the abstract quality of the shapes and the mark making that results. If you are a less experienced artist, you may like to start with a coloured glass object as it has more solidity than clear glass.

Recycled glass is my personal favourite. It is thicker and has the lovely turquoise edges that is fun to suggest. Jars of foodstuffs provide us with two challenges: not only the glass receptacle with its contents, but also the reflections and highlights. Metal or enamel jar lids give us the opportunity to explore colours for different metal finishes and their highlights. You could also consider tarnished or rusted enamelware if you wanted more interesting textures to depict.

With metal objects, a fairly matt surface such as pewter is a good choice if you require a confidence builder, perhaps moving on to brushed stainless steel, and then some of the coloured metals, brass and copper. The highly polished metals, such as silver, have the strongest tonal contrasts with the brightest highlights and therefore pose a greater challenge.

EXERCISE

AIM

To make a still life painting of reflective objects, perhaps also on a reflective surface, while approaching these reflections in a methodical manner that helps you to simplify what you see.

DURATION

The example took 2-3 hours, but spend as long as you need on this exercise initially while you get used to each individual stage.

MATERIALS

Pastels are a good quick way to approach this exercise, though coloured pencils or paint would also work. If using pastels, a blending tool is also helpful.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

When it comes to painting reflections, simplification is key. Suggestion is more powerful than over describing.

This exercise will teach you how to accurately render complicated reflections by breaking them down into individual stages that are easier to focus upon. ▶

THE PROCESS



SET THINGS UP

It is important to control the way the light falls on a still life arrangement. It needs to stay constant. I use a "shadow box" most of the time – you can make a simple version using two sides of a cardboard box to "trap" the light.

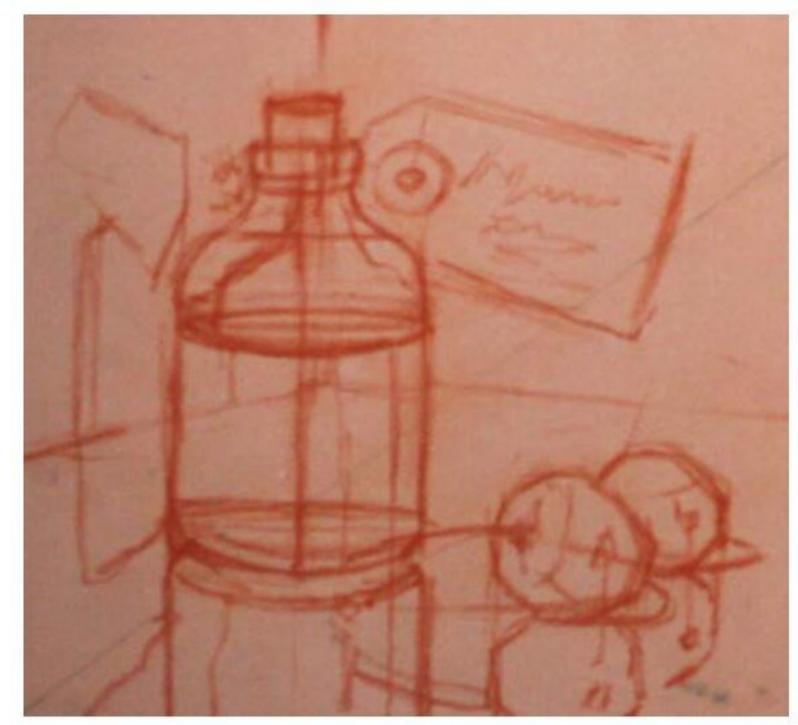
I like to think that this is like the stage in a theatre, that provides a space where I place my objects and adjust elements until I find something that pleases me. An alternative approach is to use natural light coming through a window, preferably a northlight that will stay constant.

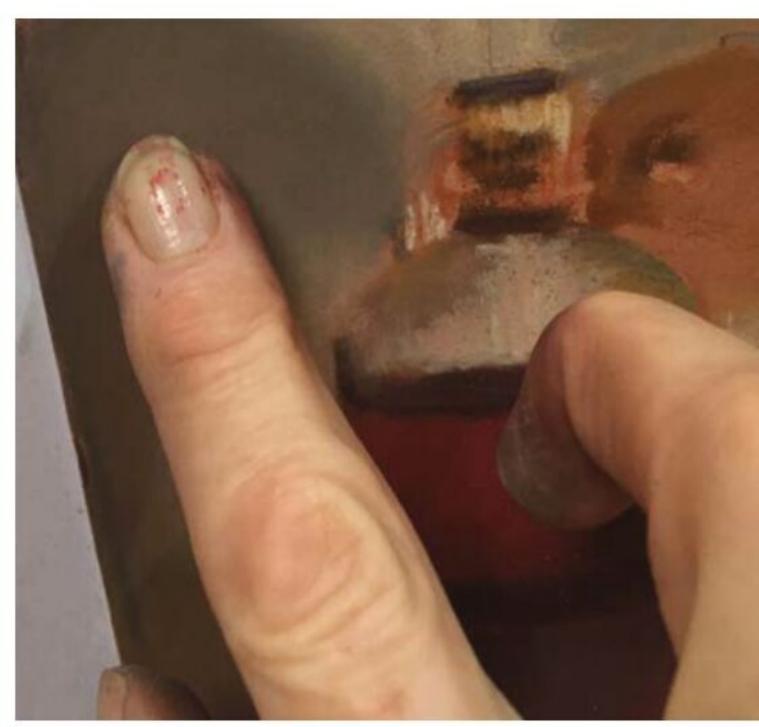
If you want to have subtle reflections on the tabletop, try using either a piece of varnished wood, a marble chopping board, a sheet of glass or even a piece of acetate to produce the desired surface reflection.



MAKE A VALUE SKETCH This next stage will help you be selective and learn to simplify a composition before you start painting. Look closely at the set-up and squint your eyes. This limits the amount of detail you can see and reduces the information to just the main shapes and values.

In order to help you remember this simplified version of the subject, it is useful to make a value sketch - known as a "notan". Focus purely on recording the basic tones of your subject in this sketch and forget about colour. This notan will then become a road map for how to proceed with the finished painting.







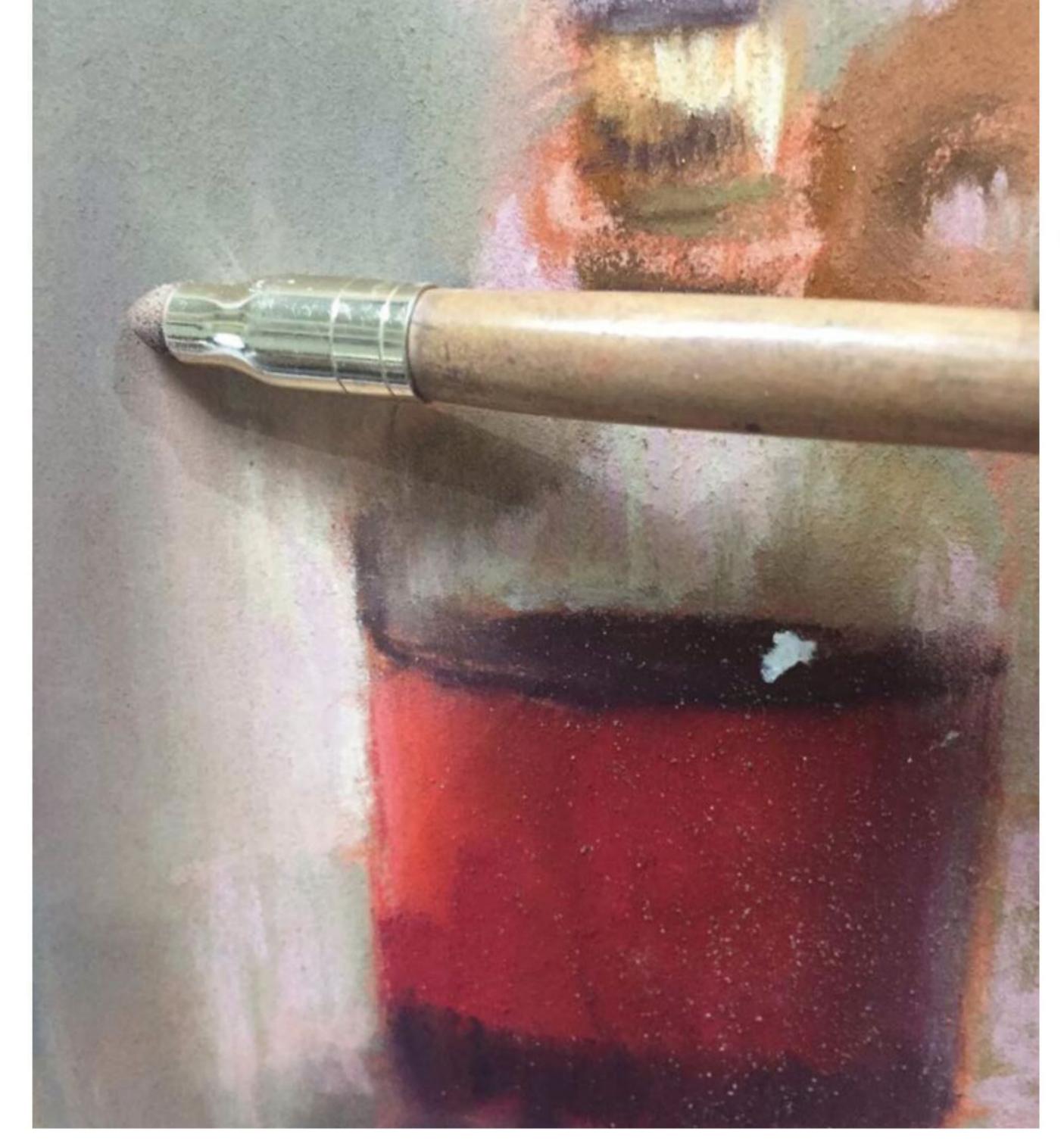
BLOCK IN THE OBJECTS

Start your main painting by drawing up the focal structure of the composition. With your notan for reference, begin to lay in the darkest shapes, letting the value sketch help you to calibrate how dark or light each of the shapes should be.

Try not to use pure colour here, but rather layer a few pastels together, often combining a warm colour with a cool one. Once blended, they will neutralise each other and give a greyed mix.

Blend with your index finger, using just the lightest of pressures. Add some more colour to the mix once the value has been finally determined.

Repeat the process with each object in turn, once again starting with the darks before moving onto the lighter and brighter hues. Placing a whiter highlight at this stage can assist in both showing the direction of the light source. In this example, I added highlights to the clear glass and the skin of the cherries.



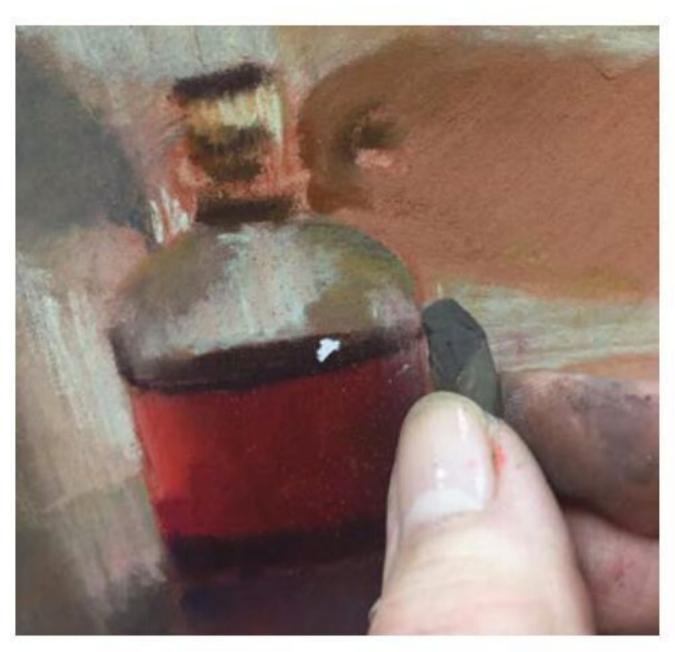
BUILD SOLID REFLECTIONS

If you've placed your objects on a reflective surface, their reflections must be in alignment with the objects above. In comparison to objects, these reflections will appear duller, softer at the edges and have less contrast. Everything shifts closer to the mid values.

This results in darks becoming lighter, the lights darker and the mid values staying as they are, albeit duller. The reflections of the whiter highlight spots will line up with the actual highlights too, but they will also be much softer – aim for just a suggestion.

To recreate these tabletop reflections, blend the layered pastels as before, using your finger with light pressure. Place areas of the background down as you block-in the reflections, making sure to replicate the same value relationships. Adjust the warmer and cooler areas produced by the light source.

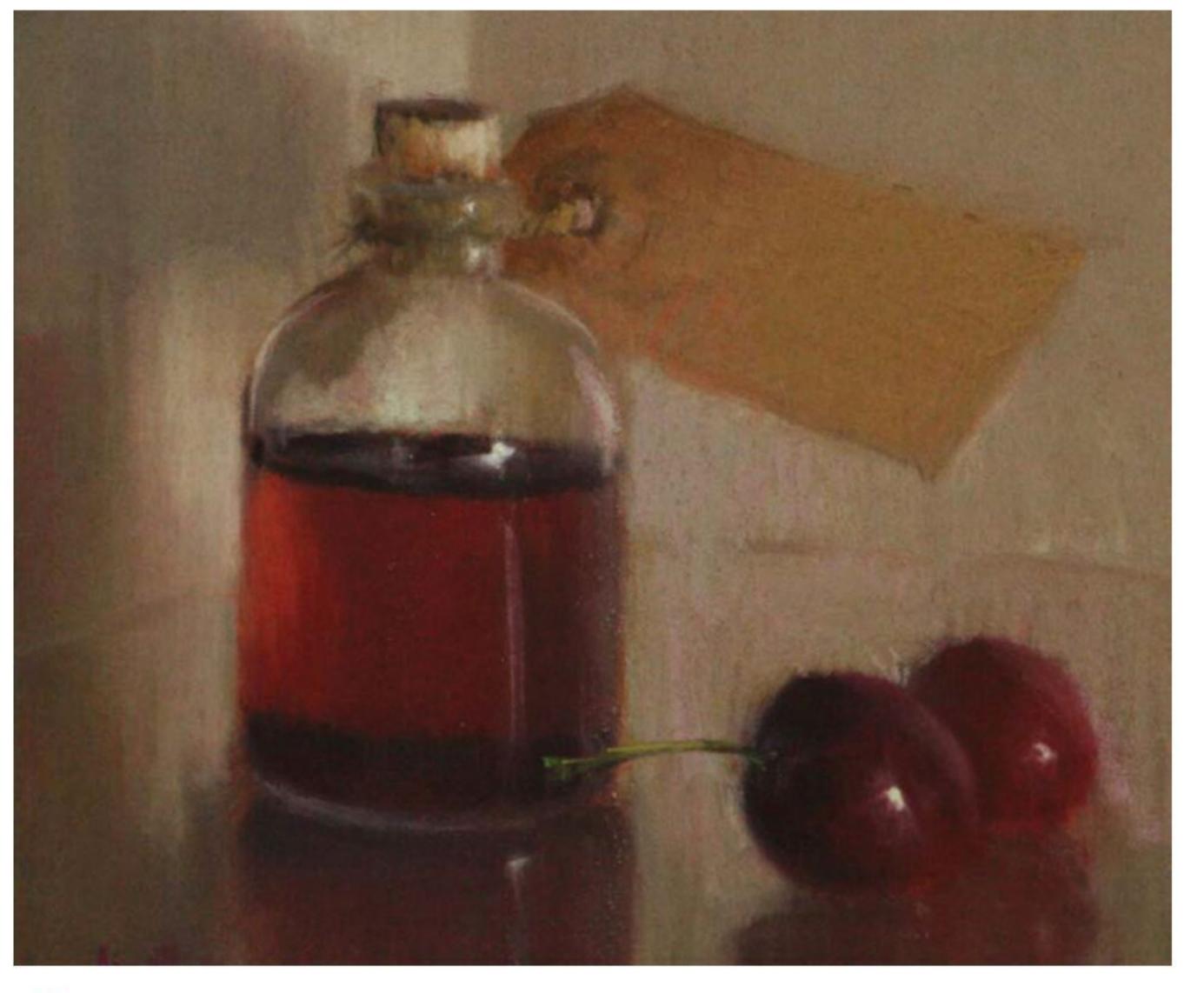
Look for any "lost and found edges," either out-of-focus or sharp edges – as they can play an important role in establishing form and allowing objects to exist within a space. If an edge needs softening more than just your finger allows, try using a blending tool instead.



5 BUILD THE SEE-THROUGH AREAS

Now start to work on the parts of the objects that are purely see-through, such as the parts of a glass bottle that doesn't contain liquid and instead shows the background behind. When looking through clear glass, shapes may appear distorted and will possibly be a fraction darker. Pay close attention to the sides of the glass and the fruit where the background is reflected on them.

Use small pieces of pastel to suggest these detailed areas. Twist and break a small conte stick to give a sharp edge with which to draw. I use generous amounts of pastel on my work and I find pastel pencils often remove rather than place pastel on the surface. These small broken pieces lay nicely on top of the pastel and work well together.



ADD SUITABLE HIGHLIGHTS
Finish by addressing the highlights and any other surface reflections. The nature of highlights is a great indicator of whether a surface reads as tarnished, dull or highly polished. For example, a textured surface (such as the peel of a citrus fruit) can break up a highlight, whereas a softer surface (such as

the skin of a peach) produces a highlight with a softer edge.

This stage may seem insignificant, yet the quality of a highlight and what it conveys about an object's surface texture is a hugely important final touch to the illusion we are trying to achieve.

lizbalkwill.com





LIZET DINGEMANS suggests new colour combinations to help you develop your practice

THE BENEFIT

When constructing your palette, the possibilities are endless. Knowing this, it should be evident there is no unique, correct solution to finding the best palette for every occasion. This challenge is therefore not meant to define a single answer to the best landscape or still life palette, but to suggest some places to start which can help you find your own solutions.

THE PROCESS

Cadmium Yellow, Lemon Yellow, Chrome Yellow, Indian Yellow...

When setting up your palette, there are more pigments to choose from than ever before. But how do you know which one to use for

your particular painting? Which are the best and most versatile colours for landscape, portrait or still life? In this challenge, I will detail what to look out for and suggest pigments to use when setting up your palette, be it for a still life, landscape or portrait painting.

First a bit about how to set up your palette. The classical way of arranging the colours on your palette is from light to dark, adding the white and black (if used) at the outer edges of the palette, and then adding the colours in between, usually in the following order: white, yellow, orange, red, purple, blue, black, green. Many great artists of the past have set up their palettes this way, including Anders Zorn and John Singer Sargent. This

structural method of setting up is popular because it allows you to reach for your colours instinctively, given that the yellows are near the lighter end of the palette, whereas the blues are near the darker end.

Of course, which pigments to use depend on the type of work you will be doing; painting a landscape has very different demands to mixing skin tones. Always remember that a great palette will not automatically lead to a great painting - and using more pigments is not always better, either. Some artists have restricted their use of colour with beautiful results - including Zorn, looked at in detail in Artists & Illustrators magazine recently [see issues 419-422], and illustrator Mead Schaeffer.

Still life palette

Recommended for: Intermediate painters wanting an all-round palette; still life painting

All you really need for a palette is the three primaries and a white. Nevertheless, this all-round palette is a good way to start expanding things, particularly when painting still life. The goal of this palette is to have two pigments for each primary - one cool, one warm - of which one is saturated and transparent and the other one muted and opaque. Ivory Black can substitute for a very desaturated blue, as it is relatively muted and opaque. This can be sufficient for skin, but a more saturated blue may be required when painting a still life.

HOW IT WORKS

For every primary colour, there is now a cool hue and a warm hue which makes this a very good all-round and still life palette. In addition to this, there is now one transparent and one opaque pigment for every primary, giving you more flexibility in the mix.

You may want to adjust this palette and add

more colours, depending on what you are painting. For instance, any artist knows that lemons can be challenging to paint as the fruit's skin has very specific yellows, so you will probably reach for Yellow Ochre to create the warmer yellows, while for the highlights you may find the Cadmium or Lemon Yellows to be too bright and saturated. You may also want to add an Indian Yellow for the saturated dark yellows that you can't reach with the Ochre.

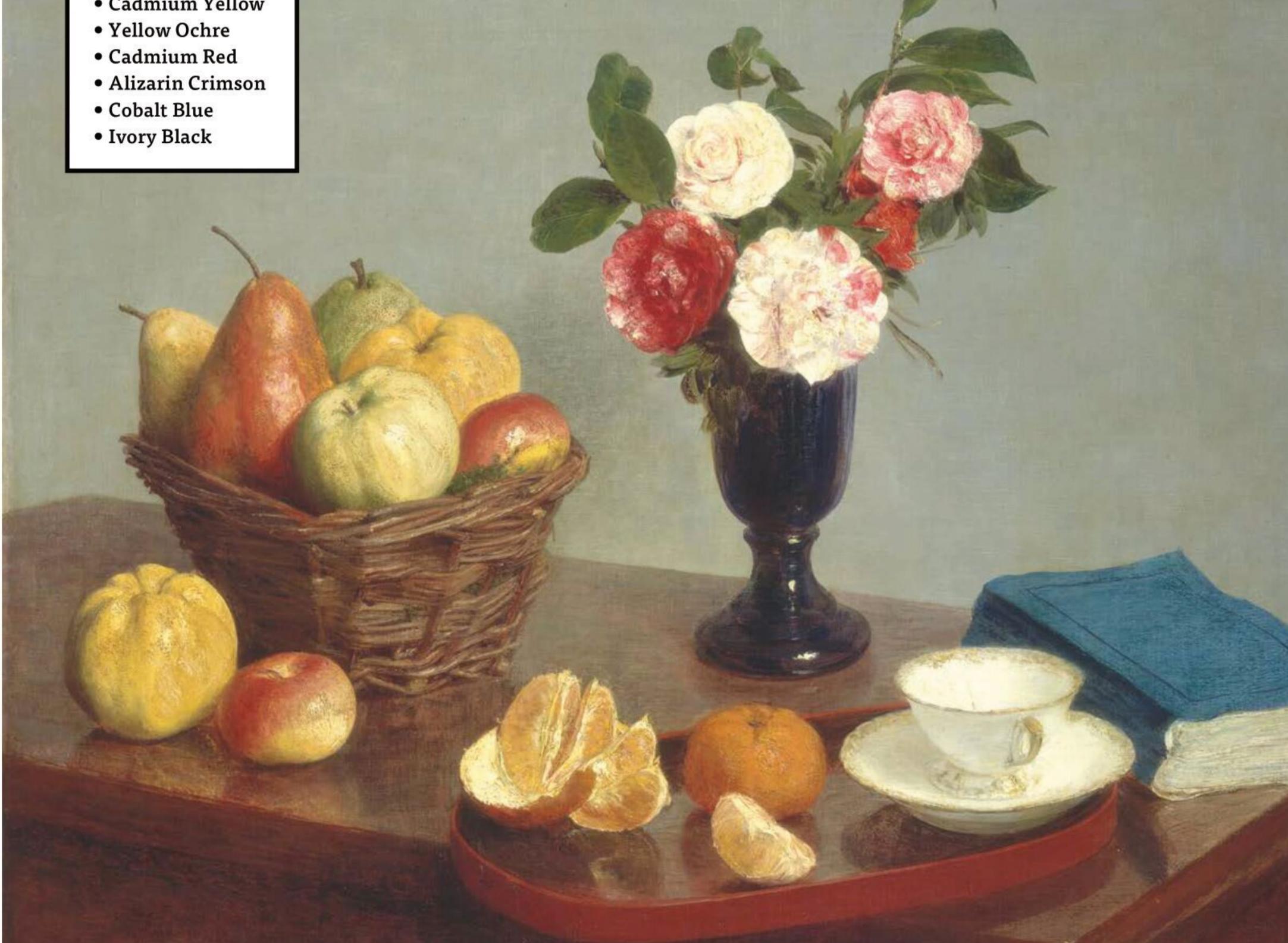
FURTHER ADDITIONS

For those painters who dislike using a pure black pigment, you could use Cobalt and Ultramarine Blues to give you one greenbias blue and one purple-bias blue. A deep inky "black" could then be mixed from Alizarin Crimson and Ultramarine Blue. Note that opinions are divided on the permanency of Alizarin Crimson, so Quinacridone Crimson can be used as a substitute, although do note that it is more pinkish than red.

> I often substitute Yellow Ochre with Raw Sienna when using this palette, as I don't find much use for opaque yellows in my still life painting, but this is a personal choice and depends on the subject matter. ▶

PIGMENTS, IN ORDER

- Titanium White
- Cadmium Yellow





Landscape

Recommended for: Advanced painters; plein air painting; flowers; added vibrancy

Landscapes, or indeed anything in bright sunlight, will need a more colourful and less muted palette as outdoor paintings call for vibration and saturation. Black is often not needed and can really grey down your landscape painting. Some painters don't use black at all, in any of their palettes, for this reason. In order to grey

down your colours with this palette, you will have to make use of complementary colours, using the opposite hue on the colour wheel to tone things down, instead of relying on black or white. For example, if you wish to desaturate your blues, adding a touch of orange will help to grey it down ever so slightly.

HOW IT WORKS

Ivory Black has now been replaced with Ultramarine Blue. To mix black with this palette, simply mix the darker pigments together, for example Magenta and Viridian.

Alizarin Crimson has been replaced with Magenta in order to be able to mix the deep purples found in landscapes.

The two blues complement each other: Ultramarine is a purplish blue, while Cobalt Blue is greener. Without both, you would struggle to mix, for example, a green-blue for the sky by using only a purple-blue pigment. The complementaries were added as "convenience colours". For instance, a Viridian-like green could be mixed using the blues and yellows in this palette, but it is a nice shortcut to

have. I chose Viridian here but really any green will do. In the past, I've used Sap Green as well when looking for a more yellowish-green as opposed to the bluish-green of Viridian.

