



NEWSLETTER November 2013

[Editor: Brian Richardson]

Important Message from Tom Moss

Dear All

Having been in post for 5 years now, I have decided that it is now time to step down to give the opportunity for fresh ideas to carry the Society forward.

This means that at the AGM on the 7th February 2014 we shall need a new Chairman and I urge all members to consider putting themselves forward for this important role.

I have found my period of service to be extremely rewarding and, having had the benefit of an exceptionally able and dedicated Committee, not to have been too onerous.

On behalf of your Society, I do ask you to consider putting yourself forward for election as Chairman, or if you consider that one of your fellow members would be ideally suited to lead us, please do put their name forward for election, having obtained their agreement first, of course.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you all for your support during my period in office and in particular to the Committee for their wise counsel and unstinting effort.

Tom Moss

Editor's Notes

The agenda and voting paper for the AGM together with the membership renewal form for 2014 are included with this newsletter. In a break with tradition the AGM start time is at 7.30pm. Please attend and also consider standing for committee rather than leave it to the stalwart few.

The Society's exhibition faces a crisis in the years to come unless we can attract some fit younger members. This is because the regular few who set up the stands each year are finding it increasingly difficult as they age to put in the necessary effort.

Christmas Party 13 December

The Christmas Party is the next landmark in the Society's year. Jenny Colquhoun is devising another of her fiendish table quizzes and there will be the usual hot and cold fare and drinks provided by the members, together with a raffle in support of a local charity for which prizes are requested. Volunteers are needed to help with the setting up in the afternoon. Speak to a committee member if you can offer assistance.

Reviews (by Sam Dauncey unless otherwise attributed)

Graham Scandrett's workshop: Drawing with Rubbers, 20 and 27 September

Week 1 involved the use of: cartridge paper, graphite sticks, putty and plastic rubbers, compressed charcoal (not willow sticks) and charcoal pencils. Photos of light on water and interesting building were the reference materials.

The exercises were intended to get us thinking about tone - starting with a mid tone and working out to lighter and darker ones. We were set to do one painting in graphite and another in charcoal.

Graham started on a graphite one. Putting the paper onto the table he sharpened a graphite stick over it until he had enough shavings to be able to rub them evenly over the sheet with light touches of crumpled kitchen paper.

Noting that the sky was lighter than the sea he masked the area below the horizon and removed graphite from the sky with a plastic rubber. (*N.B. It is vital to use only the plastic rubber with graphite because a putty rubber will just smudge it. The rubber will still need frequent cleaning.*) The harder you rub, the whiter the resulting marks.

He finished this quick demo by adding some dark hills to the horizon with the sharpened graphite

example, if you put yellow pastel over black charcoal you will get green, not yellow

- Apply general areas of colour with the side of the hard pastel. Putty rubber can remove excess pastel, too
- Keep turning the putty rubber inside out so that it doesn't have fresh charcoal or pastel on its surface
- Use charcoal pencil to sharpen edges
- It is not cheating to use white pastel for very light areas!



Demonstration; Christmas Card making by Jo Quigley, 11th October 2013

Jo had two topics to cover:

- how to produce the image for a Christmas card
- how to make the card itself.

These are different, depending on whether you want to give your friends original artwork or to print numerous copies.

Original artwork

If she's making her own, Jo is more interested in 'fine art' cards than 'craft' ones which have lots of glued-on cut-out bits. She finds watercolour the most suitable medium and, for Christmas, it is better for the colour to be interesting rather than strictly realistic.

Take decorative trees for example. Jo has already mastered the general shape of Christmas trees, so she can go straight in with paint. The advice here is to use the brightest colours you have, but to put them strictly in the order they happen in the colour wheel, from tree-top to base, so no complementary colours become mixed (which would make grey). The same applies if baubles are the subject.

Very effective cards can be made of paintings which have a very limited colour range.

Many people print their cards at home but this is not a very significant saving if you count the cost of the paper, ink and envelopes and of your time.

There are many card-printing companies on the Internet, each slightly different (e.g. available sizes, single or double-sided printing, inclusion of envelopes or plastic sleeves). Jo uses one called Moo which doesn't force you to have the same picture on each card, so you can see which ones print or sell

best without having to invest in printing a large number of one design.

She offered a big pile of paintings and photos to inspire us, and spent the rest of the evening encouraging us to play around with what we had been learning.