FURTHER ADDITIONS

For those finding Viridian a bit too opaque, try using Emerald Green, or Terre Verte for a more muted green. Adding some Burnt Sienna to your greens can also make them a little more natural and less bright.

PIGMENTS, IN ORDER

- Titanium White
- Cadmium Yellow
- Yellow Ochre
- Cadmium Orange
- Cadmium Red
- Alizarin Crimson
- Magenta
- Cobalt Blue
- Ultramarine Blue
- Viridian

Skin tone palette

Recommended for: Portraiture; figure work

This palette is optimised for the subtle hue changes that are needed for figure work and portraiture and it is suitable for every skin complexion and hue. Note on the colour wheel diagram that the chosen colours are much more muted and are now mostly in the orange range. Raw Umber has been added as it is a useful, quick-drying pigment to use to make an initial drawing.

HOW IT WORKS

This set is very similar to the all-round palette, albeit more muted. Skin is less saturated than one might expect, so these more muted tones like Terre Verte and Raw Umber will be useful to grey down any orangeness in the skin.

As every person's skin has different undertones you may

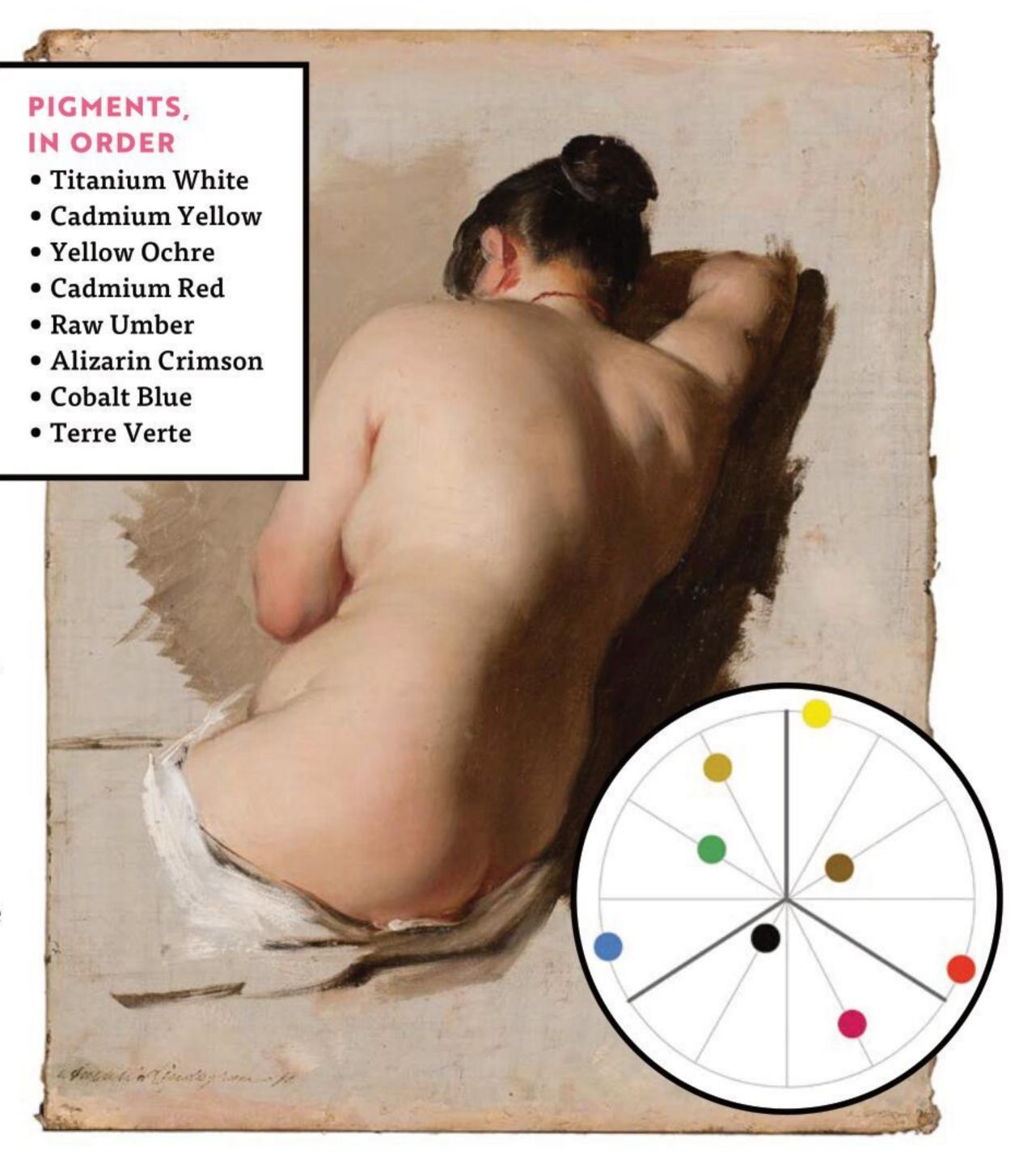
need to tweak the palette depending on your sitter. Use more Yellow Ochre and Terre Verte on warmer, olive complexions, and more Alizarin Crimson or Cadmium Yellow for cool-toned complexions.

FURTHER ADDITIONS

Try leaving out the Raw
Umber altogether and using
the Terre Verte for the initial
drawing. Using a soft greenish
brown underpainting is a
technique known as a
verdaccio.

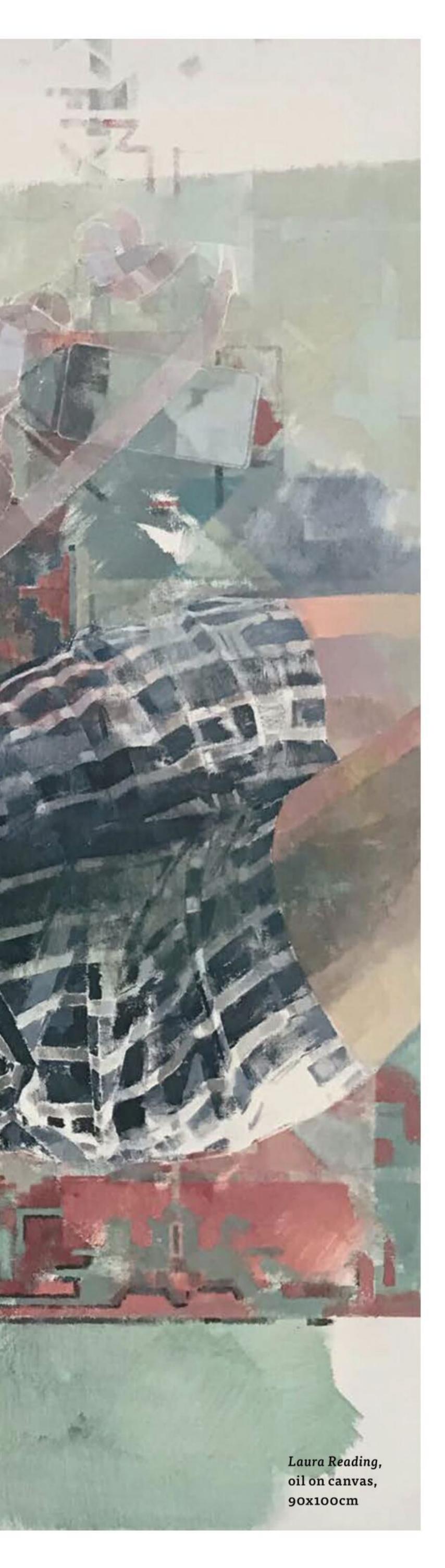
Try adding a touch of light blue to the dark skin highlights for a beautiful cool glow. You may want to add the occasional black, blue or green if your sitter is wearing bright clothing too.

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Jeannie Kinsler

Recently re-settled in England, the South African painter tells Steve Pill how she composes her portrait and still life paintings, while sharing tips on colour, texture and more

Stockport, England in 1963, before moving to South Africa. She left school to study a diploma in graphic design from Technikon Natal (now the Durban University of Technology), only turning properly to painting in her late 30s following three years in the studio of South African artist Pascale Chandler.

Jeannie returned to England in 2019 and has since exhibited with the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and New English Art Club.

Where does a still life painting begin for you – is it an object? The light? A concept? It's probably a combination of those things. I do tend to paint from a collection of objects that I have gathered, even quite random things, but also some very treasured things. Sometimes I just come upon something on a windowsill and think, that's great, but then other times I actually really do plan them.

Do you have a shelf full of objects in your studio or do you find things around the house? You know, it's quite interesting, we only moved to the UK about two years ago, we moved from a really large house where we raised our children in Durban, and it's amazing how much of the home is the things in it. We've moved four times since then because we're renting and we're trying to find where we want to live in England, so the objects are packed up and then wherever they are, I feel at home.

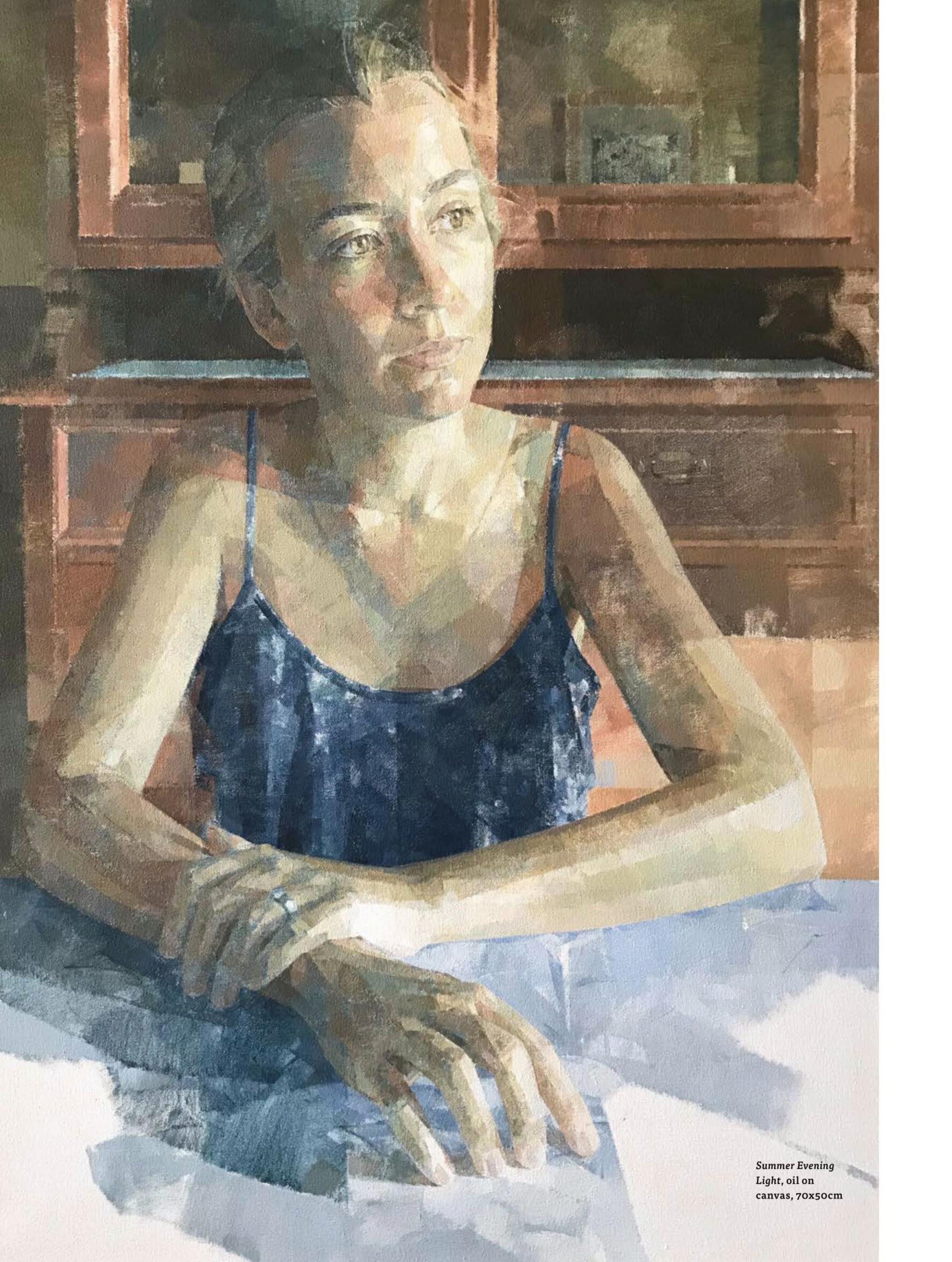
How do you go about planning a new still life composition? A lot of my viewpoints are from an angle above or from directly above, like Wreath and Mustard Bowl. I have a bit of a collection of fabrics and cloths, which provide me with a horizontal or vertical. I take a lot of photographs and I crop images, sometimes I work from more than one or I splice them together. And then the light is quite key, mostly because of the shadows it makes often the shadows link one object to the next.

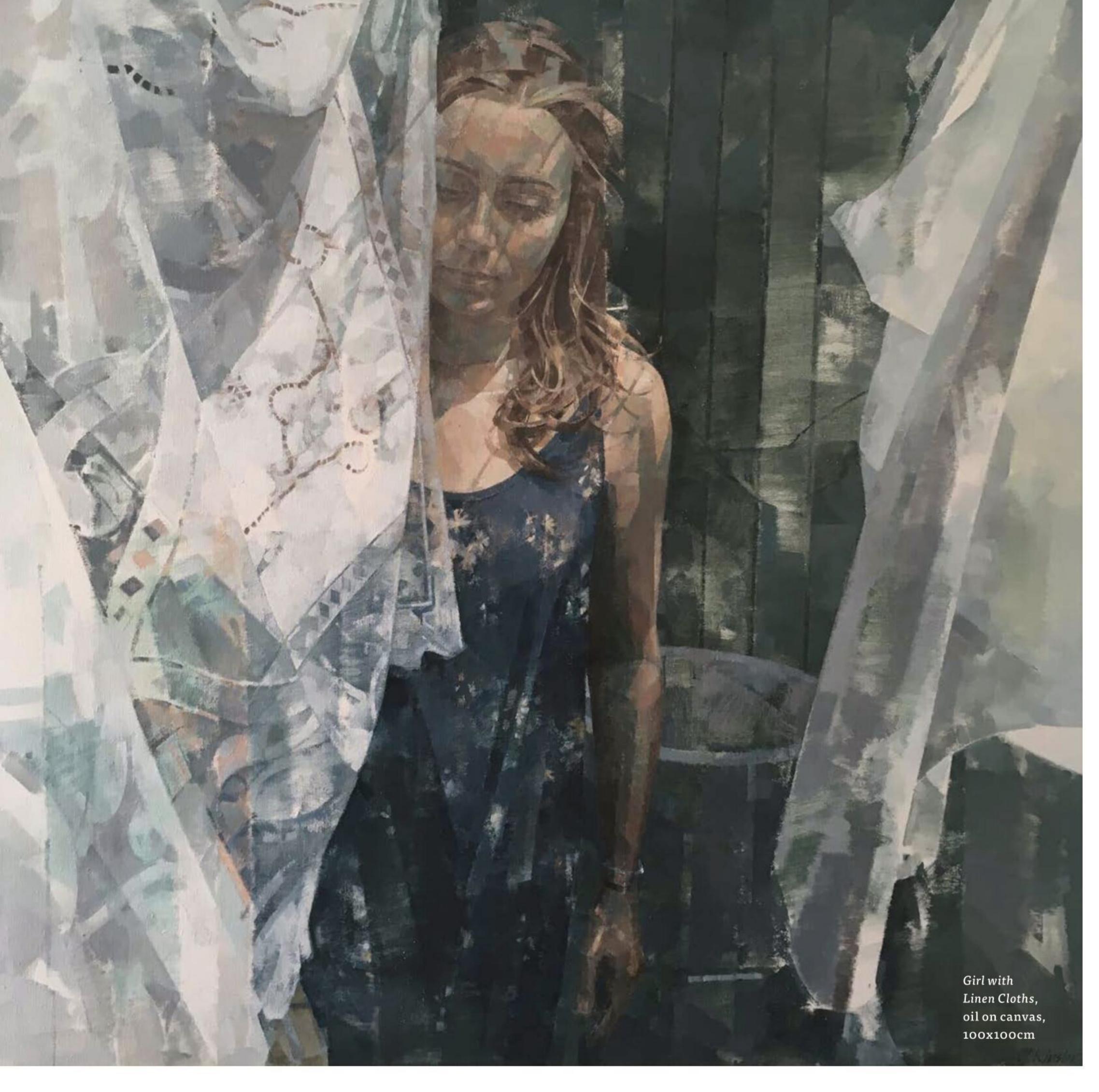
I'll take a number of photographs, say 10 or 20, then I might shift something or add a new object. Also, I redraw a lot in my paintings. I will shift things and redraw along the way.

On the progress photo of Wreath and Mustard Bowl [see page 69], I see you added in blocks of colour early on. What was the purpose of that? I put down those blocks early to take the pressure off having a clean, white canvas. I have done a number of paintings over old paintings which just works so well and sometimes I put down these patches of colour to attempt something similar to that.

I let those horizontal and vertical lines hang in the painting until the end. They end up being quite useful. You can see that in the painting of my daughter, Laura Reading, [left] there's quite a dark horizontal – it was just there in a number of photos I took from that day and it was useful to me to go that dark early.

There are a lot of geometric shapes and angles in your paintings. Where did ▶





the idea for those come from? I did study graphic design at college, that might have something to do with it. Also, everything is very considered – there aren't many throwaway marks in my work. A very early influence was Euan Uglow, who measured up with grids and kept that grid showing through. I don't work on a grid, I just divide the canvas in half vertically and horizontally, but I do a lot of measuring through those two lines, just to check I've got the basics right.

So do you draw on the canvas first?

I do use pencil, just a little bit. I prefer to go straight in with a filbert brush, a smallish one, and draw with that.

The paint looks a little chalky in places and the texture really comes through. How much does that have to do with the canvas? Or do you mix any mediums into the paint? One thing that I do is use the side of my brush – it's very noisy when I paint. I also mix my oil paint with Liquin, always – I do use a lot of thin layers and sometimes I'll leave those showing through. Even the thicker top layers going on, I'll paint them sideways and it's hard on the brushes – they lose their shape on one side because I really go at them.

I work on stretched canvases, always. I'm not very fussy about what kind of canvas it is and I'm still working it out. I had someone who made my canvases in Durban so when I came here, I've just been trying every different supplier and type.

Does it need to have some texture?

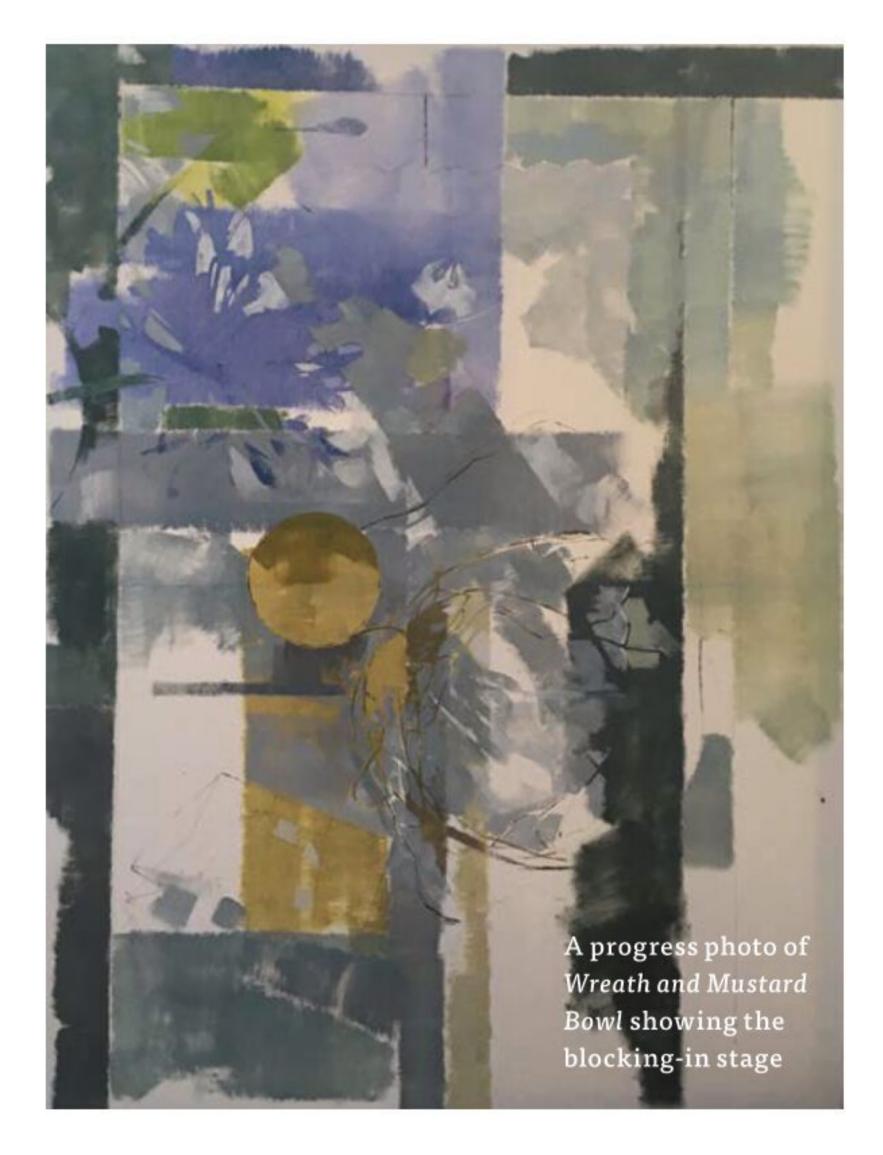
Yes, not too rough, but the texture is quite useful because you do get to see it. And I do tend to stop before I should because I want it to look like a painting, I don't want it to pretend to be real life. Sometimes I'll leave a whole corner unpainted.

I noticed that on Summer Evening Light.

Did you plan that in advance or just like how it looked? I did deliberately leave it.

I always think that I might get to it and then sometimes I might even put down something and then I just feel like it is... Not ▶





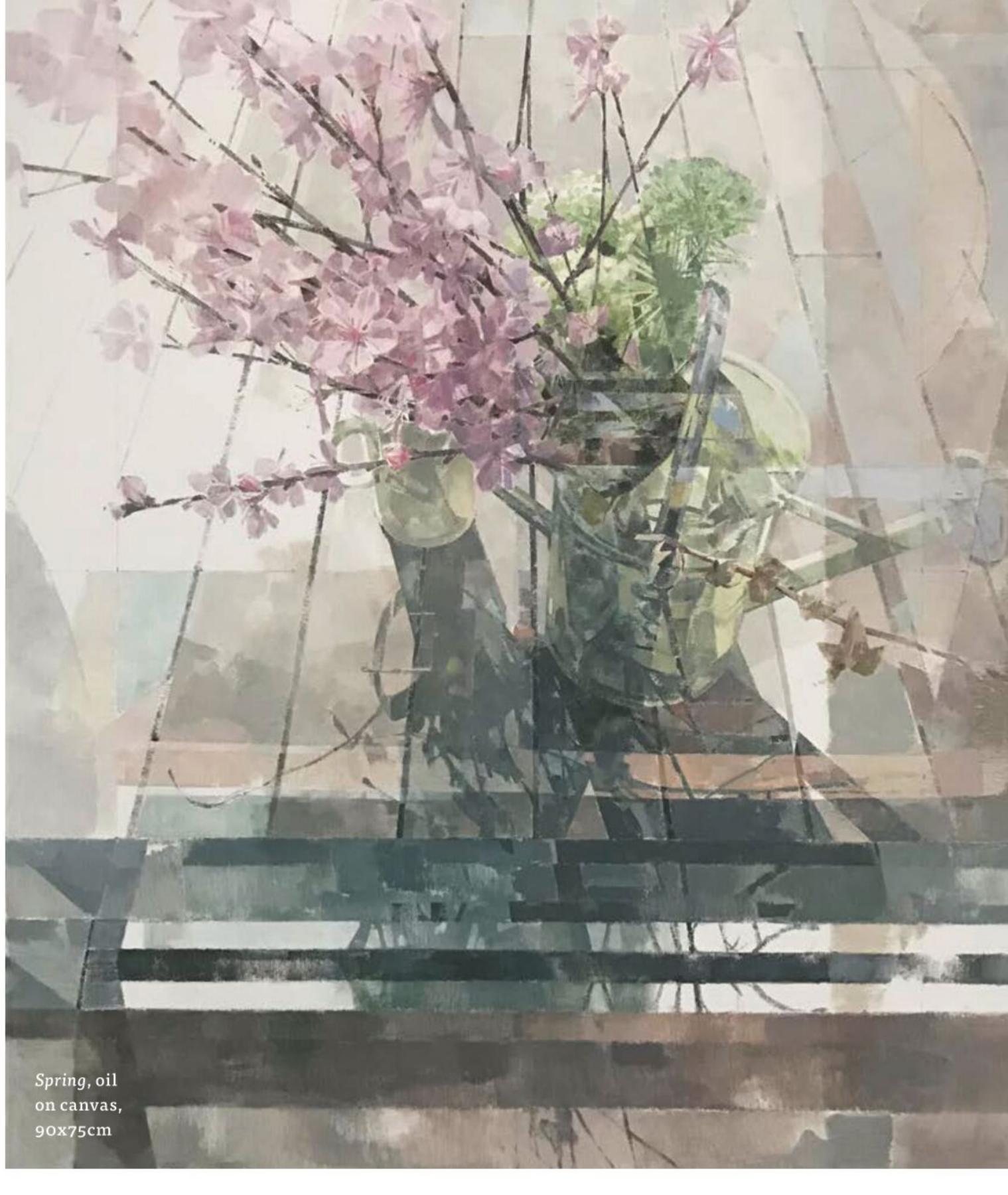
ordinary, but I just take it off. I was doing that anyway and then I discovered the work of Diarmuid Kelley. I admire the fact that he leaves whole swathes of canvas undone with some pencil drawn lines still evident. When I saw that I thought, 'Ok, I'm just going to do what I want'.

You move objects around when planning a still life. Are you directing your portrait sitters in the same way?

Apart from commissions, I tend to paint people I know very well. I often tell them to not think about me and just sit, and then I'll just go and move them around.

Girl with Linen Cloths is my youngest daughter – that was very planned. I'd seen the movie of Girl with A Pearl Earring with Scarlett Johansson and there's an amazing scene that I've played and played where she's hanging these white cloths outside – it's sunlight and not much else. I just wanted to do something with that, so these cloths that I collect, I pegged them up and made a wonderful series of photos. That was very planned, other times someone will just be sitting somewhere, and I will say, oh don't move, I'm coming back with my camera. It's a combination of both of those things.

Girl with Linen Cloths looks as if the paint has been printed on the canvas or rubbed away in places. How did you achieve those marks? I take the paint off with a cloth and turps, actually. I picked that up when I was learning oil painting with Pascale Chandler, she did that. That's the



thing I love about oils – you can take it off as well. I'd always painted with watercolour and once that's down, it is there, but it takes the pressure off if you know you can take a mark away.

Do you have a fixed colour palette?

Yes, I do. Titanium White is always there, and I've just discovered Michael Harding's Unbleached White, it's a nice stone-coloured white. Then there's Yellow Ochre, Green Gold, Rose Geranium and Burnt Sienna. Sometimes I use a Cadmium Red Deep. I don't always squeeze that out though, it depends on the painting, like in Laura Reading I probably did use it because there was a lot of red.

Then there's a Maimeri colour called Cassel Earth and I use a Perylene Black, which, when mixed with white, is everywhere in my paintings. It's a very green black. And there's Indigo, Ultramarine and Phthalo Turquoise. Italian Green Umber is a new colour I've added, which is nice for knocking things back.

You manage to find so many colours

within the greys. Are you painting as you see it or are you consciously trying to exaggerate? Yes, I might be trying to consciously exaggerate with the greys and even white – there are so many kinds of white. I do tend to mix everything: not much doesn't get a bit of Indigo or Yellow Ochre added to it, just to knock it off the very pure colour. But yes, I probably will exaggerate some of those greys – I will go looking for extra colours in the shadows.

How do you deal with things if you're stuck with a painting? The first thing I do is just put the painting aside for a bit and have a break from it. It helps to look at it with fresh eyes. Then I do something that Pascale taught us, which is to turn the canvas upside down and also look in the mirror with it. This helps focus on the shapes a bit more and be less precious about what you're trying to capture.

Sometimes a canvas can never be resolved, but then they are fantastic for painting over. I just turn them upside down and start something new.

jeanniekinsler.com 🗆



Peter Quinn

The Royal Watercolour Society member tells *Steve Pill* his tips for drawing complex subjects, balancing bold colours, and suggesting details in just a few simple marks



in 1960. He studied painting at the Glasgow School of Art before later completing a PhD in the history of art from the University of Sunderland. He now lives in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he both paints and teaches art history. Peter is a member of the Royal Watercolour Society and also the chair of the Bewick Society, dedicated to promoting the life and work of the great Northumberland artist, children's book illustrator, wood-engraver and natural

history author, Thomas Bewick.

A recent exhibition was called Voyages, but presumably you've not had many of those in the last two-and-a-half years. Are the paintings all based on previous travels? Yes. In 2020, before things locked down, I had already been to Malta, to the carnival, and then as things were in the process of locking down here, we were in South Africa.

And then when I got home, I decided to take time to go through older things – things

that I'd put to one side, projects that had been shelved, or ones I wanted to go back to when I had more time. I generally work in the studio from sketches and photographs that I gather on site, so that was a normal thing for me to do.

Which was the most interesting destination to revisit? There are a number of paintings of Paris and I've always been interested in it as a place. It's so steeped in the history of painting and I've always made short visits there. One of the things that I did ▶

HOW I PAINT



with my adult learners during lockdown was a short course on the city of Paris in art history, so arts, photography and film. It was something I was reading about and thinking about as well.

Do you ever look at other artists' work to see how to solve problems or achieve certain techniques in your own

paintings? I suppose, I do and I don't. I have a slightly haphazard approach to technique and I'm not by any means a standard watercolourist who would build up a picture from very light washes. I sometimes experiment with acrylics and inks as well, so I do have a slightly idiosyncratic approach and that may be because I look at so much art.

I quite like the idea that a watercolour bears the traces of its history. I always draw in pencil before I start using paint, so I've got an outline of the composition beneath and I sometimes look upon the painting as blocks of colour in quite an abstract way.

Tell me about your process of finding new subjects. If you're setting out for a walk in Cape Town or Paris, say, do you have a particular aim in mind?

Sometimes I might have an aim: for instance, to visit a historic place or to make some sort of record. Often what I find myself doing is putting that to one side and looking for accidental inspiration.

In Greece, I had the idea that there might be a wonderful fishing port with lots of activity and such like. I was never there at a time of day when that was demonstrated to me, but actually there were quite a lot of lovely details, like nets and ropes and

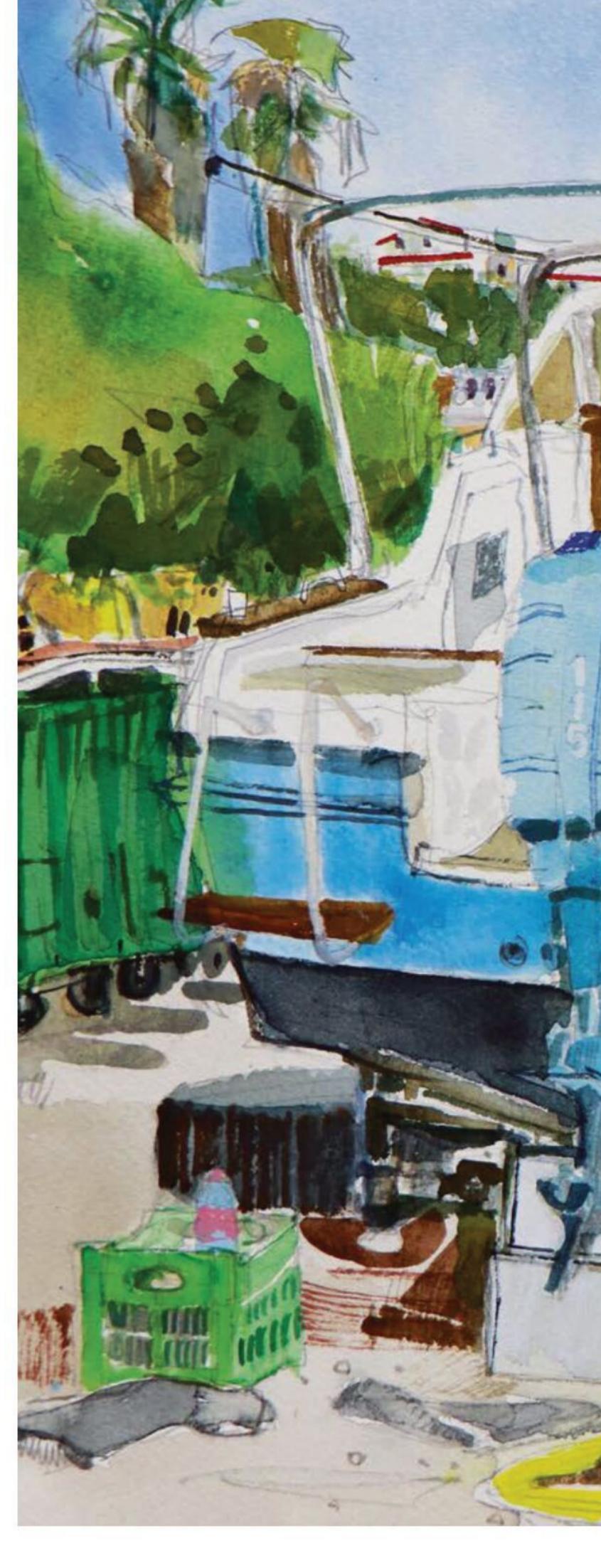
upturned boats, which I made a number of pictures of. It's about leaving yourself open to finding things and not having too preconceived an idea, really.

When you're trying to draw a more complex subject, like fishing nets, what goes down first? Most recently I've been using a combination of pencil and pen and [a sketch on location] tends to be an outline of an idea which means something to me - and that might be something very scribbly, very rough and really quite unattractive. I don't develop a more considered drawing until I've got a bit more of an idea that this is something I want to focus upon in my painting.

What part does photography play in composing your pictures? It varies. I do take an awful lot of photographs. With some of the paintings, you could find a photograph in my collection that is pretty close. The best is to have six or eight reference photos. If I have too many, it gets confusing; if I have too few, it may feel like something is missing.

Boulevard Malesherbes has a rather overwhelming perspective. How did you come up with that composition? It was a kind of patchwork. They are wide boulevards and I do have a number of panorama shots. The passersby came from sketchbooks and one or two of them appeared in the photographs. I quite liked the idea of the grand façade with the trees dancing across it, that was the visual treat of it.

Since you've been revisiting sketchbooks to find new source



material for paintings recently, have you become better at knowing what works and what doesn't? I've always been very jealous of people who have very complete-looking sketchbooks. Mine look a bit more spasmodic. That's partly because sketchbooks aren't something I use in the studio; I use them out and about, and they become like notebooks, so that includes writing down the name of a place or the name of a bus that gets you there. They live a bit longer, because they are a diary, if you like, of a period of time spent in a place.

I don't make finished pictures in the sketchbooks. I have very rarely torn something out of a sketchbook and put it in a frame.



You've said previously that you often have a lot of "preparatory drawings and false starts" in the studio. What things will cause you to start again? A common thing would be an open and enthusiastic use of a great block of colour, that then becomes really quite dominant in a way that I don't intend it to. Or a piece of drawing that looked good when I was doing it in the evening, but then the next morning it looks like I've gone wrong somehow. I do tend not to throw things out. I like to put things to one side and see if something could be made of it.

I prefer to be working on a group of pictures too. At the moment, I've got a dozen quite big paintings that I'm trying to do. If I tried to just concentrate on one, things may go wrong in relation to everything else, so

I like to move in and around and between them. And it means if seven do go wrong, I've still got five left.

You seem unafraid of bright passages of colour... Yes, I probably seek them out. The place that is not represented in this current exhibition, but which I've painted many, many times, is Malta. My solution to painting Malta is big areas of colour because the island has bright sunshine most of the year and a great contrast between a very blue sky, a very green-blue sea and a very pale, yellow land. Colour has always been the way in which I solved painting there.

It can be difficult for bold colours to not look childlike though, and you handle

that well. Is there a secret? I suppose the paintings that go right, as opposed to the ones that go wrong, have often got an element of quality in the way in which the bold colour is placed on. That may be that a colour has been placed sensitively in relation to the rest of the drawing or it might have a serendipity which I can just retain, a splash of yellow wall or whatever.

That said, you never seem to paint a consistent block of colour, there are always variations in there. How do you control those areas? Sometimes what I would do would be to paint on damp paper. I might damp the entire sheet or with a larger stretched sheet of paper, I might dampen a section and allow the paint to fill ▶



it. If you [experiment like] this, it becomes important to realise what you've done, leave it alone for a while, and then come back to it.

Are you particular about the paper you

use? I most often use a smooth Saunders Waterford 300gsm paper, which I would stretch using gum strips. I sometimes use a rougher Saunders Waterford paper, which is 450gsm. I use that for smaller pictures and, because that's heavier, I don't need to stretch that.

I gather you stand up to paint. What are the benefits? Not slumping off to sleep, I suppose! I have the watercolour paintings on a raised flat surface. It's a standard trestle table, but it is higher than you would have a desk.

It encourages you to not get involved in the finicky details and to think promptly. And you do work more from the shoulder rather than the wrist if you're standing.

There is lots of lovely black line work in Rue du Faubourg, Montmartre. Is that ink?

No, that's all watercolour. I suppose the way in which I could add observations and bring the composition together was to work with a smaller line, but I rarely use pen or ink on a painting; it's always paint of some sort.

So, the detailed work, where you've added areas of lighter colour over darker passages, is that all watercolour as well?

Yes, it may well be. For larger pictures, I would often block-in using a wash of acrylic

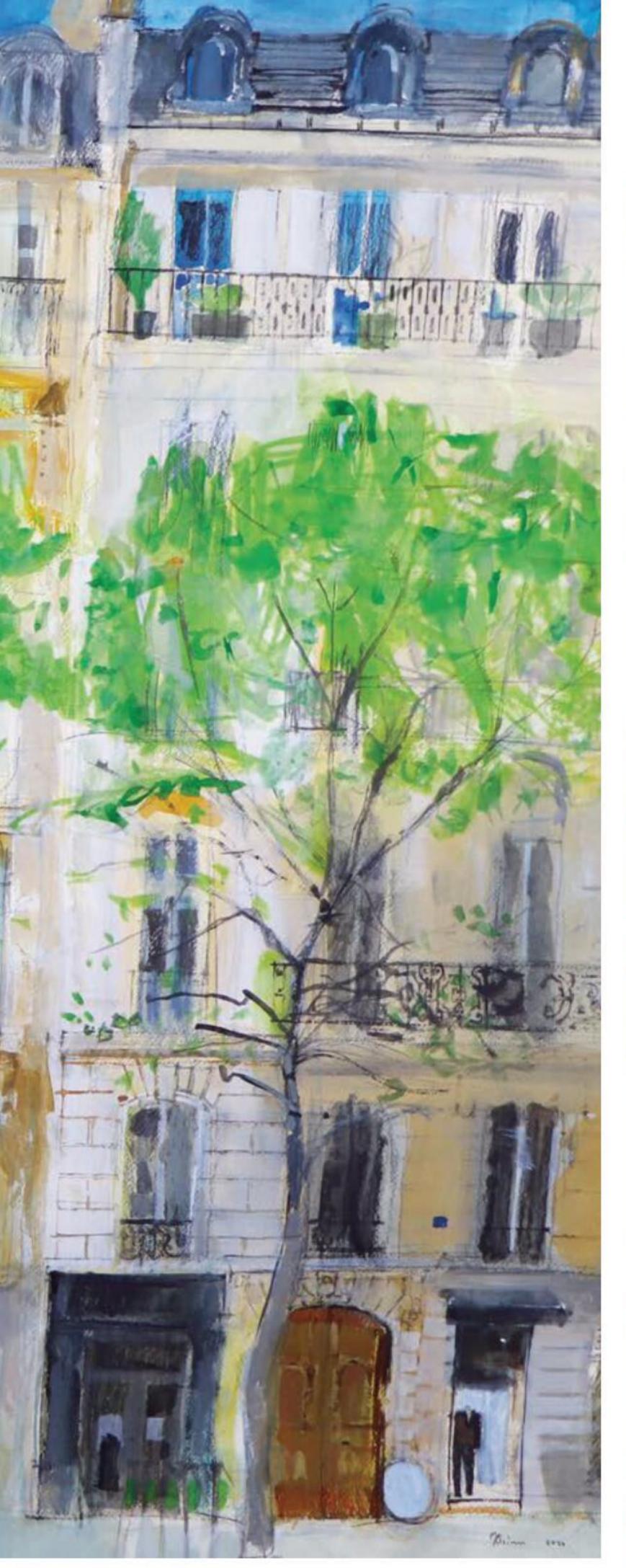
paint. I use Golden Fluid Acrylics, it's quite intense paint that you get in little bottles.

I use less gouache now than I have done in the past, but I quite like the quality of it in isolation – it can add an extra flat texture, which can be quite interesting.

The shop windows are painted with just a few choice marks. How do you plan those

out? I suppose it is a question of showing the depth of a scene, about making equivalent marks for the dark interior and the things in the foreground, without thinking: Is it a book? Is it a dress? Is it a shoe?

I'm not the sort of person who would record exactly what was in the shop window, I'm much more interested in the overall impact and effect.







You have maintained an experimental approach throughout your career, yet always produce gallery-quality paintings to sell. Are there certain things you always ensure you do to achieve this? It's probably time and thought spent with the painting. The things that do find their way to a gallery are generally things I've spent time and thought with. I stopped oil painting because I didn't like the materials, they didn't agree with me, really, so I decided I would specialise in watercolour.

The clamour for my watercolour paintings has never stopped and I'm happy with the variety of marks and the freedom that watercolour allows.

peterjquinn.org 🗆



Mark Adinston For this wildlife artist, a distant lion's roar

represents opportunity not fear. Here he reveals how to capture the fiery spirit of wild animals using tricks of light and texture

Cub Bundle, crayon on paper, 21x28.5cm

ARK ADLINGTON is one of the UK's most skillful and collectable wildlife painters. Born in 1965, he grew up in Ireland and was captivated at a young age by Joy Adamson's books about raising lion cubs. He went on to study art history at the University of Edinburgh and fine art at City & Guilds of London Art School.

His research has taken him from Spain to Gran Paradiso, from Arabia to the coastline of the British Isles. In recent years, projects have included visiting the Arctic Circle to paint polar bears and spending three months in East Africa studying elephants. Mark has been staging solo exhibitions since 1999 whilst his work hangs in many collections.

Now we hear from the man himself...

CAPTURING REFERENCES

In a perfect world I would only draw from life and the great outdoors would be my only studio. In reality, depending on the animal I am studying, I am almost always forced to supplement sketches made in the field with photographs and video footage. Lions, which ▶





I have been working with for the past three years in six different habitats across East and South Africa, spend much of the day asleep and the window of opportunity for gathering information and interesting poses and compositions can be very brief as the light fades into night.

Having said that, the freedom and honesty of line drawing made in the bush are an essential reminder of the qualities that I try to retain in the studio work, and when something interesting is happening it can be a tough call between whether to grab the

sketchbook or the camera.

Whether I am making a drawing or a painting, the first marks inform the rest of the journey as I am piecing together a composition, and as such they are hugely important.

In both cases, I try to always begin with urgent, exciting marks or brushstrokes, working as rapidly and loosely as I can and allowing the material to speak for itself, while simultaneously fighting to both describe the form and place the composition within the frame of the canvas or paper.

In painting, I often cover the negative space with paint first, leaving the shape of the animal in raw canvas. This allows me to instead focus on the essential rhythms and lines before building up to the details.

Sometimes as you work, details like the eyes almost paint themselves when you work on the structure around them. With line drawing it can be almost the reverse, so I often begin by smudging in a general shape or silhouette broadly, then working from the inside out. This gives you something to react against and means that you can make a fast, energised line in one stroke rather than redoing the same line several times. This approach can be interesting in a life study when the subject is moving, but can act as the kiss of death when working from secondary material.

A LINEAR APPROACH

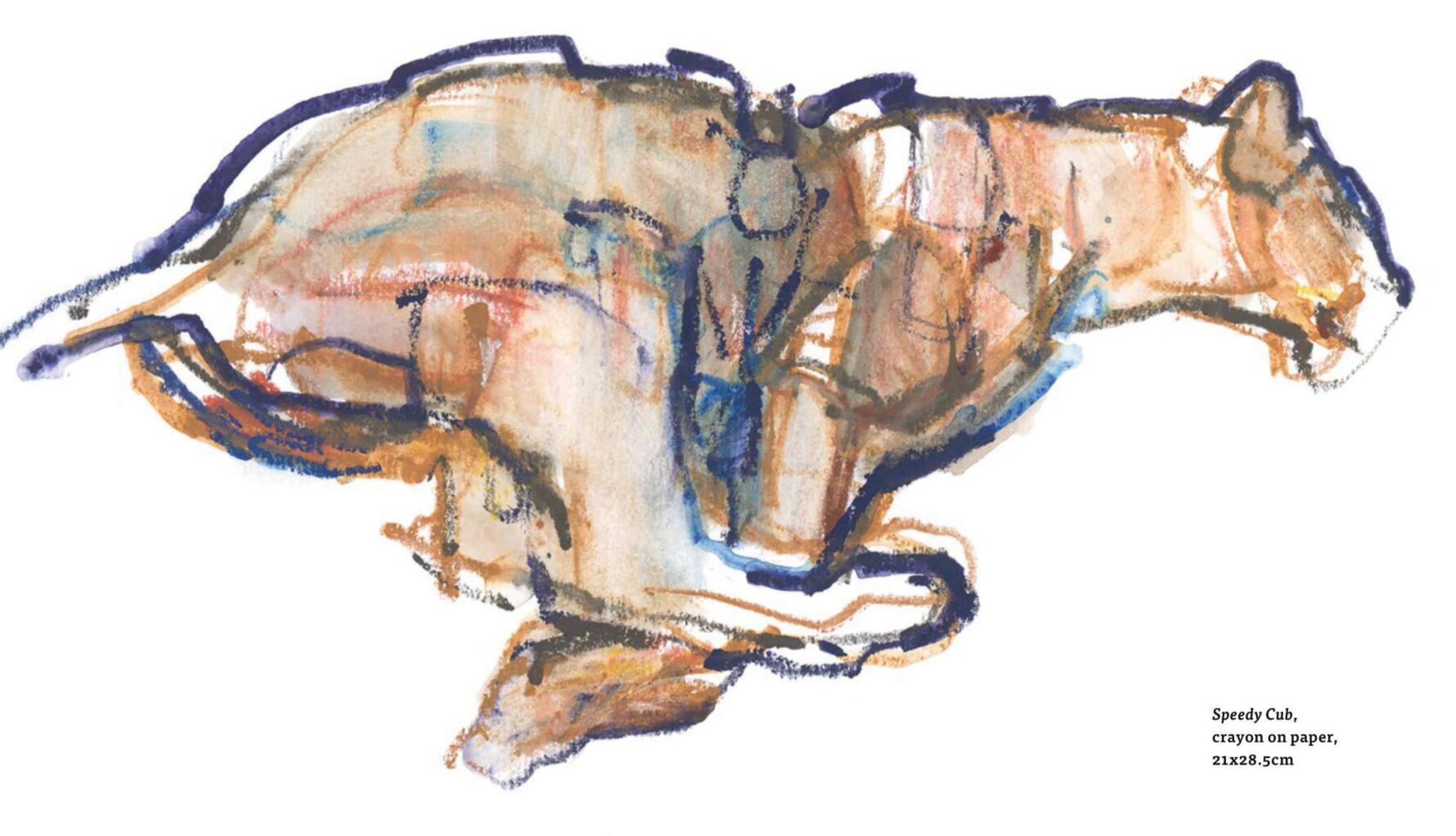
My practice is hugely random when it comes to technique and, rather than having a "one method fits all" approach, I tend to adjust the media and the method to suit the subject matter. For example, when working with polar bears underwater, I struggled to find a way of conveying the clouds of bubbles they leave in their wake. Eventually I found the perfect mix with an aqua coloured Moroccan pigment.

With this latest lion project, a more linear approach was key, and after a long battle I learned how to use water-soluble crayon effectively, sometimes in conjunction with a teabag - a chance discovery when drawing at breakfast during the lockdown!

When choosing the right medium, I think it's a question of working out what it is you are trying to say first, and then using the one that is best suited to the purpose. In my practice though, fluidity and movement are key. That means that, whatever I use, I need to be sufficiently fluent in the language of it, whether that's watercolour, crayon, teabag or whatever it may be. It's important to not have to think about the media too much. In a sense, it's a little like driving a car: you need to be thinking about where you are trying to go rather than how the clutch works.

My figurative drawing requires total focus and accuracy so, when it comes to colour selection, I tend to use pigment as just another tool to convey form or structure, and colour choices tend to be relative rather than specific. In other words, I think about whether something is cooler or warmer, ▶





more or less saturated, opaque or transparent, rather than trying to establish its specific Pantone code. I find if I do this then, after a certain point, the painting takes on a life of its own. When that happens, it might have aesthetic demands of its own that I can respond to, at which point I might make more considered colour choices. Colour is definitely a secondary tool for me, and a bit of a guilty pleasure. The dessert rather than the main course, if you like.

Fortunately, my fluid approach means I seldom overwork drawings or watercolours, because, to my eye, it's immediately apparent when you have gone too far with them. At that point, the bin beckons. Works on canvas are another story though. With those, it depends on how quickly I manage to say what I want to say. Once the animal has presence, everything else feels like titivation. If it happens too fast then the painting can look insubstantial and thin, whereas if it happens too slowly then there is definitely a danger of overworking, and your only options are to sand everything back or paint something different over the top.

MIXING MEDIA

My selection of brands changes, as does my selection of colours, and it really depends on the project I'm working on as to which I lean towards. I went through a phase of loving Sennelier inks when I was trying to draw Przewalski horses in France. For the current lion project, I am enjoying drawing with Caran d'Ache Neocolor II watersoluble crayons. With watercolour, oil and particularly pastel, I think the mineral element in the pigment can mean that each colour can react so differently. This means that you have to discover colours one by one and work out which brand you like for each colour.

A current obsession is R&F Pigment Sticks. While they are extremely pricey, they make the most beautiful and sensitive line. If I had to save something from the studio in a fire, it would probably be a watercolour brush that had the end chewed off by an Arabian leopard cub while I was painting him in the desert. It's an occupational hazard, I suppose.

If I were to offer some advice to others making a foray into capturing animals which are, on the surface, a single colour, it would be to think of

them not just as a subject, but to consider them instead within the context of their habitat. I love an animal that is a single colour in a landscape of the same colour, such as a polar bear on the ice or a Namibian lion in the desert.

The key is to use a monochromatic scene such as this as an opportunity to sculpt with light, giving you more licence to use all the visual weapons at your disposal to greater effect: line, tone, texture and transparency all come into play. For example, if you were dealing with a tawny lion or a white bear you can really use any colour you like, so long as the relationship between those colours is consistent. It's completely different from, for example, painting an exotically coloured bird where the exact colours in its plumage are what makes it so beautiful and distinctive.

Maybe this is why I love a more detailed and illustrative approach to birds and reptiles – for example, the masterly work of [the 19th-century American ornithologist and painter] John James Audubon – but often find hyperrealism in mammals a little stiff and lacking in the sensuality that makes them so magnetic. markadlington.com 🗆



Why draw?

Here we are celebrating the humble act of drawing. Over the next eight pages, you will find tips, ideas and challenges, but *Steve Pill* begins with an important question...

HY DRAW? It's the simplest of questions, yet it deserves some thought. Drawing is an activity that is easy to take for granted, given that many of us have been doing it for longer than we can remember. Chunky felt-tips and reams of old printer paper with perforated edges were a means with which to make our first marks, stick figures emerging before we could even form a sentence on the same page. In the arc of an artistic life, these were our cave paintings at Lascaux, the very first step in a chronology of drawing that would only develop, becoming both more refined and more expressive over time.

Drawing is a compulsion for children and something that tends to garner praise at an early age, the recognition being that an ability to create art is a more impressive and elusive signifier of a gifted child than SATs results or athletic trophies. Sadly, there also comes a point - usually in our teens - when the opposite is true, when continuing to "doodle" is dismissed as a phase out of which we should have grown. All too often I speak to brilliant artists who were thrown off their wide-eyed exploratory path by an adult influence – a teacher whose narrow concept of art doesn't fit with one's own; a wellmeaning parent who suggests getting a "real" job. The pursuit of other careers gets in the way, only returning to their initial passions in their 30s, 40s or even retirement age.

A return to regular drawing can be an



attempt to reconnect with our earlier selves and try to document that wonder once more. It is a worthy ambition, in keeping with Pablo Picasso's famous quote that it took him "four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child".

For those who manage to continue or rediscover the drawing path, the motivations are varied and fascinating. Identifying

yourself within them can help you to better understand your own purpose too. For some, drawing is a daily pursuit, part of a routine as fundamental as brushing your teeth or putting out the bins. In this respect, the sketchbook becomes a visual diary, updated every day with notes and dashed off sketches, the focus on establishing a rhythm via these simple passive records. Illustrators ▶



DRAWING SPECIAL



and urban sketchers are the masters at this, as these sketchbook workouts become a form of exercise, a stretching of the artistic muscles to keep the eye and hand in good shape. This also taps into the idea of praxis, a concept first laid out by Aristotle and popular with many modern philosophers, the gist in artistic terms being that the focus is placed on activity rather than theory. By drawing regularly in this instinctive, almost automatic way, the hope is that new ideas or conclusions can be made from reviewing the work at regular intervals.

There is often talk of this unfiltered approach being more honest, with practitioners from Salvador Dalí to the architect Le Corbusier praising the inherent truthfulness of putting pencil to paper. "I prefer drawing to talking," said the latter. "Drawing is faster and leaves less room for lies." In a way though, this idea of an artist being able to make an unbiased record of an object, a person or a scene is an impossible one. Even a mechanical camera struggles to be truly dispassionate, as even the lens and settings all count towards the interpretative nature of photography.

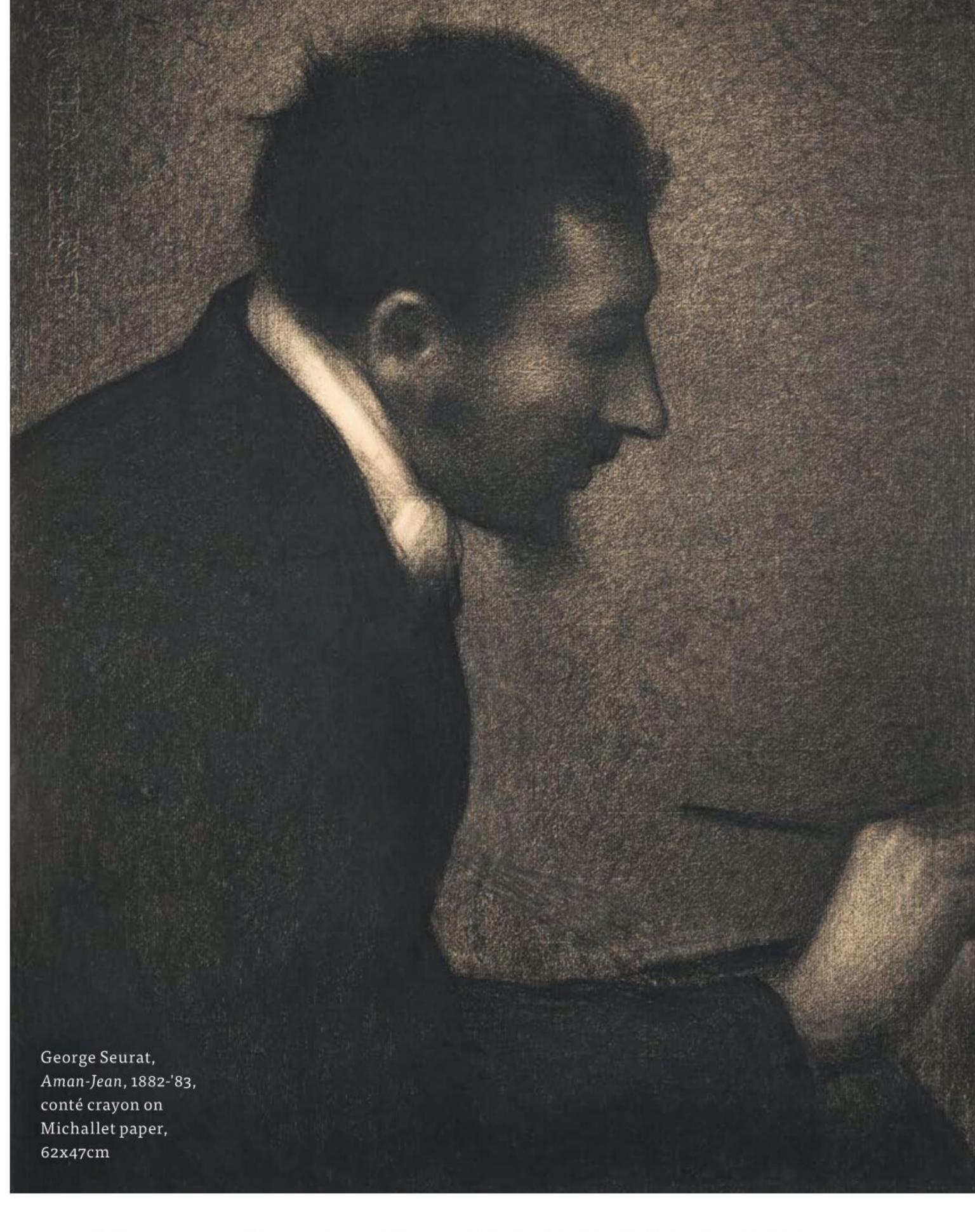
By contrast, a human being brings a lifetime's worth of accumulated knowledge, skills and memories to any given picture. None of this helps in the pursuit of an unbiased image perhaps, but it is also one of the many beautiful aspects of drawing as a process.

The next step beyond this, of course, is a desire to not simply record the world but engage with it and use the pen or pencil as a means of developing a better understanding of what we see.

This might be a landscape artist using a sketch to become familiar with a location or a wildlife painter using repeat observations to better understand how an animal moves or behaves. When we engage with a subject in a more active, reciprocal way, this encourages us to be present in the moment.

Portrait artists and life-drawing tutors often emphasise the need for interaction between artist and sitter, as it elevates the process above the act of mere recording and into the realms of collaboration.

Confidence is a huge issue for many artists, particularly at the start, and there is no better way to overcome those concerns than drawing. If a blank page represents the ultimate fear, then getting in the habit of making those first marks quickly and decisively is a major step towards conquering it. There is also a tendency to think of drawing as a private practice in contrast to the rather public-facing intentions of a painting, and while that isn't



necessarily true – many of the most exquisite drawings in the world were intended for exhibition - there are benefits to this way of thinking. Treating your sketchbook as a safe space, away from prying eyes, can help you to develop without inhibitions. Reminding yourself that you are the only person judging these drawings can help you experiment without burden. Mistakes are nothing to be ashamed about.

Tied to that idea, drawing can also be a wonderful outlet for the imagination. Fanciful ideas that you may be embarrassed to discuss can be enacted on the page, as you dream up mystical worlds or futuristic scenarios. In a quote on the wall of her new exhibition at Tate, Paula Rego compares drawing to an adventure. "First of all, it is like this: piece of paper and pencil and you find an image in your head, behind your ears somehow. You put it down and something suggests something else and then, afterwards, when you go over it with the pen and ink you change it again. So there is

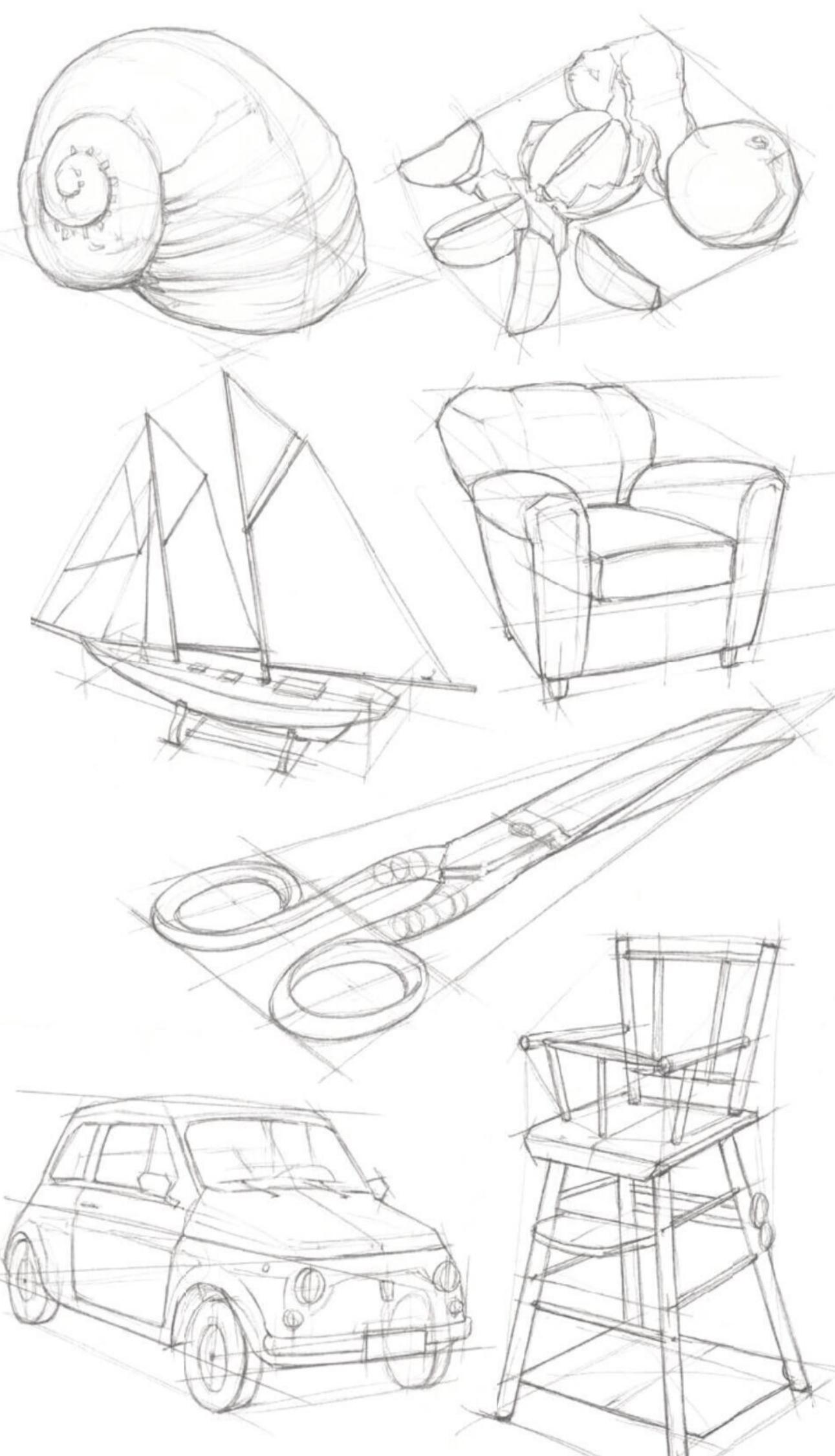
constant change, adjustment, and so on... The drawing is where the story and the picture develop, really."

This leads us on to one of the other great reasons to draw - as a means of refinement. On the one hand, this might involve refining an idea, using thumbnail drawings to quickly test potential compositions; on the other, it might be a case of simply honing a final image, draughting and erasing individual lines ready to be scaled up for painting or exhibited as they are. Drawing then becomes a substitute for thinking, a means of working through options on the page.

Whichever way you approach drawing doesn't really matter, there are no winners and truly it's the taking part that counts. All options are valid, the possibilities endless. Paul Klee's idea of taking a line for a walk is one of the oldest cliches in art, yet the beauty of drawing is that - no matter how many times you set out in a similar way no one truly knows where that line might end up.□

Adding structure

GIOVANNI CIVARDI explains the importance of using construction lines to help you better understand the essential elements of your subject



"On voit tout autrement un objet dont on connait la structure."

("When we know the structure, we see a completely different object.")

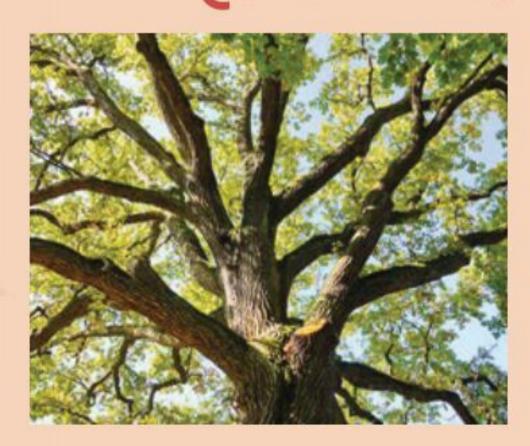
-Paul Valéry

HE WORD "STRUCTURE" comes from the Latin verb struere, "to construct": the way in which the parts of an object come together to form a whole – i.e., the relational arrangement between an object's composite parts. It is very important for an artist to understand a form, be it organic or man-made, in terms of its structural characteristics. This is achieved by seeing the object stripped of its inessential details, and therefore concentrating on it as an arrangement of simpler geometrical forms: cubes, oblongs, cylinders, and so on.

It can also be helpful to supplement this intuitive investigative framework with a kind of X-ray vision, enabling the artist to visualise the non-visible lines of the object's linear and perspectival structure, as if viewed as a cross-section. This is partly based on symmetrical relationships and linear directions that are found between an object's parts, and partly on the logical sense they make together in terms of size and fit.

When drawing from life or executing a design drawing, the study begins by drawing lines freehand to indicate the relationships between the different planes, the subject's main axes and its thickness. These lines then act as directional guidelines and reference marks when the drawing is developed to the desired degree of precision. The lightly drawn lines may be left visible in order to heighten awareness of the object's structural framework, or they may be gradually overlaid by lines that come later, depending on the particular style of you and your picture. This is an extract from Giovanni's book, Drawing – A Complete Guide: Nature, published by Search Press. searchpress.com

QUICK PRACTICE



Drawing trees is an excellent starting point for understanding and sketching construction lines, as they have a number of straight elements.



drawings While good drawing does take real practise, these simple correctives are designed to improve your sketching skills

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PENCIL FOR YOU. "B" grades get progressively softer, create darker lines and need regular sharpening; "H" grades get harder, leaving fine, crisp marks. A 2B or 3B is a good place to start.

KEEP YOUR PENCIL SHARPENED. A good point means more precise lines and a more satisfying outcome.

START SIMPLE.Reduce a complex subject to basic elements - a cube, a sphere, a pyramid, and so on. Sketch those in lightly first to get an idea of your subject in space.

WORK LEFT TO RIGHT (Unless you're left-handed, in which case work right to left.) This prevents you dragging your hand across the drawing and smudging your progress.

AVOID FRAGMENTED LINES. If you're unsure of the exact position required, draw a light yet continuous line first instead. Go over this with a firmer, darker line later once other elements are established.

VARY LINE WIDTH. Give emphasis to certain marks by

doubling up or using a softer, less sharp pencil.

FORGET WHAT YOUR SUBJECT IS. Focus instead on what it really looks like instead. Think of it not as a bowl of fruit, for example, but rather as a series of lines, forms and textures.

DRAW QUICKLY. A faster line looks dynamic and less forced than a slower, shaky one. Occasionally the latter is necessary for accuracy, but quick lines generally lend pictures a sense of movement and purpose.

ALTER YOUR GRIP. Press down on the side of the pencil to create wider marks or larger, shaded areas.

DRAW SOMETHING TWICE. Revisiting a subject forces you to really look, and also learn from your mistakes. Familiarity breeds confidence too.

gap between an arm and a body, for example - as a shape in its own right.

CHECK ANGLES AND PROPORTIONS.

Hold up your pencil against an angle on your subject and replicate that on the page. Likewise, use your thumb to measure distances.

ADD TONE IN INCREMENTS. Whether hatching or shading, begin lightly and add another layer if required. It is easier to assess accuracy when you build slowly.

Make sure you're happy with general shapes, proportions and tonal areas before committing to fiddly details.

DRAW WITH AN ERASER. Remember you can subtract as well as add. Pick out highlights in a drawing with the edge of a hard eraser. For more subtle graphite removal, use a clean putty eraser shaped into a point.

CONTROL THE EDGES. A sharp edge suggests part of a subject in focus, whereas a softer transition appears further away. Use this to your advantage to create a sense of depth.

DRAW EVERY DAY. Even if you can only spare 10 minutes, regular practise will sharpen your skills over time. Get in good habits. Carry a sketchbook wherever you go and draw on the bus, in a café, or from a park bench.□

Sketchbook challenges

Struggling for inspiration? Try a quick drawing exercise to get you started and you might just learn something along the way too!

Challenge 1: Negative space

WHAT?

Use crosshatching to indicate the negative spaces between parts of your subject.

WHY?

A focus on negative space helps to view a real subject in more abstract terms. This can make it easier to think about line, form and colour.

HOW?

For this challenge you need an intricate, light subject against a dark background: a bunch of white flowers in front of a dark curtain, for example.

Look closely at your arrangement and try to think of the darker gaps between the objects as shapes. Find a gap in the centre and focus upon it. Using parallel hatched lines, try to draw an approximation of that gap in the centre of your paper. Now locate another gap nearby and consider its size and position relative to the first one. Mark it with hatched lines again. Continue until all the main gaps are in place and an outline has emerged.

Now add an extra layer to the tonal drawing by adding crosshatching. Look for the darkest areas of your subject and replicate them in your drawing by adding more hatching at right angles to the previous layer. You should finish with a drawing which has three distinct areas of tone - cross-hatched, hatched, and the white of the paper – in a more abstract manner than you would if you had drawn the outline first.





Challenge 2: Follow the form

WHAT?

As seen in the previous challenge, traditional crosshatching involves suggesting tone through intersecting layers of parallel lines.

Here you will develop that idea further by making a drawing in which the tonal lines follow the form of your subject.

WHY?

While the concept of crosshatching is straightforward, this challenge will have you thinking about building tone in a way that better describes the form of your subject.

It will also encourage you to really look at what you are drawing and think about how the various forms sit within the space.

HOW?

Take a firmer pencil, maybe a 2H, and sharpen it with a craft knife (cut away from yourself). Hone the tip into a needle-like point so you can hold the pencil at an angle and produce sweeping lines with it.

Choose a more complex subject – a figure at an angle or a busy still life composition – and make a loose, light outline drawing of it. Add a first layer of hatching to the darker half of your subject, trying to mirror the contours with the angle and curve of your lines. Hold the pencil away from the tip so you can make more sweeping lines. Think about how different parts of the subject appear to come forward and recede within the picture plane. Add a second layer of hatching that mimics these movements.



Challenge 3: Vary your marks

WHAT?

For our final challenge, you will be making a drawing of a scene using a range of similar drawing materials.

WHY?

All too often, we complete an entire picture using the same drawing tool, which limits how expressive we can be with mark making. This simple challenge will help you

focus clearly on the added variety that a range of materials can bring.

HOW?

First you need to arm yourself with a set of similar drawing tools that will give you a varying degree of marks. You could follow our example and choose graphite pencils with different levels of hardness, or you might want to try charcoal or fineliner pens of varying thickness – anything that produces similarly textured marks of a differing width or darkness.

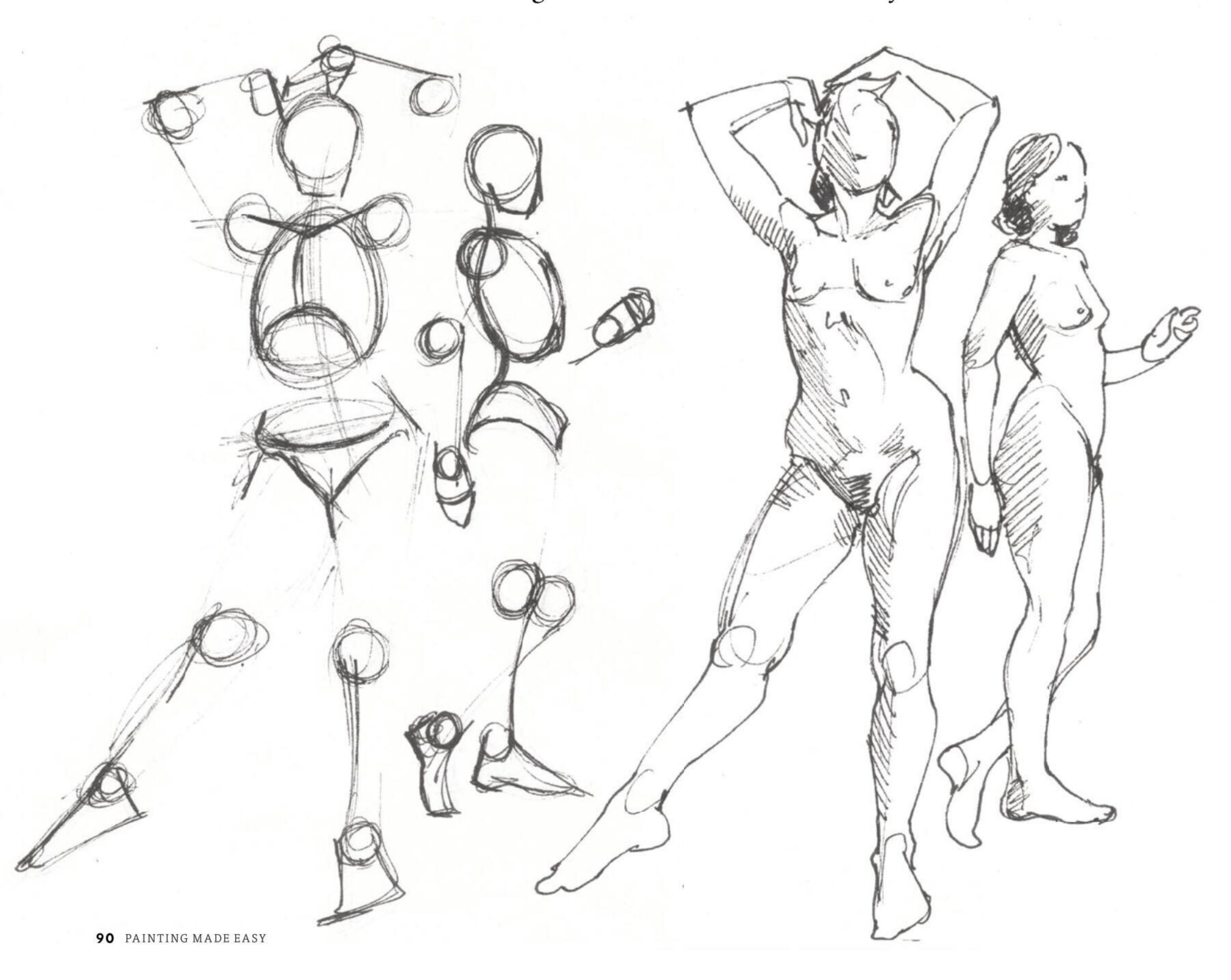
Now find yourself a scene with an obvious

background, mid-ground and foreground. It could be a landscape or cityscape, but it could equally be a garden viewed through a window.

Begin by drawing the furthest elements from you, using your lightest (or thinnest) drawing tool. In the case of graphite pencils, choose one with a high H value as it will create the hardest, lightest lines. Once complete, work on the mid-ground and use a middling pencil – a B or HB perhaps – to draw this with darker slightly thicker lines. Finish by drawing the areas nearest to you with your softest pencil, using the wider, darker lines to create subtle emphasis. \square

BONCE BONCE

JAKE SPICER begins a five-part series on the building blocks of life drawing with a look at how a better understanding of the human skeleton can aid your art



of life drawing was in the studio of the etcher John T Freeman. I was 15 years old, woefully self-conscious but eager to rise to the demands of the situation. I drew from a long, seated pose whilst John kept up a succession of anecdotes and well-timed instructions for the class. The model was a university student, who offered kind words about my drawing in the tea break.

Ever since then the life drawing studio has represented inspiration, challenge and friendship to me. It is a communal space that provides common ground for artists of all backgrounds as they contend with the struggle of representing another human being in marks on a page.

A cornerstone of 19th- and early 20th-century European art education, life drawing fell out of fashion from the 1960s onwards and was removed from the art school curriculum. More recently, we have seen the return of drawing as a legitimate means of artistic expression, elevating this universal language beyond its previous station as a training tool and means of recording.

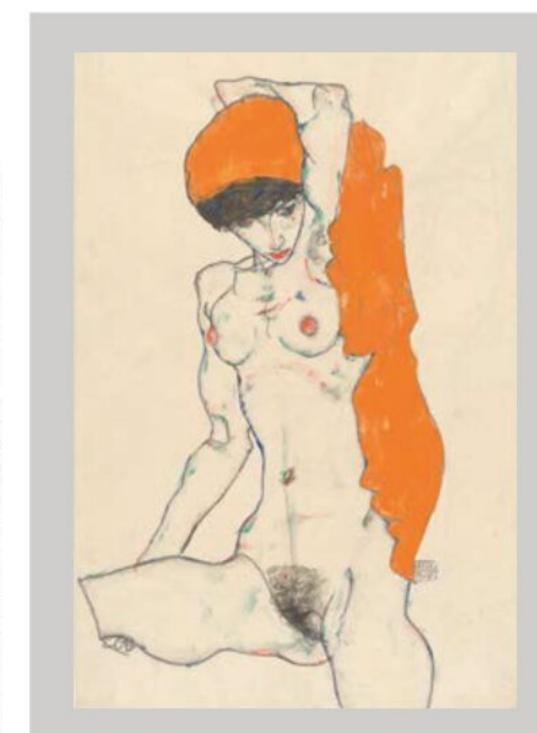
Over the next 24 pages I'm going to be exploring figure drawing by examining four primary masses of the body - bone, muscle, fat and skin - and finishing by drawing the figure as a connected whole. The aim of this series is not to teach you how to draw figures, but to give you points of departure from which to explore the figure through drawing. The fundamental lessons of life drawing stem from the clear observation of shapes and tones in the body and have been stated many times over - this series is intended instead to make you look harder at yourself, your model and the depictions of the figure that we see around us.

You do not need to learn the anatomy of the body to make a good drawing of a figure, but a working knowledge will help you make more focused observations and will be invaluable if you are inventing bodies from your imagination. Each month I will lay out an aspect of the body to explore, accompanied by studies that will help you think about its structure, tensions, forms and surfaces. Firstly, I'll begin by looking at how bones confer structure to the figure.



The skeleton provides scaffolding for our bodies, creating rigid structures upon which our muscles can act. A body without bones is like a teddy bear without its stuffing and, likewise, a figure drawing made without a sense of the skeleton is also soft and structureless.

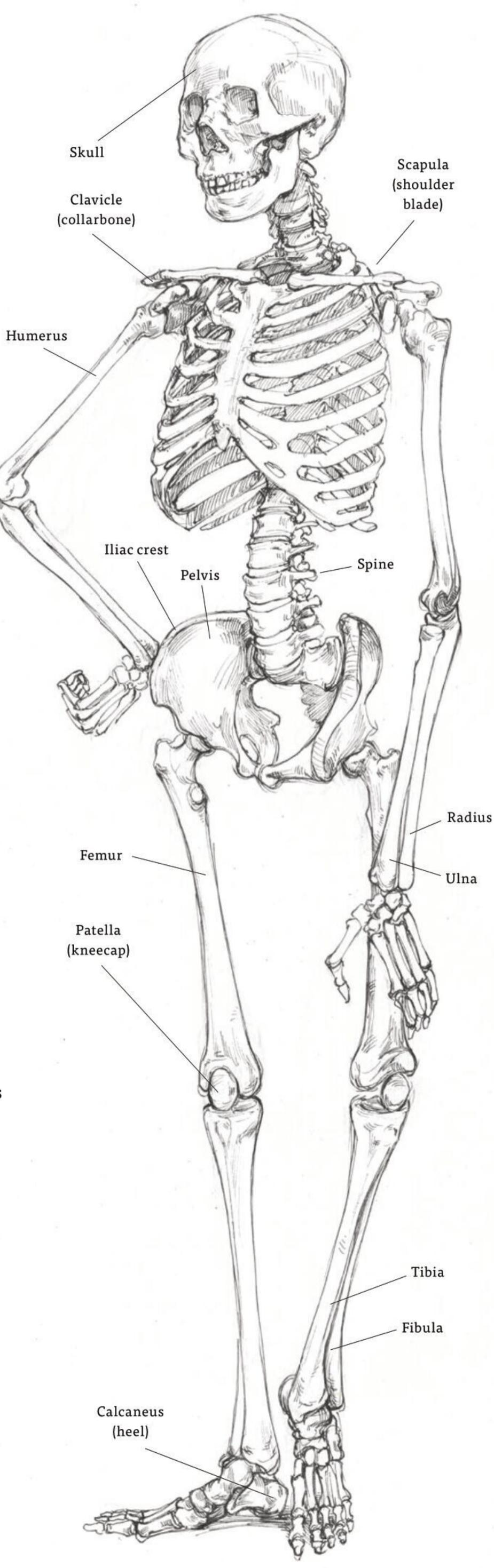
The skull and ribcage underpin the volume of the upper body, providing a consistent frame prominent from all angles. The midriff by contrast is malleable and can create a multitude of shapes. The pelvis forms a bowl-like shape, providing a largely hidden connection between the spine and the legs. The bones of the limbs give straightness and clear points of articulation in their joints.

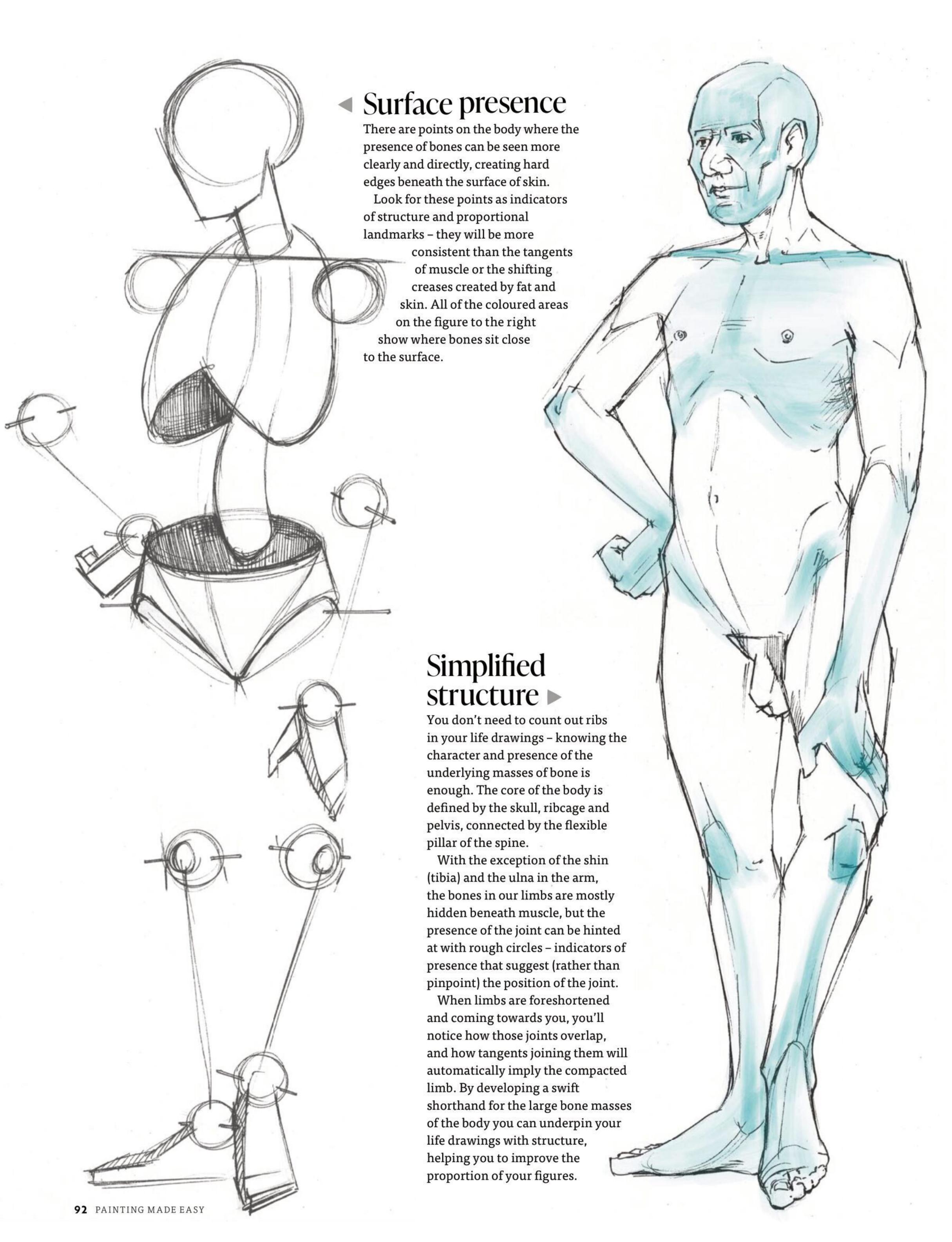


IN CONTEXT: EGON SCHIELE

Never was the skeleton more present in an artist's drawings than in those of Egon Schiele; it is as if they have bone beneath the paper, their contours delineated by pencil point.

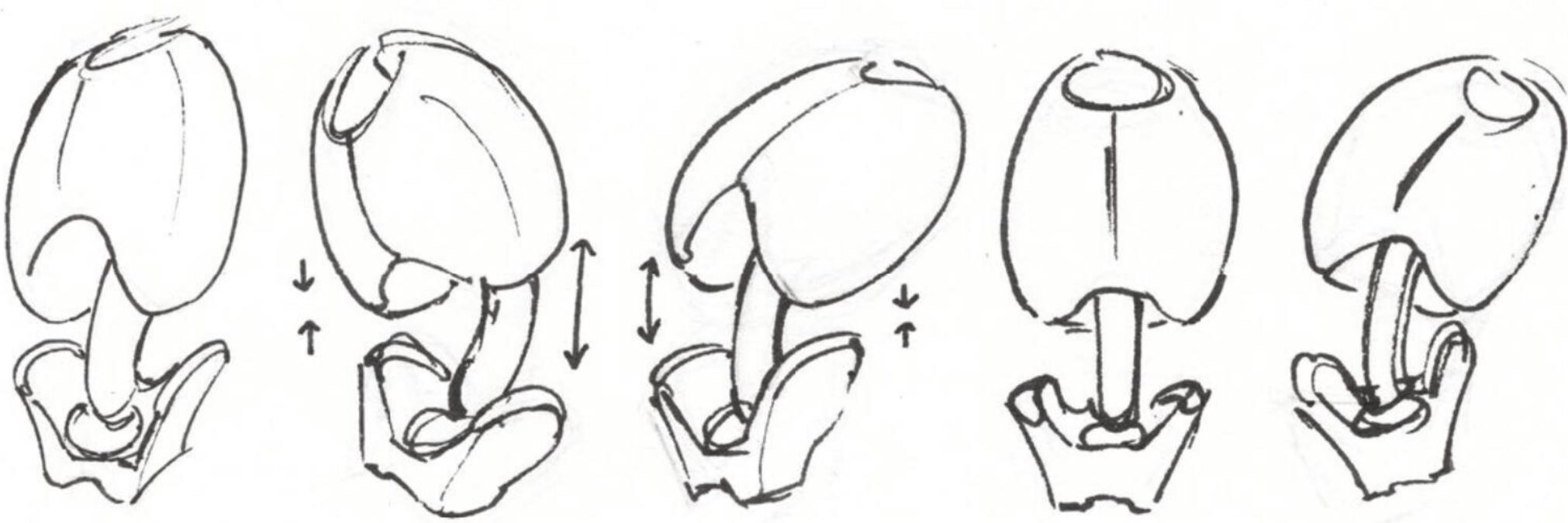
In 1914's Standing Nude with Orange Drapery, notice the presence of bones in the shoulder, collar, chest and hips, implied by Schiele's rhythmic line. ▶





Observations

Deeper self-awareness will help you to make better observations of the model posing in front of you. Get to know the bony protrusions of your own body and notice the parallels between your own anatomy and the figure that you are drawing. Here are a few things to notice when you are drawing the figure.



1 RIBCAGE AND PELVIS

The ribcage reaches its lowest point at the side of the body, arching up to the lower point of the breastbone. Put your hands on your hips – the V of your thumb and forefinger sit roughly at the base of your ribcage, whereas your little finger sits just over the iliac crest of your pelvis. Notice this space on the model and how tilting the body to the left and right can either open up or compact the body on either side.

3 HIPS ▶

The pelvis is a large bone structure – its presence is directly suggested by the bony protrusions on the front of the body (known as the ASIS) and the "dimples of Venus" (or PSIS) on the back. The curve of the iliac crest underpins the bump at the top of the hip, roughly in line with the waist band of trousers and skirts. Find the lower protrusion on the sides of your hips, created by the greater trochanter at the top of the upper legbone - this marks the widest point of the hips. By joining all of these points, you'll make the shape of clothing falling over the pelvis. Use this rough, underpants shape as a foundation for your drawings of the hips.

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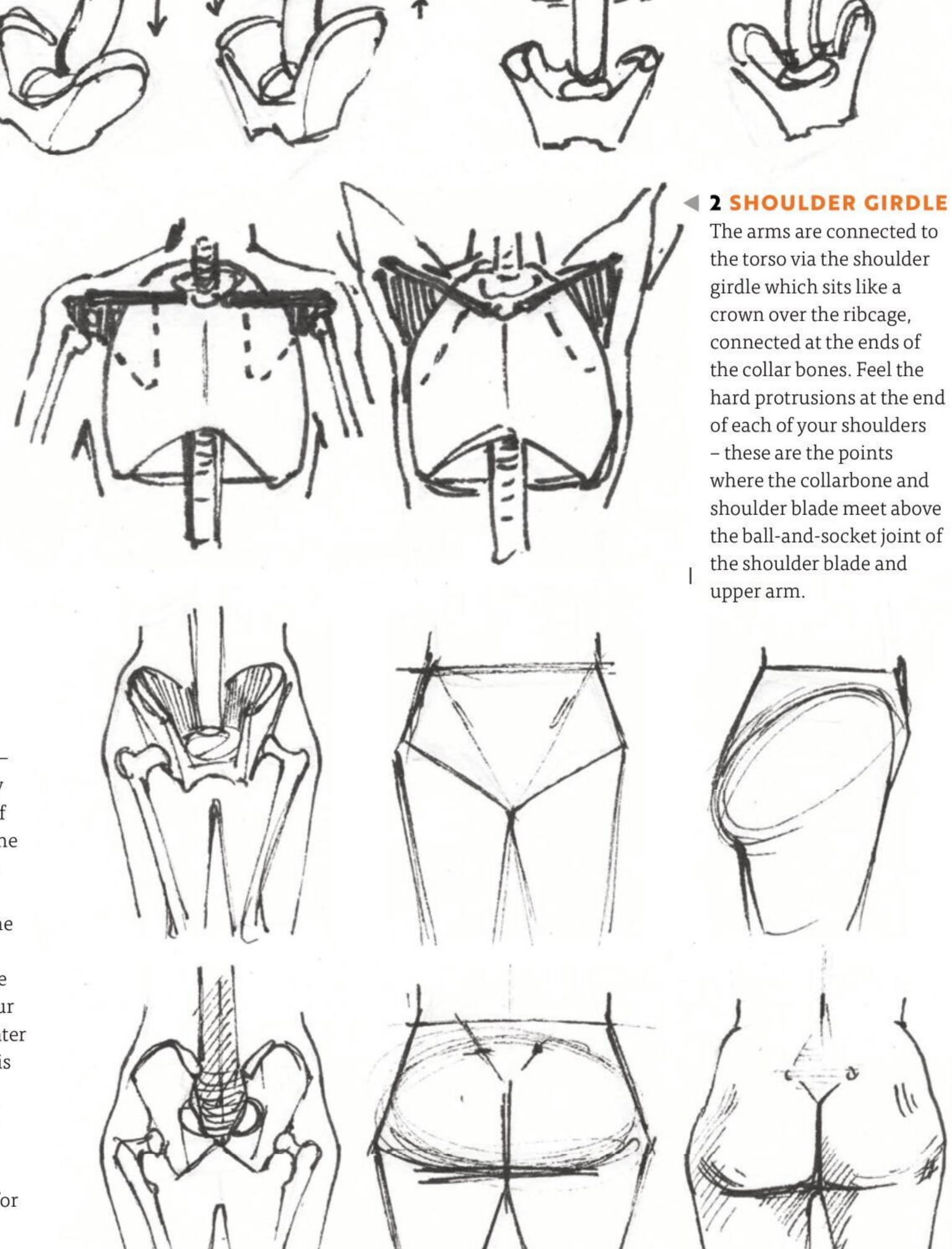


FIGURE DRAWING **PART**

JAKE SPICER'S five-part series on the building blocks of life drawing continues with a focus upon how to show tension through musculature

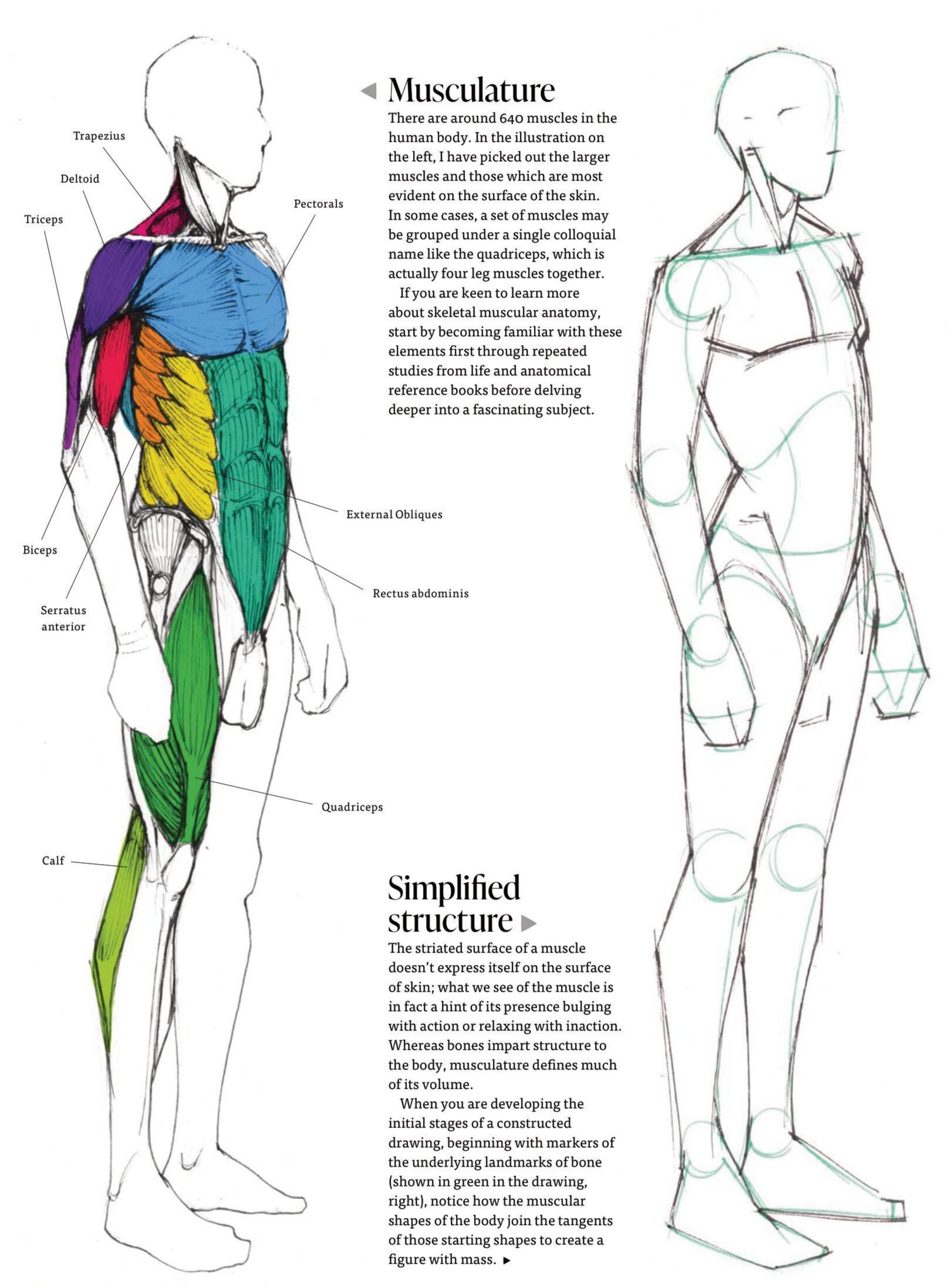


UMAN BEINGS are creatures of action and our bodies are powerful tools. Our hands are capable of delicate and dextrous articulation, our legs are muscular trunks that can propel us forward at speed. Even the act of standing on two feet is an impressive show of muscular power and control. Next time you get up from your chair, think about all of the muscles that you used to bring you to a standing position, not to mention the adjustments required to keep you there, balanced on the relatively tiny platforms of your feet. We're like marionettes, albeit with our own "strings" held inside us.

In this article, we will be looking at the musculature of the body and touching upon the ways in which you can use your understanding of these dynamic masses to improve your drawings. Just as our muscles articulate the structure of our skeletons to facilitate movement, so your observations of the muscles beneath the skin should give your drawings expression and dynamism.

As I said in the first instalment, you do not need a developed understanding of anatomy to be able to draw the figure well - observation should always come first. As part of my own training, I spent five years of drawing from life for three hours a day before I got to the stage where I felt it would be helpful to learn more about the body. However, a well-timed anatomy course helped me to clarify the observations I had already made.

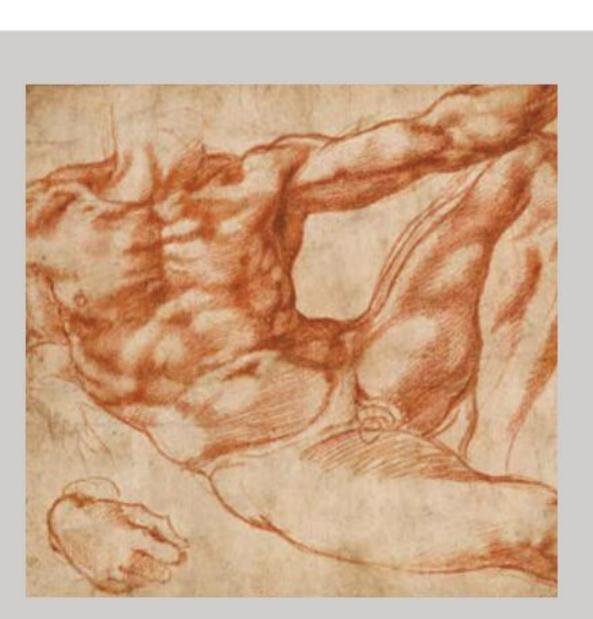
Once you have been drawing from the figure long enough to notice the shapes beneath the surface of the skin, let your own curiosity lead you to find out more about what is going on inside. It is only with the observational and experiential knowledge that comes from drawing that you will be able to make the best use of the knowledge that comes from further research.



Surface presence >

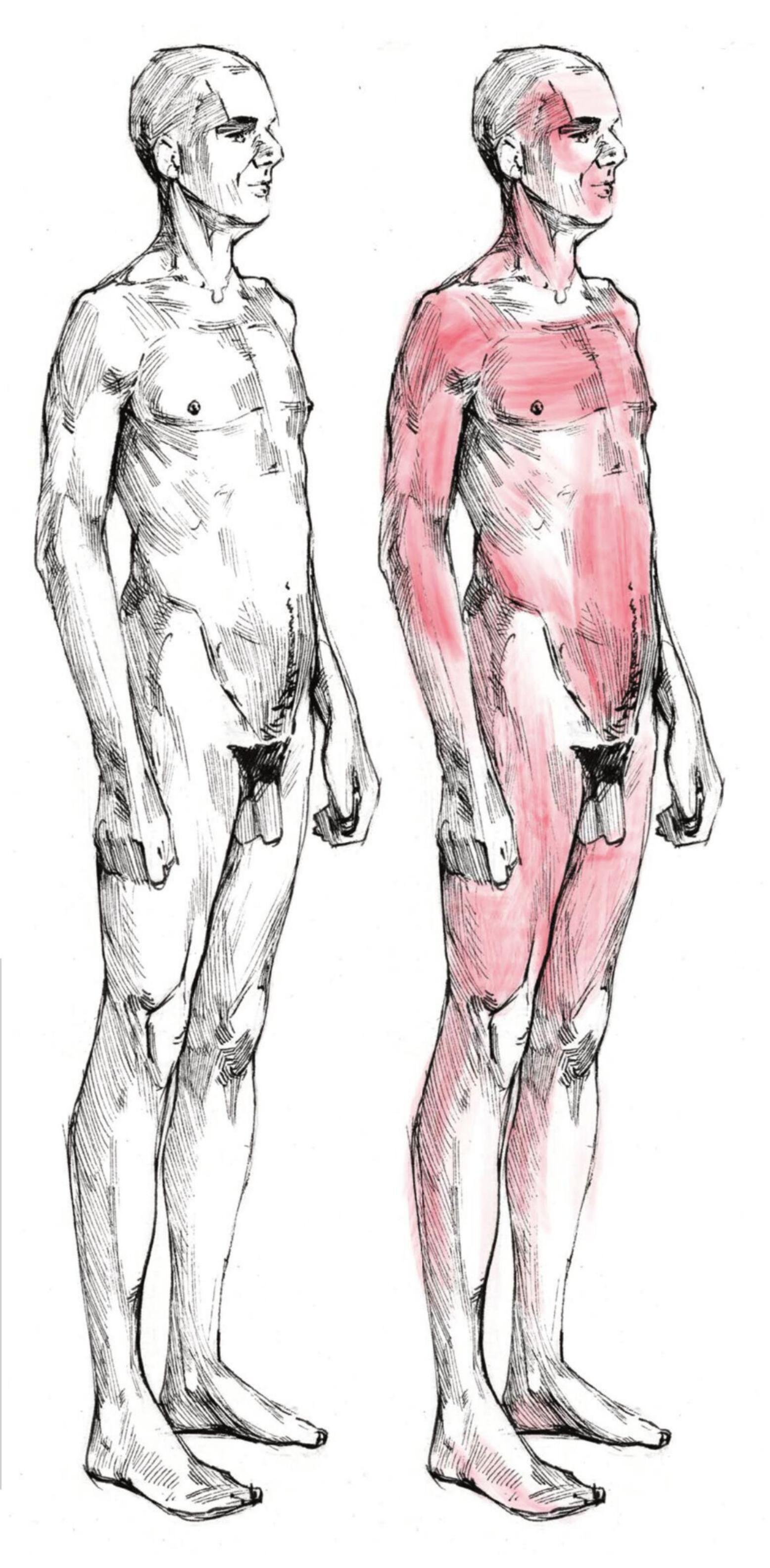
Although muscle and its connective tissue covers almost all of the body beneath the skin, it shows its presence in some places more than others. When we are drawing a figure from life, the shapes that we see in our model's body are governed by the balance of bone, muscle and fat that make up their physique.

Genetics and lifestyle combine to create a unique combination of volumes. While the shape of an adult skeleton is relatively similar, the balance of muscle and fat creates very different shapes from one figure to another. A person's regular activities sculpt their body: a dancer will have a different distribution of muscle to a swimmer, who will in turn be different to a weightlifter. A model's pose will also affect the visibility of muscle. When a model goes into pose in a life class, notice which muscles are involved in that action and which are holding it in place.



IN CONTEXT: MICHELANGELO

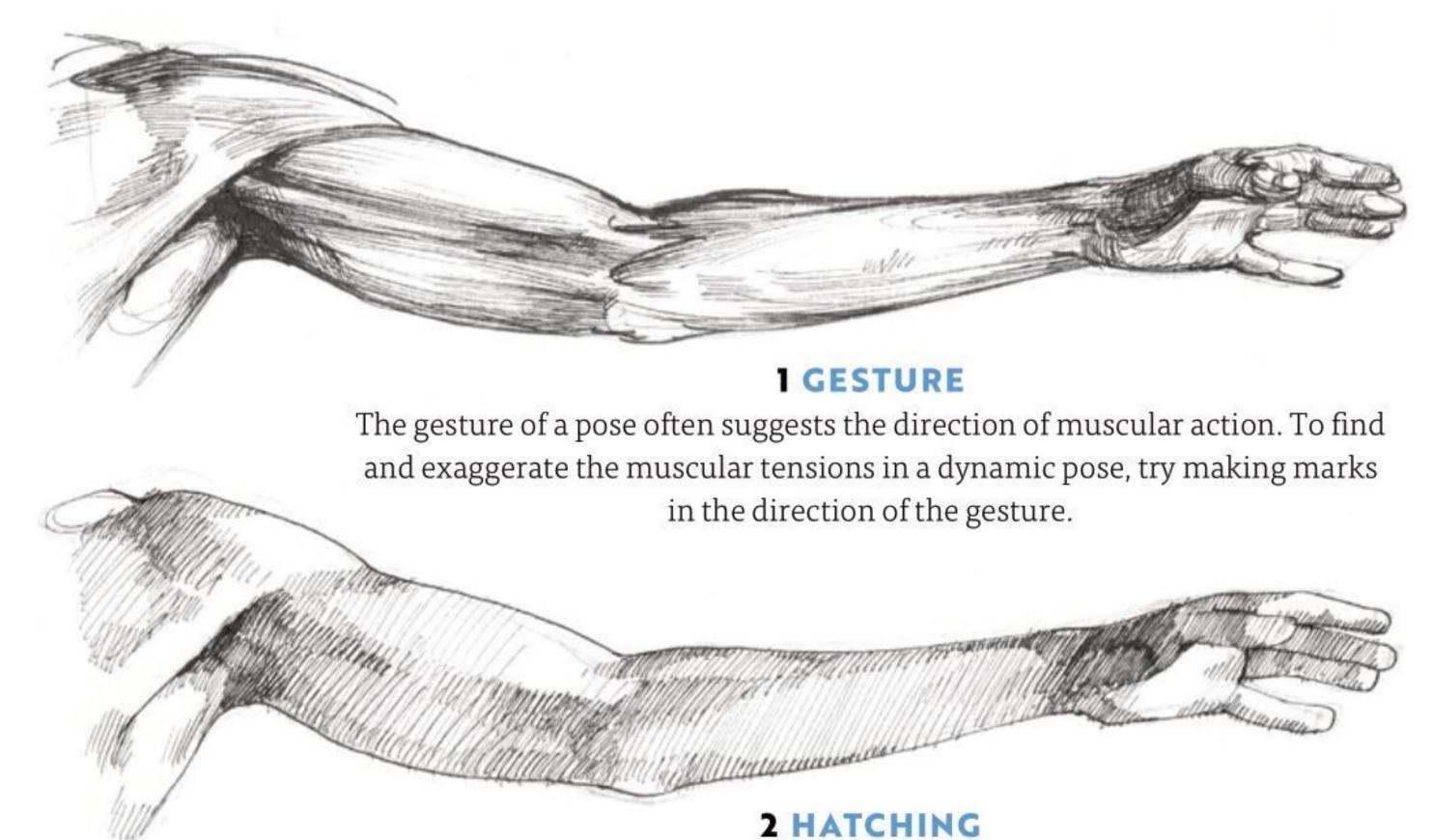
Michelangelo's drawings of the muscular male torso display a clear sense of attention to anatomical details. In the chalk studies he made for his Creation of Adam fresco on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, the multiple contour lines show him searching for the truth of his subject.



Observations

When a model adopts a still pose, that pose is at its most tense and energetic in the first few minutes. Try to capture the muscular tension of the figure as quickly as possible using just a few lines; that urgency will help to keep your mark making vital and lively, while focusing on the most important aspects of the figure.

It is often harder to capture the tension of a pose from a photo. Even though we have longer to reproduce the image, the camera stands between us and the model and removes the urgency for recording the pose in swift marks. If you are drawing from reference, you'll have to work twice as hard to get the speed and energy into your mark making than is required to capture tension in a figure.



Use hatching that follows the direction of the action and try to emphasise both the bulges of active muscles and the hard edges of tendons where they briefly show themselves on the skin's surface.

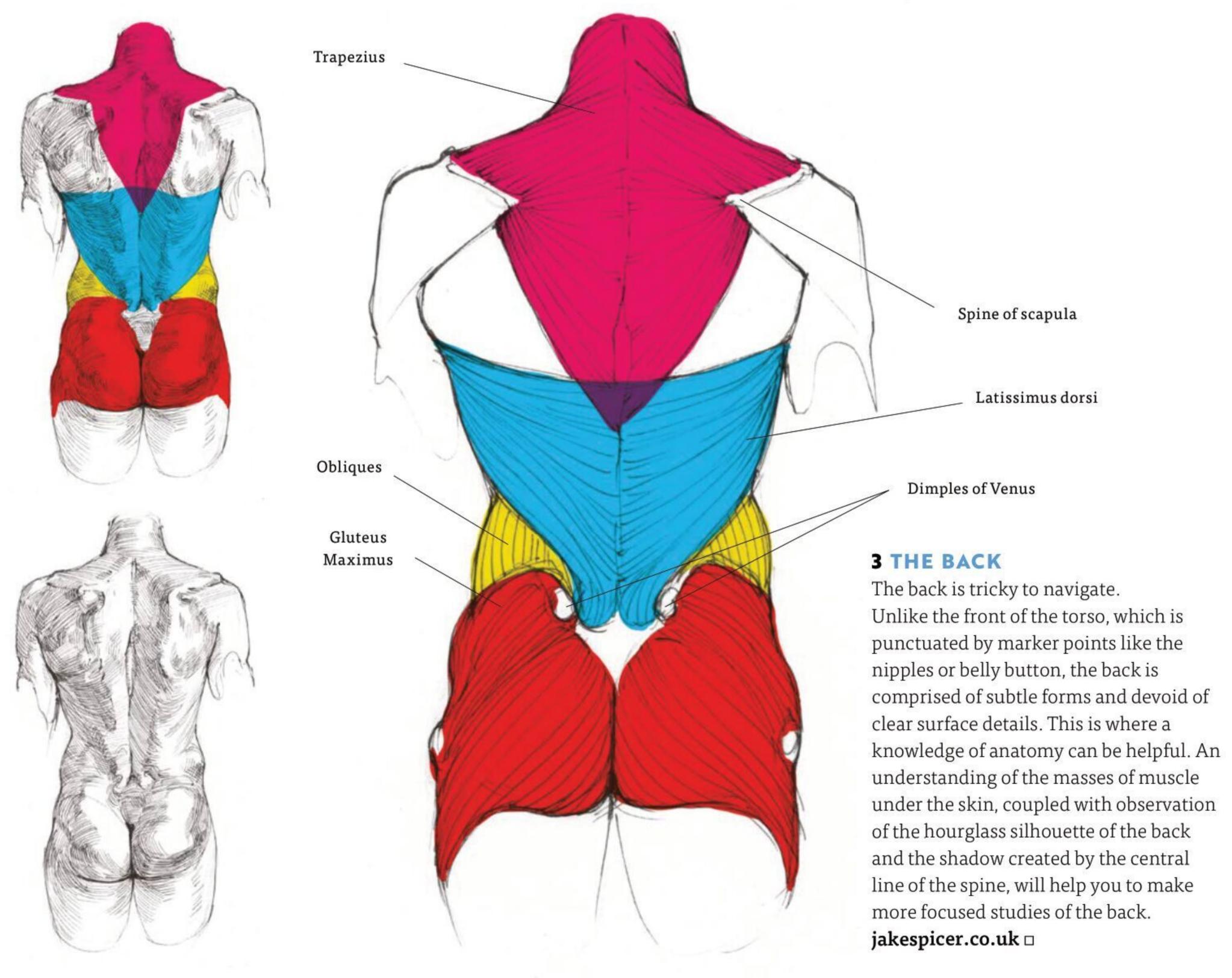
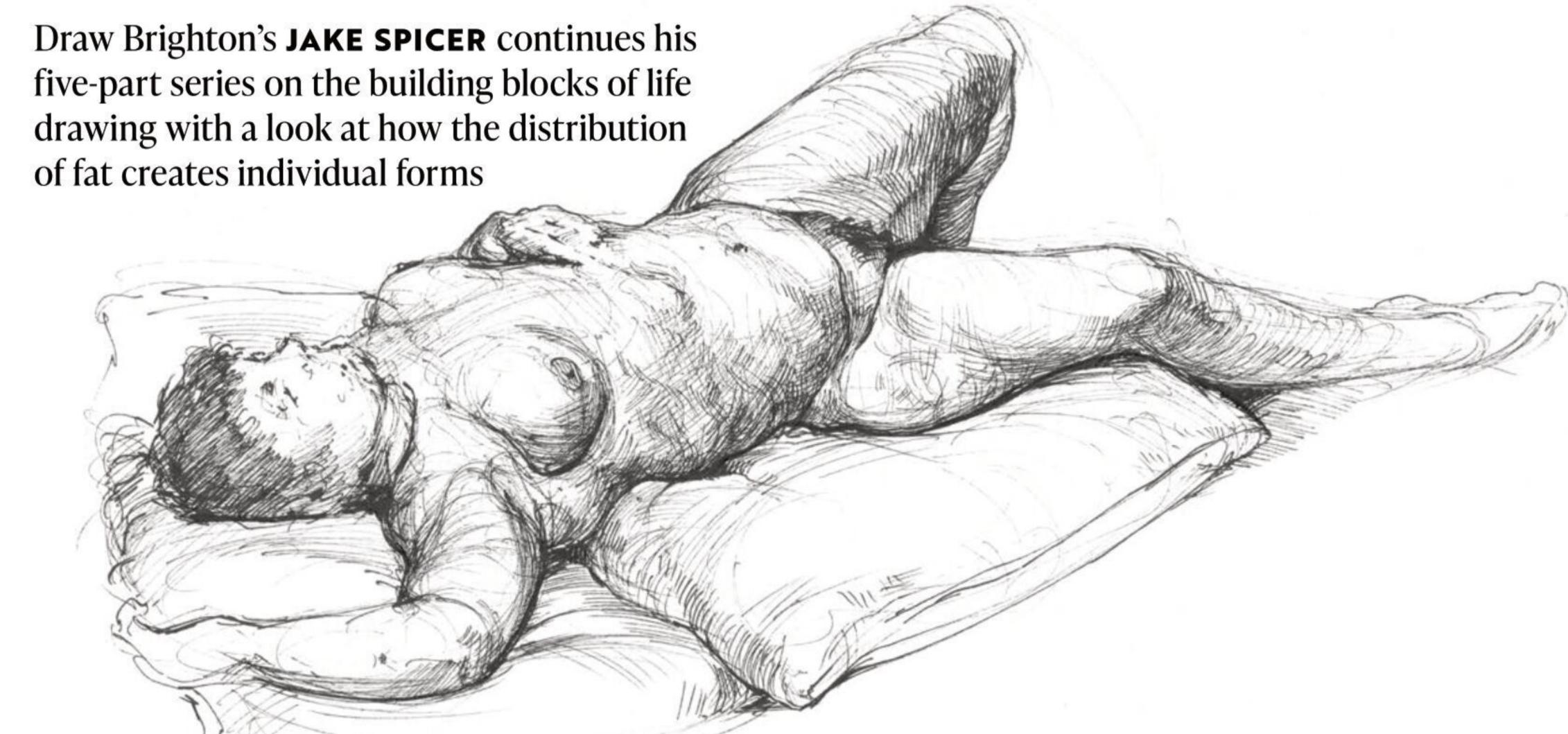


FIGURE RAWING **PART**



HE FIRST LESSONS of life drawing are lessons of looking: being able to clearly see the edges of your subject, the negative spaces that surround them, and the values of tone on the surfaces of the figure are all important skills to develop. However, once you have established a basic confidence when looking, you must learn to perceive qualities in the figure that go beyond the immediately observed; qualities that relate to the life model's presence in space, their physical nature.

These aspects - gesture, form and surface relate to the body as something that we, as viewers, share with our model. This article focuses on form in the figure.

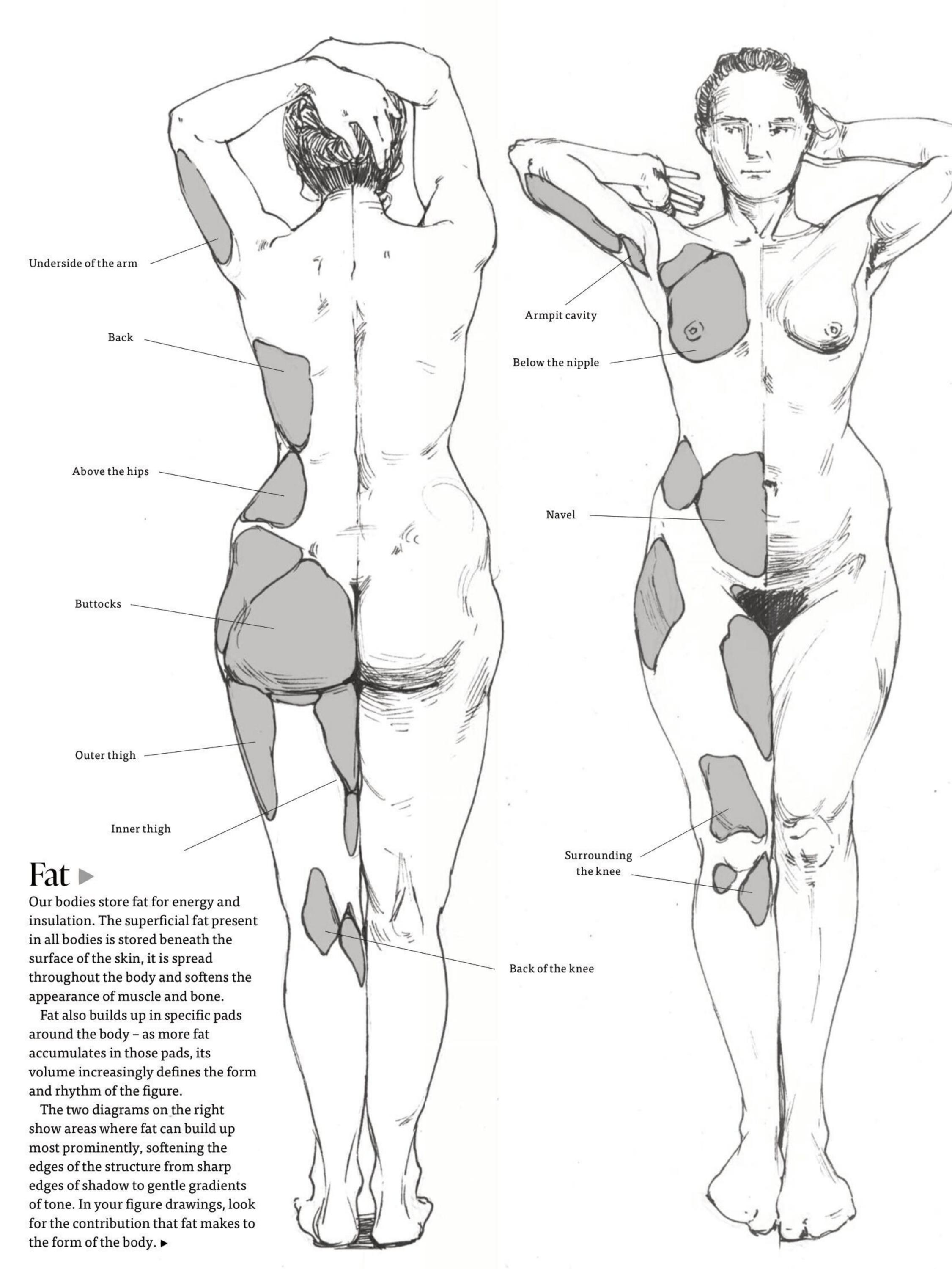
Learning to draw well is an embodied process - you learn by doing. Whatever approach you take to translating your observations and ideas into drawn marks, your physical engagement must keep up with the theory.

When you are working to improve your figure drawing, anatomical knowledge can be a two-edged sword. Although an understanding of the masses of the body will help you structure your drawings, it must be developed through the observation of real bodies to avoid your studies becoming formulaic. Many anatomy books for artists focus on skeletal-muscular anatomy, rightly encouraging you to look for both structure

and tension in the figure; the great omission is often the integumentary system, which includes fat and skin.

We'll be looking at skin in the next instalment, but now we're going to delve a little more into the contribution that fat makes to the form of the figure. The considerations of fat apply to life models of all body shapes. In a slim model, fat will soften the edges of muscle and bone, whereas in fuller-figured models the flows in the body might take on their own rhythmic forms.

In either case, it is the balance and distribution of fat in a model's body that contributes to some of the most individual and engaging forms in the body.



Gravity and weight ▶

Bones provide ridged anchors in the body which muscles act upon to facilitate movement. By contrast, fat hangs with gravity. When you are looking at a human figure both your own sense of physicality and your empathy for the model should inform your drawing. One of the advantages of drawing from life is that you can see the model move into and out of their pose, giving you an insight into how forces act on their figure. Notice how the malleable forms of their body shift: within the constraints of skin, both fat and relaxed muscle will be pulled downward by gravity.

Marks that suggest weight do not directly record observed phenomena like an edge or a shape of shadow. They are metaphors, tapping into a feeling. They record a personal

response, something that can't be directly prescribed. A concentration of dark marks often indicate weight, whereas pale lines suggest lightness. Likewise, marks that suggest form might also be used to indicate weight but the language you develop should be your own.

In the drawing on the right I built up swift, intuitive lines in response to weight, concentrating elliptical marks where it felt gravity was acting on the model's body, particularly the legs, belly, buttocks and breast.

I sought tension where the weight hung on bone structures and allowed the areas supporting little weight to remain light (the hair and neck). The drawing resembles a figure lit from above, as top-down lighting mirrors the effects of gravity.



IN CONTEXT: ANTOINE WATTEAU

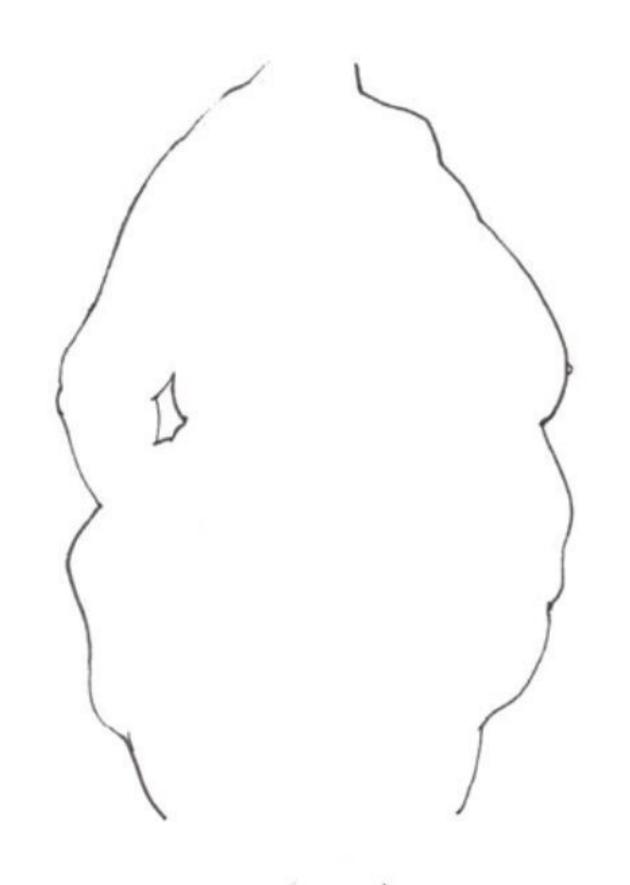
Antoine Watteau's drawings contain a tactile awareness of form, both in the bouncing contours of the outer edges of his figure drawings and in the subtle cross-contouring across figures, fabric and faces in his work. These qualities are subtly present in his Study of a Nude Man Holding Bottles, c. 1715-'16 [above].



Observations

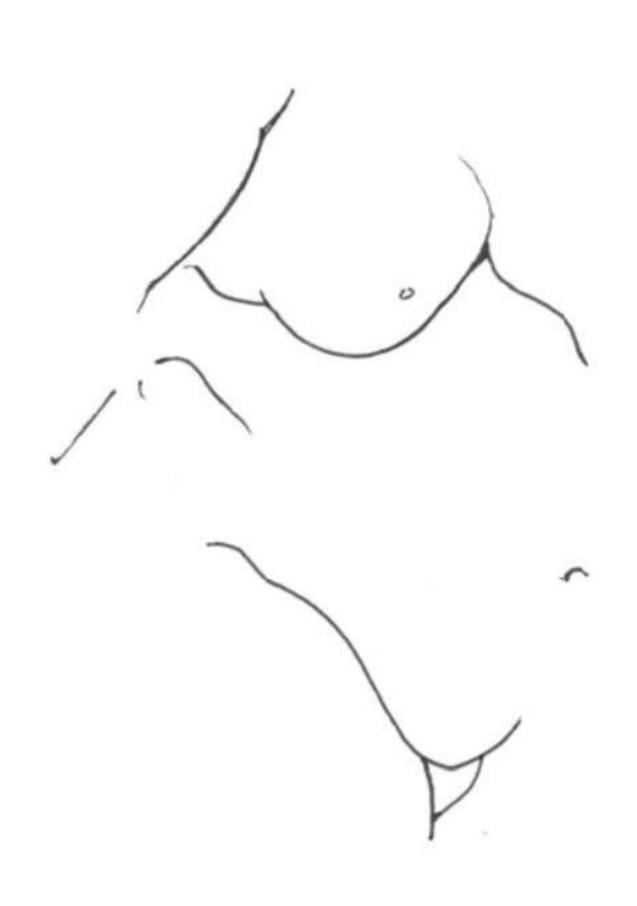
A life drawing both records and explores the body. By making a drawing we allow ourselves time to observe the figure in front of us, discovering things about the pose, the model and ourselves as we draw.

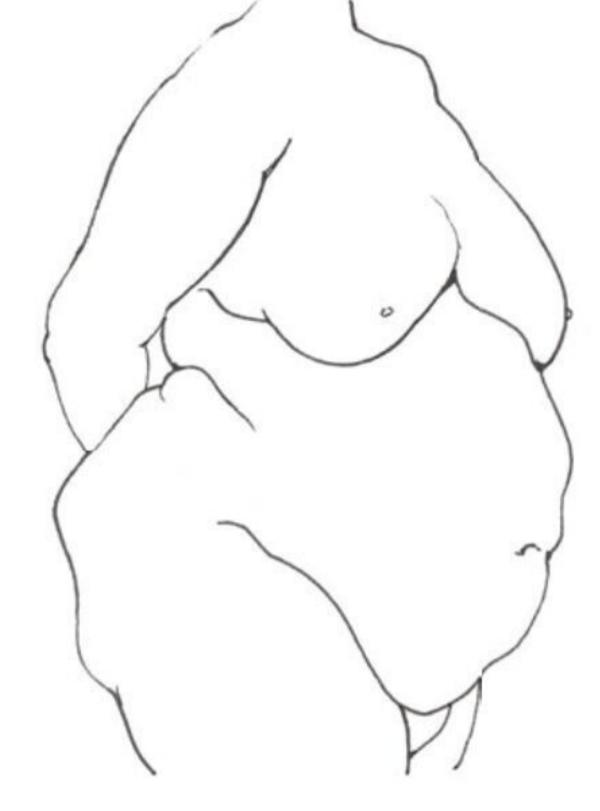
We translate what we have discovered into marks on the page, telling a story about what we have seen and experienced. The language of marks, and by extension the medium that we use, will lead us to have different experiences of our subject and make different drawings.

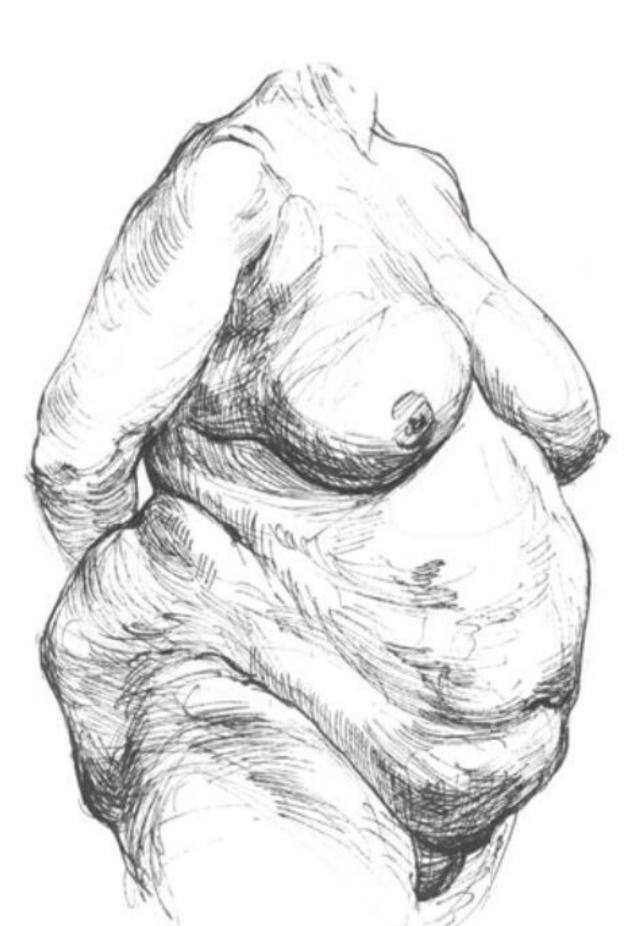


1 CONTOURS

The edges of the body are often the first clues we have to the form of the figure – as you lay down the external lines that describe the outer limits of your model think about how the weight and emphasis of your marks might say something about the hang of fat, skin and relaxed muscle, tugged down by gravity – the speed, pressure and rhythm of the mark all contribute towards the corporeal expression of the drawing.







2 CREASES

When two surfaces of skin press together it is the slim occlusion shadow between them that tells the story of their contact (see point A).

To become more sensitive to these shapes and rhythms try making a drawing that begins with the creases [far left], starting from the internal contours of the figure and working outwards, exploring all of the variety of their rhythmic lines.

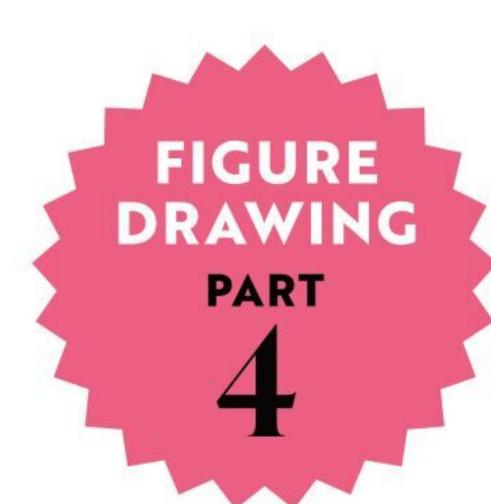
3 CROSS CONTOURS

Where contours describe the outer edge of a form, cross-contours describe what is going on between those outer edges. Cross contours are imaginary lines that trace the topography of the figure – you cannot see them in real life, but you can perceive their presence in the rounded masses of the body.

To help you perceive cross contours, imagine lines drawn in marker pen horizontally and vertically over your model [far left]. Notice how marks left by elasticated waistbands or the curve of rings and bracelets all suggest cross contours.

Cross contours can be used to emphasise form, suggesting the direction that you might build up tone in charcoal, colour in pastel, or hatched marks in pen and pencil. Notice how the tonal marks in my drawing of a torso [left] roughly follow the direction of the cross contours in the topographical study [far left].

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Surface

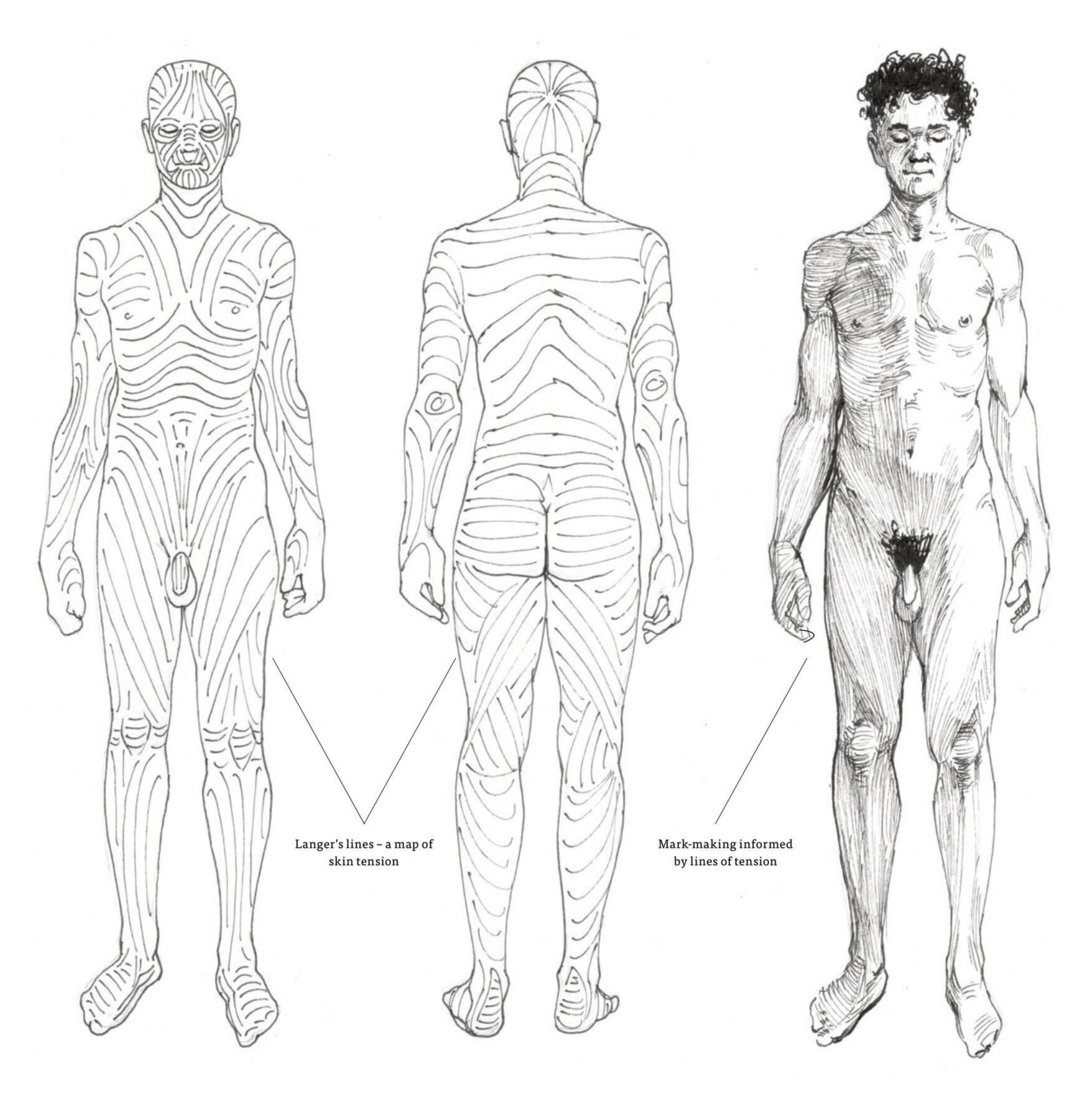
In the penultimate article of his five-part series on the building blocks of life drawing, Draw Brighton tutor **JAKE SPICER** turns his attention to the skin

s we seek to better understand the figure, we often direct our attention to the deepest anatomy – those hidden masses that define the structure and rhythm of our model's physique. In our haste to understand the interactions of bone and muscle, we bypass the one thing that every life drawing should reference: the largest organ in the body, skin. In this penultimate article of a five-part figure drawing series I'll be focusing on the skin and the marks we use to record our observations of it.

The surface of skin defines the practice life drawing – when we draw a clothed model, we are drawing a character draped in the trappings of their selected identity. Clothed only in skin, a life model becomes essential, universal, and the trust implied through the model's nakedness allows artists in a life class to be vulnerable and take creative risks.

In a life drawing, the skin of the model becomes our inevitable subject. When we draw the contour of our model's figure, it is the horizon line of skin that we are recording, wrapping around the body and out of sight. Shapes of shadow are cast onto skin, darkening its surface whilst highlights pick out specular reflections. It is upon this uniting protective layer that we see the story of our models' lives played out - from the stretchmarks of childbirth and the creases of repeated expressions, to the stubbly suggestion of a day without shaving and a toothbrush-flick of freckles, still fading from a recently passed summer.





Skin A

In a long sitting, when the reactionary process of intuitively drawn short poses gives way to the ebb and flow of a sustained drawing, you have time to turn your attention to skin.

A life drawing is always, in part, an exploration – if we already knew what we were drawing, why would we need our model to hold still for so long? Through

making a drawing you discover new things about the model, from shapes and textures that you hadn't noticed before to characterful details on the skin's surface – your drawing becomes a map of this uncharted territory, describing the topography and landmarks.

Your drawn marks can speak about many things – from hatching or blocks of tone that might describe the shapes of light and shadow, to cross-contours that can feel around the form, to marks
that describe the texture of hair. To tap
into the tactile nature of the surface
you can use lines of skin tension to
inform the direction of your marks.
They were initially mapped by the
19th-century Austrian surgeon Karl
Langer and the directions of tension
can run parallel with the anatomical
masses beneath the skin and the creases
of wrinkles at the surface. ▶

Hair ▶

Second to the skin, hair covers a significant portion of the body, creating a surface with a more varied texture and direction. Aside from being anchored to the scalp, head hair is not restricted by the underlying anatomy that defines the skin's surface - the textural characters of the hairs themselves, combined with the styling choices of the model that shape the overall form and flow of the hair; its tone and reflectiveness define how we see it.

Over the rest of the figure, the texture of body hair interrupts the surface of the figure, creating a tonal intervention in the surface of the skin. Here, the shape of individual hairs can inform the gesture of the mark that you use and you can suggest the hair's overall mass – look carefully at the direction and shape of individual strands and practice a swift, repeating mark that mimics its character to build up a mass of texture and tone.

Too often lazy observation inclines us to scribble an indistinct mass for the hair – suggesting hairiness yet failing to properly convey the particular type of hair that we are trying to observe.



STRAYS

The texture of head hair is most readily expressed at its boundaries



SHEEN

Paper can be left light to suggest reflections in the hair



DENSITY

For pubic or armpit hair, draw dense masses of characterful curling shapes



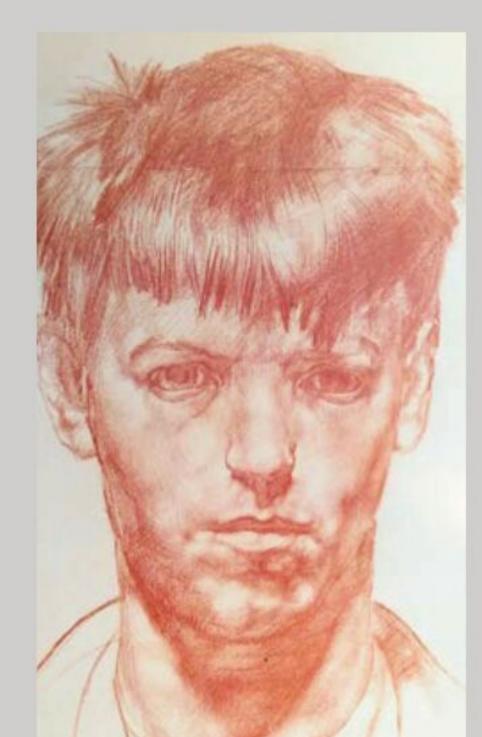
DISTRIBUTION

The character of individual hair comes to the fore in sparser areas



DIRECTION

With dashed hairs, start the mark at the skin and flick out towards the tip



IN CONTEXT: STANLEY SPENCER

Stanley Spencer's 1912
Self-Portrait in red chalk
is a sensitive record of
surface texture and
direction.

It is the combination of directional marks that make this portrait engaging, with cross contours indicating the direction of skin and hair, sculpting the paper into a form that we can almost reach out and touch.

Surface texture

Our awareness of the physical sensation of touch feeds into how we perceive the model in front of us. Whether conscious or not, the contact that your pencil makes with the paper is analogous of the contact your eye makes with the surface of the model's body.

Likewise, your experience of having skin yourself will permeate the studies you make of another person's skin. Here are some approaches you can take to rendering surface details on the skin.





Scars and stretchmarks

In a monochrome sketch, scars and stretchmarks register as light shapes on a darker surface. Once you have established the skin's tone, use an eraser to draw lighter areas.





Tattoos

Instead of interpreting the tattoo and drawing it, treat it as an abstract arrangement of light and dark shapes. Draw what you see, not what you think you see.



Wrinkles and creases

Wrinkles and creases create dark occlusion shadows in the skin – use lines of varying weight to suggest their rhythm and cross-contours to suggest how the skin puckers either side.



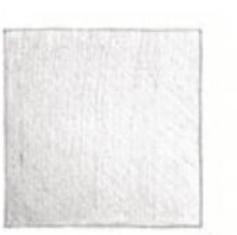
Freckles and moles

As dark interventions on a typically lighter surface, freckles and moles can be added later by tickling the paper with a little tone.



Short hair

Short hair shows the skin below and it is a personal choice how you choose to render it. I like to suggest the texture, dashing in short hairs to create tone through textural marks.

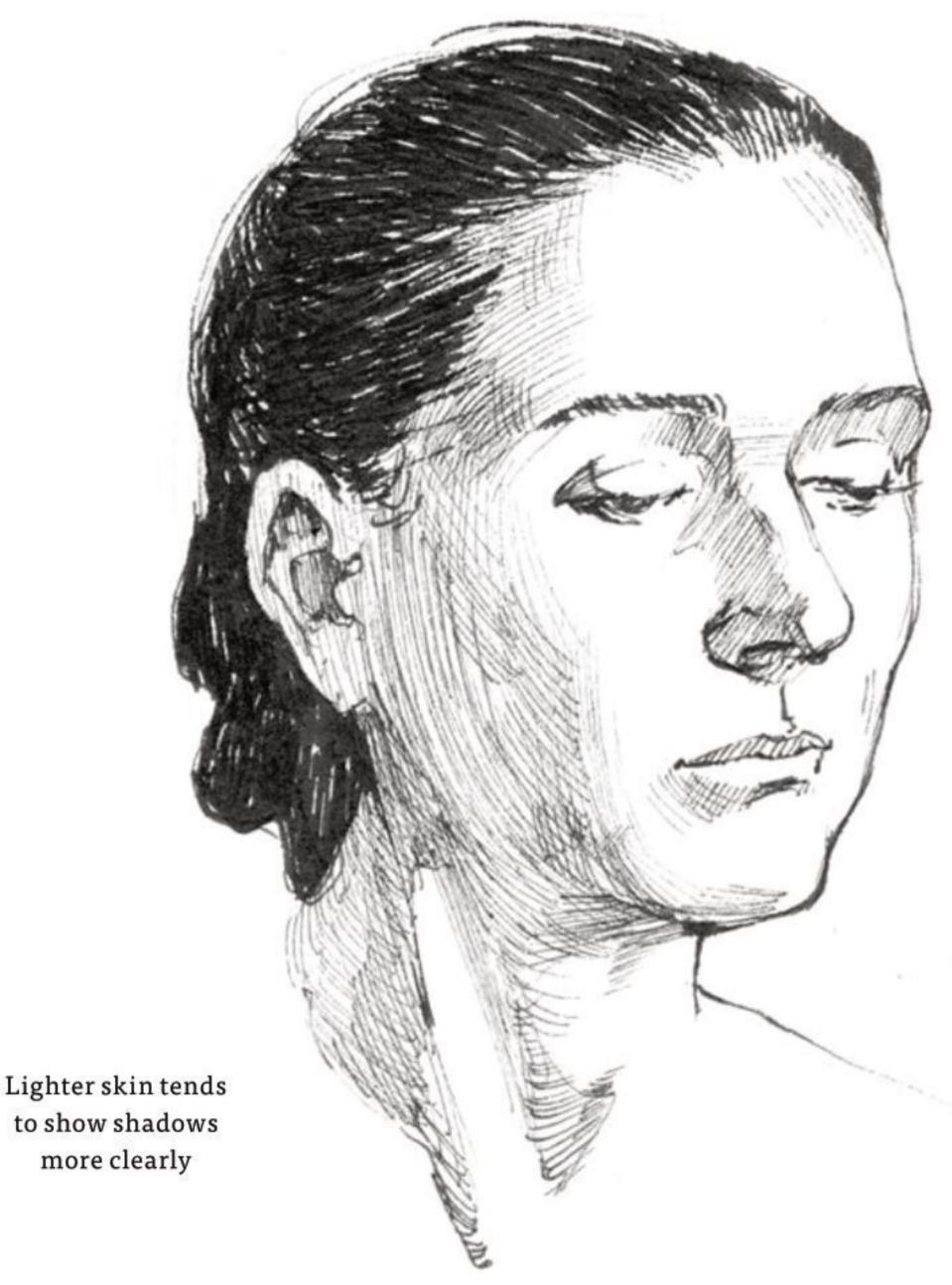




Blood vessels

Visible blood vessels create a subtle, raised shape on the skin, often presenting themselves as an adjacent highlight and shadow.

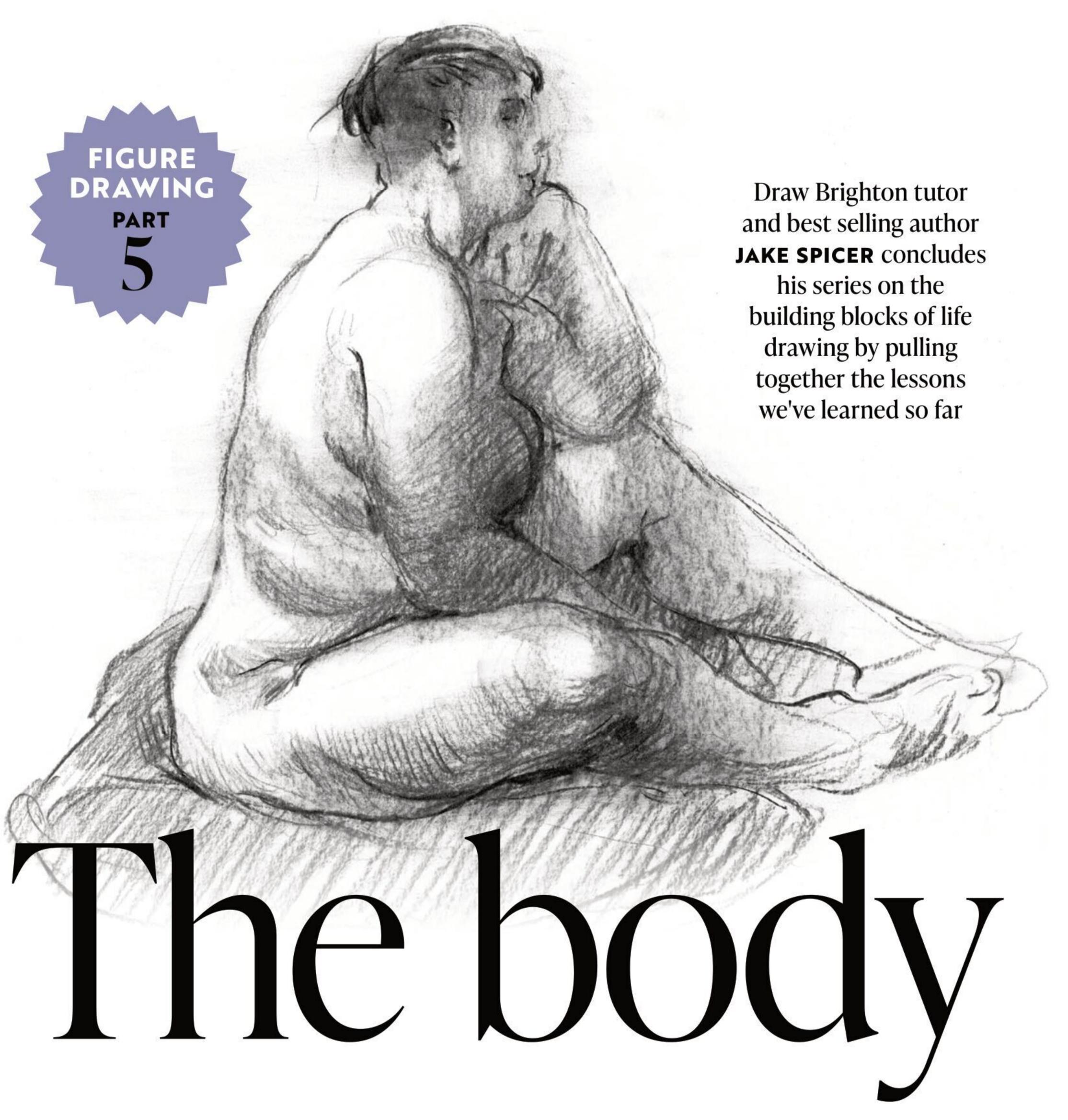




Observations

Reduced to a monochrome drawing, skin varies in tone from very pale grey to near-black. The tonal values we see in our model are created by the combination of the local tone of the model's skin (how essentially light or dark it is), combined with the pattern of light and shadow that plays across the form of the body.

Broadly speaking, lighter skin tends to show shadows most clearly as their dark shapes contrast with the pale skin tone; for the same reason, darker skin shows reflected highlights more clearly. Mid-tone skin exhibits the most limited contrasts, showing both highlights and shadows with a balanced degree of contrast. **jakespicer.co.uk** \square



ACH WEDNESDAY night for the last 11 years, I have run drop-in life drawing classes in my studio. A few weeks ago, I stood at my easel in the back corner of a busy class and listened to a retired pilot in a deep discussion with an A-level student about the merits of coloured sugar paper and half-sticks of soft pastel. For all their opposing life experiences, in those two hours of drawing they were entirely united by a shared purpose. They enjoyed the comradery of a shared struggle: an attempt to commit to paper a fleeting impression of a human figure.

Life drawing is described as a historical practice by those who might exalt it as an

idealised lost art and simultaneously by anybody keen to denigrate it as outmoded. Both camps are mistaken; life drawing remains perpetually current.

Prior to the lockdown, the informal life drawing community in the UK had been growing apace, with life classes returning to art schools as grass-roots movements, driven by students' enthusiasm. At the heart of that resurgence is a very human urge: the desire to recognise and be recognised. By drawing another person, we bear witness to them and our drawing becomes testament to both our presence and theirs. In my experience most people start life drawing because they want to

learn to observe better, or to make better drawings of people; they continue life drawing because drawing in a room full of people who are united by the same activity makes you part of a community.

Over the past four parts of the series, we've looked at the four masses of the body that concern us as draughtspeople – bone, muscle, fat and skin – and the qualities that those masses confer to our drawings – structure, tension, form and a sense of surface.

In this final article, I will help you pull all of these aspects together into a simple and connected process that aims to underpin your observations with a clear sense of purpose.

Skeletal landmarks Simple forms Surface texture and contour

Drawn anatomy

We are the result of a biological anatomy: both our bodies and our models' bodies are made up of hard edges of bone, rhythmic muscular forms and cushions of fat held in an elastic integument. Our drawings, therefore, should also have an anatomy to them: they can be built from a collection of fundamental shapes with the final lines and tones layered over the top like skin.

Drawn anatomy makes reference to biological anatomy, but they are not the same thing. We do not draw a fully detailed skeleton, layered with individual muscles before we arrive at the contour of the figure, but instead use simplified shapes to support looking – they provide just enough structure for us to move on to the next layer of observation.

A drawing that is overly concerned with anatomical precision can become as rigid and uncanny as a carved écorché, losing the humanity of the model who served as subject.

A drawing that only focuses on the surface of the figure with no sense of internal structure can become like a rubber mask, all soft surface with no bones.

Most artists who take a constructive approach to figure drawing adapt conventional models to fit their own needs. The first and most useful structures are those of bone, from the volume of the skull, ribcage and pelvis, which all underpin the core of the torso, to the spine, which informs the gestural line of action in the figure. The volumes of the body are fleshed out with shapes of muscle and fat, with active muscle holding the body up against gravity, and the fat and relaxed muscle hanging with the tug of that downward force. On the left are some simple shapes to look for in the figure that refer to the anatomy beneath. ▶

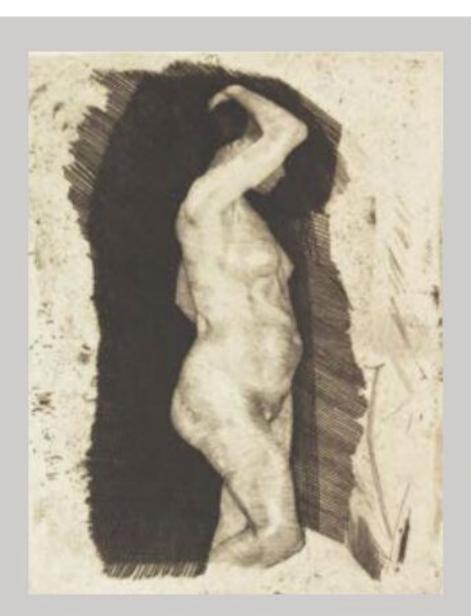
Recording time

Unlike a photograph, which is snapped almost instantaneously, a drawing preserves time in its marks like a mosquito trapped in amber.

The fleeting nature of a life model's pose is recorded in the urgency and repetition of the drawn marks so that an observer with a practiced eye might be able to tell how long the pose was held for.

It is not a bad thing to make a drawing from a photograph, but the drawing will be disingenuous: a pose that could only be held for two minutes, for example, might be drawn over the course of an hour.

To make the most of the time you have, one must develop different drawing strategies for different lengths of pose. Here are three suggestions of approaches that borrow from a constructed structure.



IN CONTEXT: KÄTHE KOLLWITZ

German artist Käthe Kollwitz represents the epitome of good figure drawing. Her etchings speak about what it is to be human – sufficiently tethered to the observed figure to be honest, with enough latitude to feel personal. In Standing Female Nude, the hatched backdrop pushes the body forward, modelled with cross-contours that describe the surface of a very human body.

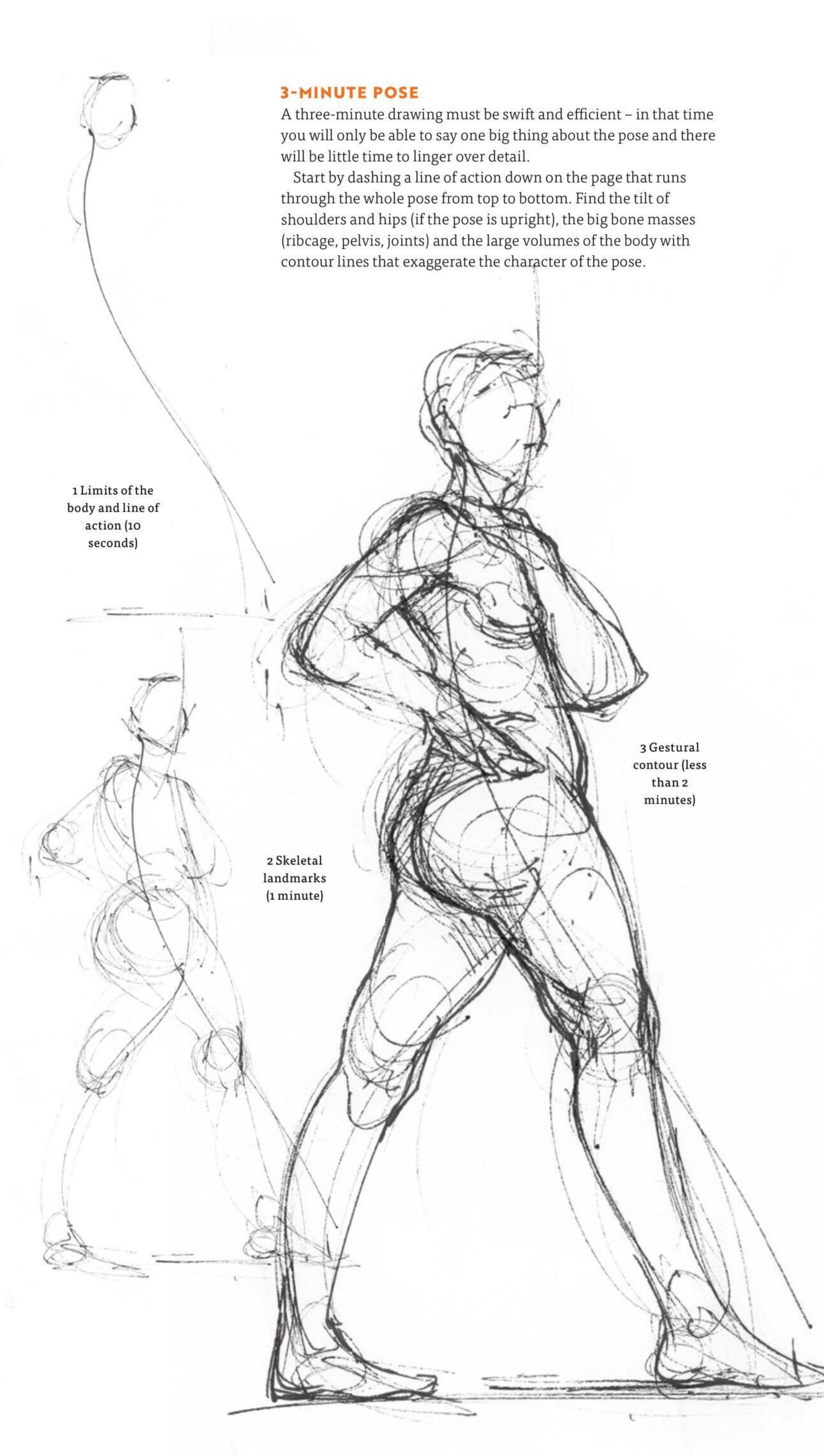


FIGURE DRAWING

15-MINUTE POSE

A slightly longer pose of 15 to 20 minutes is an ideal length of time for drawing a simple, complete figure.

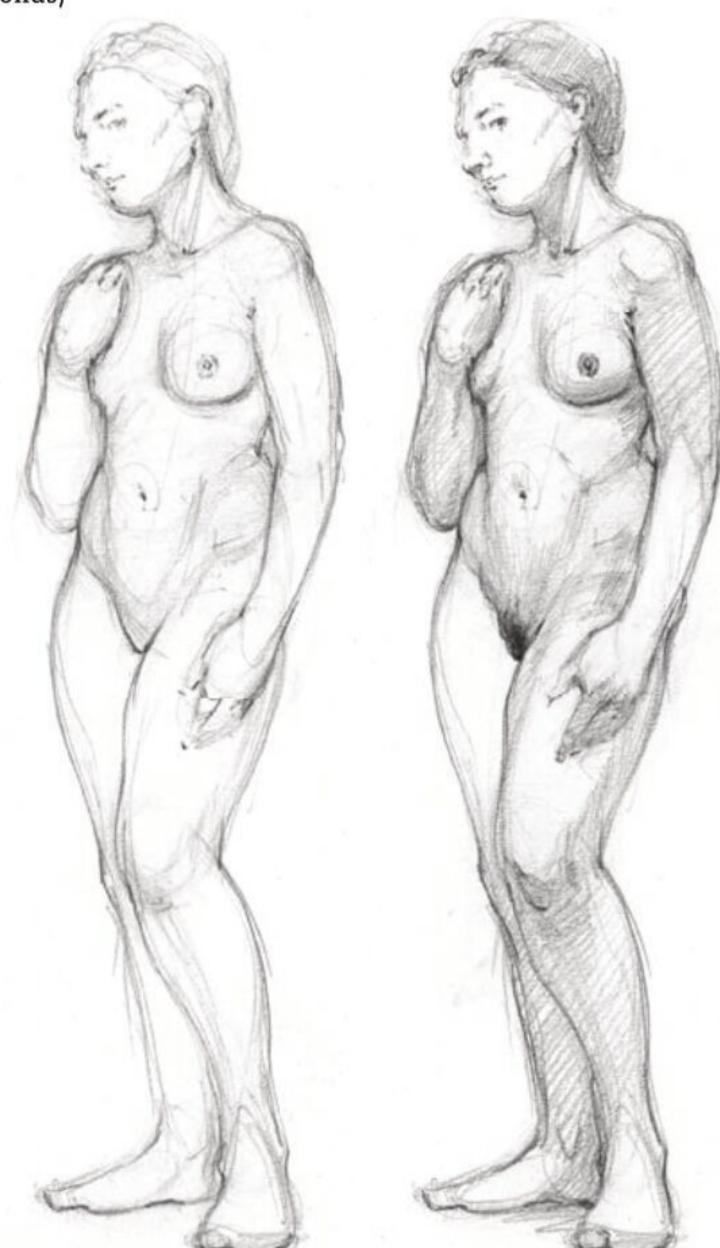
Getting used to establishing the major shapes of the figure in that time will help you to develop the foundation of skills you need to develop longer studies.



1 Limits of the body and line of action (10 seconds)

2 Skeletal landmarks (1 minute)

3 Simple forms (2 minutes)

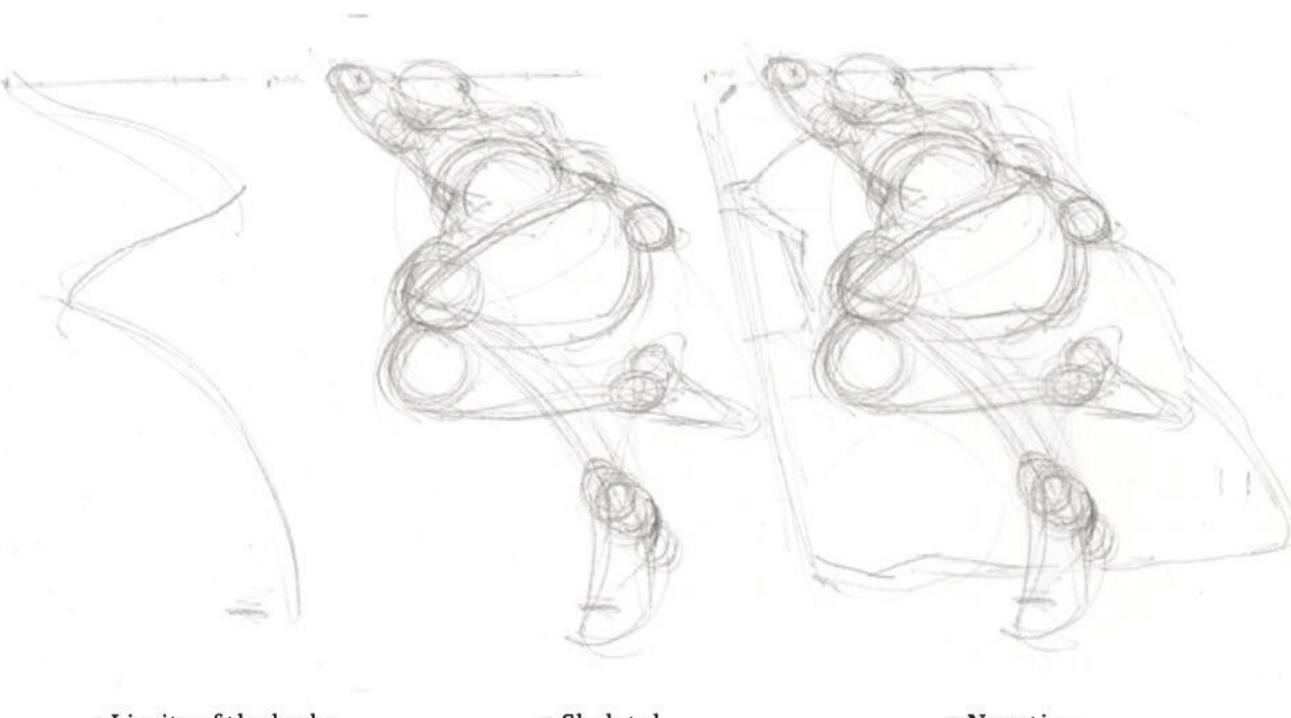


4 Developed contour (3-5 minutes)

5 Tone and form (7-9 minutes)

45-MINUTE POSE

A longer drawing allows you to deal with multiple focuses, telling a story about the rhythms of the body at the same times as recording surfaces and areas of concentrated details with more focus. It helps to make a light 20-minute drawing to establish the big shapes in the body before rubbing that back and elaborating on the study in more detail. **jakespicer.co.uk** \Box



1 Limits of the body and line of action (10 seconds)

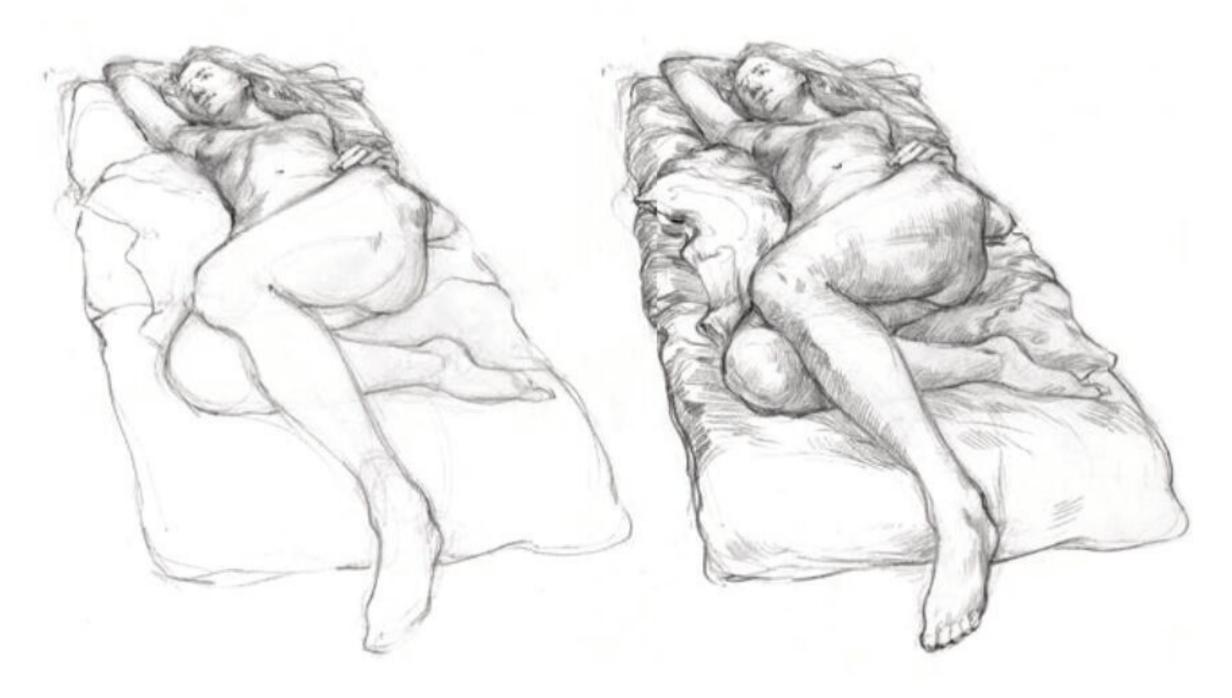
2 Skeletal landmarks (1 minute)

3 Negative spaces (1 minute)



4 Simple forms (2 minutes)

5 Developed contour (3-5 minutes)



6 & 7 Tone and form (7-9 minutes)

Watercolourist KATE OSBORNE opens up her sketchbooks to show you some inventive ways to develop your ideas in private

не ректест sкетснвоок. There are many ideas about it, but no blueprint for it and no rules about how to use it. An outdoors sketcher will tell you how drawing your immediate environment creates far better memories than if taking photos of the same subject, whereas a studio sketcher might tell you that working in the quiet of the studio allows them to dig deeper and explore ideas with no distraction. It's horses for courses, there are no "should"s.

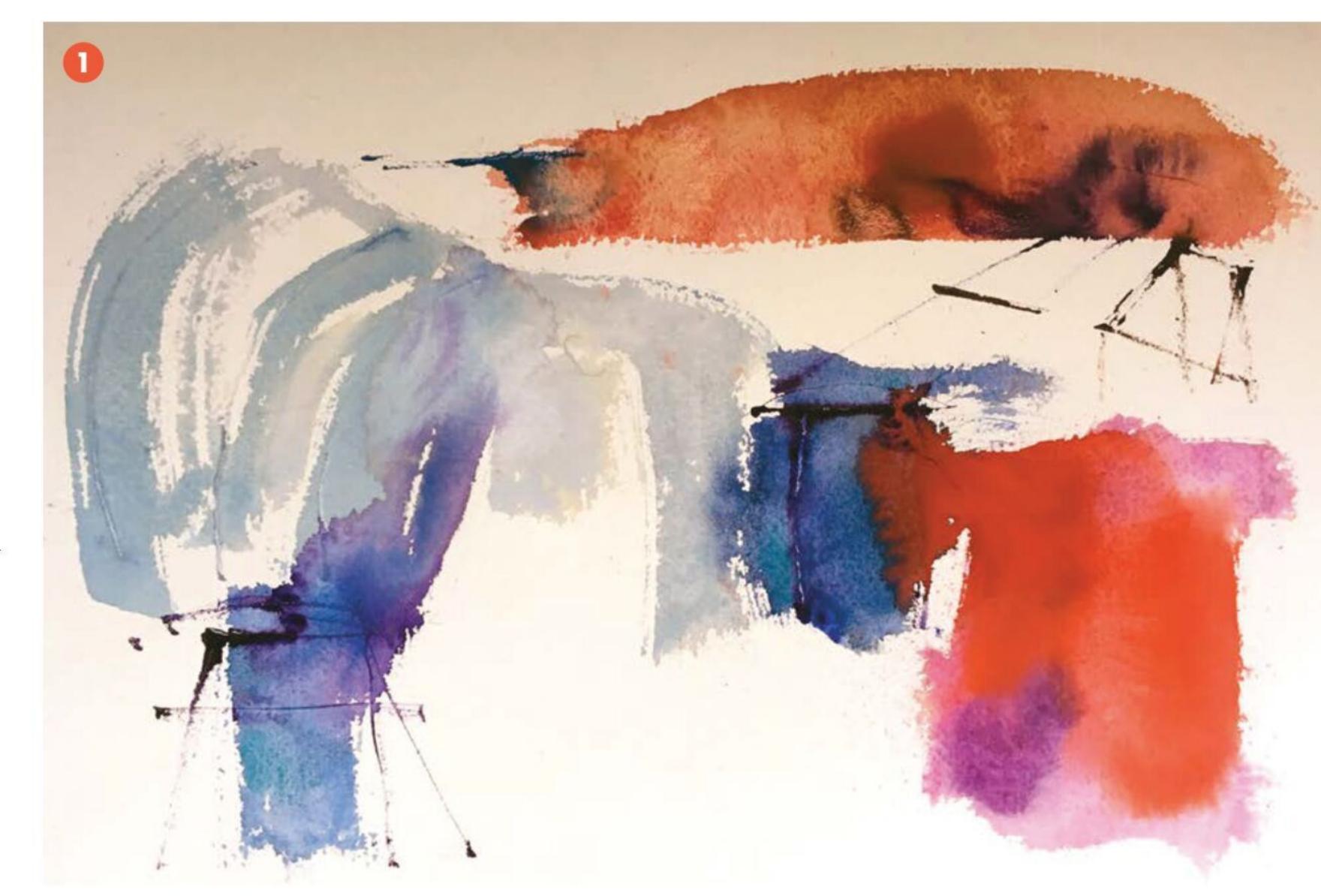
Be warned, though, there are quite a lot of rather perfect looking sketchbooks on social media these days, which are decidedly gorgeous but can be quite daunting to use as your model. It's better to approach your sketchbook fearlessly - it's your own private space, where you can record or respond to what you see and also try out those new ideas, media and techniques, work out your compositions, or play with colour, tone and more.

A sketchbook is not meant to frighten, but to give permission to play. Allow for those inevitable dead ends and mistakes that must happen en route to something that works; those "failures" are steps towards resolving and expressing ideas.

My own main source of inspiration these days has been my local allotments. Artistically, it's a great combination of wild weeds and brambles on its edges interspersed with the neat structures of cultivation.

The sketches and photographs I make on site, I then use in the studio to do more sketchbook work, where editing becomes a big part of the process. It is just about possible to wander until you find the literally "perfect" view, but even when you're sitting in front of a lovely view you'll be editing as you draw and I definitely find it more exciting to add elements together and leave elements out in a way that inspires. Once off the hook of reproducing what I see, the creative options are endless, and I can play to my heart's content.

As well as a place to experiment, a sketchbook is also a library and a great personal resource. When I hit a blank spot and don't know where to head next, it's always a good idea to have a rummage through them and see if any of the ideas in there inspire new work. Next are eight ideas for using your sketchbooks creatively.



SKETCH FASTER

Some sketchbook drawings can be reworked over a period of time, but often time is short. As an exercise, I sometimes even limit the amount of time I allow myself to spend on a sketch. Working fast forces a more instinctive way of working.

This allotment sketch was executed so rapidly that it has become pretty abstract, more about colour and shape than an accurate representation.

etchbooks







You can still be creative when working from reference photos. This spread was based on a picture of a neglected corner of the allotments – a water barrel used as a euphorbia plant pot with rubble bags in front and brambles growing over the top.

I used a range of media for this sketch, including Inktense crayons, Derwent acrylic pens and watercolour. I left a lot of blank paper showing at the bottom, these empty spaces playing off the busier top half of the sketch to create something more dynamic. Sometimes less is more.

SKETCH FROM SKETCHES

Sometimes it is useful to make sketches from sketches to develop an idea. I made the charcoal sketch above in situ on the allotment in the bleak months of winter, when the scene was dominated by the bare bones of structures, bare soil, and a sense of space.

I then used this sketch to work up a watercolour sketch of the same subject.

The pink of the chair was an invention, an example of making stuff up to make your painting work. ▶

Concertina watercolour sketchbooks are great for extending your drawings through a series of folded pages, either in one session or over a series of sessions. They are easy to spread out to check and rethink. It can also be useful to see how a project and ideas are developing. The sketch above was a quick one, showing just a few favourite elements from the allotment in watercolour and gouache.



5 SKETCH WITH LIMITED COLOURS

So-called weeds abound on any allotment site. They add to the biodiversity and encourage wildlife to flourish, and deserve credit for their tenacity, subtlety and beauty.

This was a quick and simple sketch to capture those qualities, painted very freely using just three or four watercolours and an acrylic pen to add a bit of structure and detail.



SKETCH ON NEW SURFACES
When my process becomes too familiar,
I can lose the creative impulse and need a
nudge or new stimulus. This might be a new
subject, a new media or a new surface, or a
combination of two or three of these.

I sketched this woodpecker at our local natural history museum on Polydraw drafting film, which isn't marketed for this purpose, but has a smooth, water-resistant surface. I drew with liquid graphite and pencils, erasing highlights with wet wipes.

7 SKETCH IN BLOCKED COLOUR

This sketch was based on a very old photo, which was taken on a different allotment site and lurking in the reference pile waiting for its moment.

I sketched using gouache, which has a lovely matte finish and dries quickly. The main advantage of using gouache over watercolour is its opacity, which allows you to block in colour and work over previous layers easily.

SKETCH OVER GHOSTS

If I've not sketched for a while
or I'm just having a bad day with it
all, my sketching will begin very
tentatively. As a result, I often find
that the sketches will lack energy
or commitment.

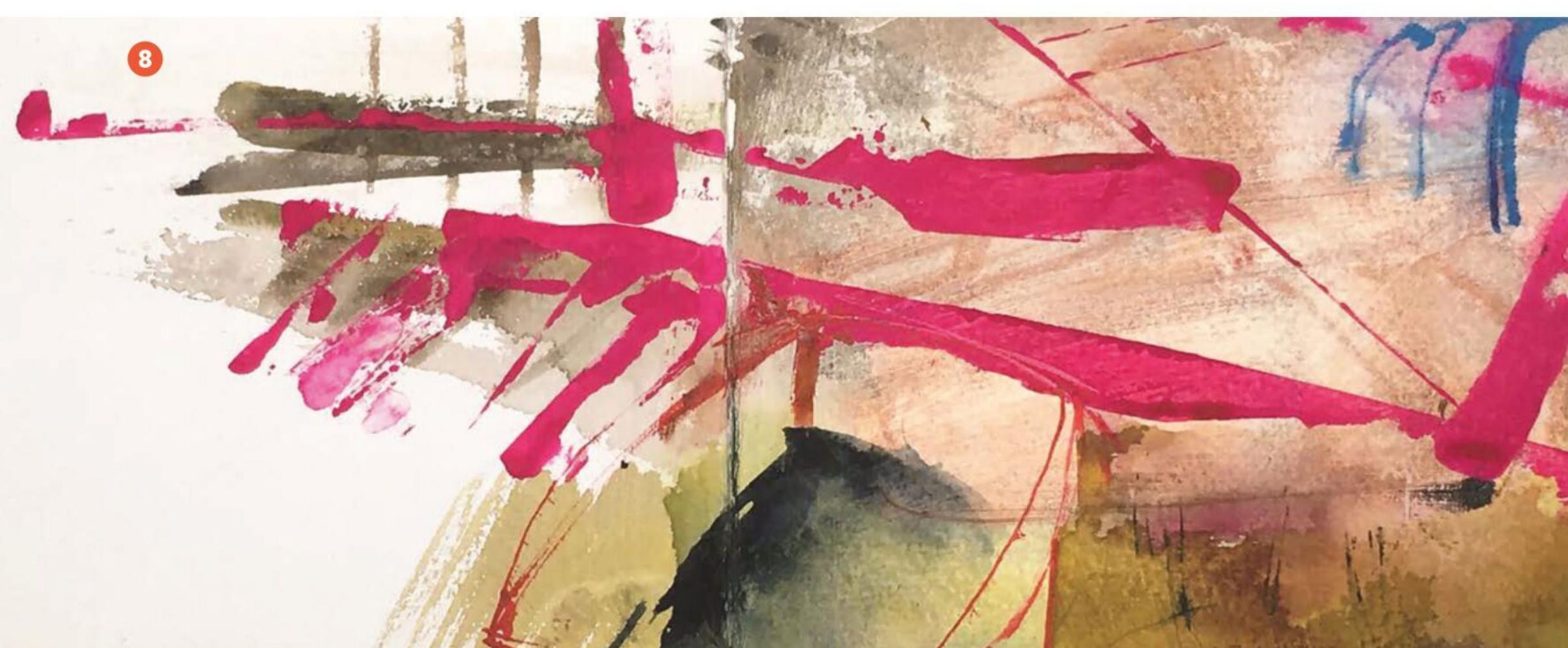
When this happens, a more interesting result can be had by washing off the original sketch with water, which leaves a "ghost" image that can then be worked over.

As sketches such as this are already deemed a "failure", I find courage with nothing to lose and tend to be less literal. For this one, I used the bright pink simply because I liked the colour, dragging it across the page on the edge of a piece of card.

This, together with the use of watercolour sticks and acrylic pens for the details, created a dynamic interplay of abstract marks.

kateosborneart.com





things to consider when booking an online art course

BY AINE DIVINE



THE TUTOR'S ARTWORK ONLINE.

Does it feel alive to you? See if you can find progress photos on Facebook or Instagram to see their process. You don't necessarily have to love a tutor's work but you do want someone who will facilitate you in nourishing your own practice.

2 FIND OUT HOW A TUTOR RELATES ON SCREEN.

What is their delivery like? Do you warm to them? Seek them

out on YouTube to get a feel for their teaching style and personality. If you can't find any videos, ask if you can call them.

3 AN ATTITUDE OF EXPERIMENTATION IS KEY, WHATEVER THE MEDIUM.

I take umbrage at any teacher dictating a rigid set of rules as though they are gospel. We humans thrive in an atmosphere of support – not hollow praise, but a focus on what works and ways to evolve.

COURSE STRUCTURE IS IMPORTANT.

Is one-to-one interaction welcomed? Find out how it takes place. How will you be supported? Is there a materials list? If in doubt, ask. None of this should be ambiguous: you are entitled to know what is part of the course and what isn't.

5 HOW MUCH SCREEN TIME WILL THERE BE?

I find one Zoom call a week was a good use of screen time. You want the focus to be on the creative practice itself, not endless videos.

6 THINK ABOUT COURSE LENGTH.

How many hours can you devote to painting each week? And for how long? Look at your diary and be honest with yourself.
Honour your own ebb and flow.
Recognise the need for care and kindness during this fertile, creative time.

Aine is a portrait artist and teacher. She runs regular workshops and enjoys giving demonstrations of what she does. Get in touch at:

ainedivinepaintings.co.uk 🗆