A heavy-grade watercolour paper (260 or 300 lb, 356 or 638 gsm) is needed, cut to the appropriate size and folded.

It is difficult to fold such thick paper cleanly so she uses a special scoring board. If you want to save a tenner by making one yourself, use a wooden board. Add a lip at one end and cut grooves to suit your card sizes. Score each fold with a blunt edged blade (commercial ones are made of bone) guided by the groove.

Jo wouldn't want to spend much over 15 minutes on each hand-made card, unless the design included more complex bits: like holly. So it must be simple and use a time-saving formula.

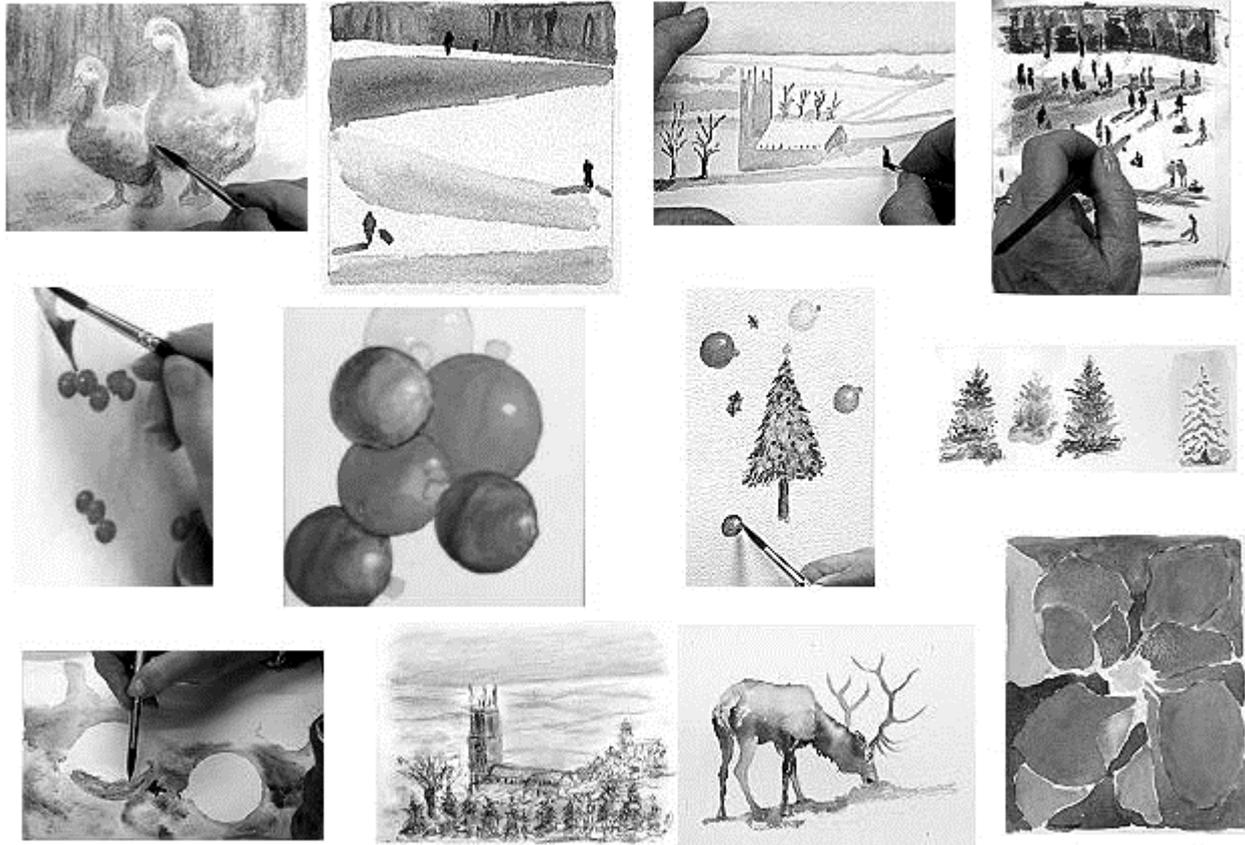
- For baubles use the inside of rolls of sticky tape to draw circles. Shape the open end.
- Be consistent about where the highlight is. Start by painting outside the white spot with thin paint. Gradually add stronger, darker paint and modify the colour, wet into wet, as you move out.
- Don't forget the end closure and loop - a brownish grey when the rest is dry. Use the same method for fairy lights (connected by a token 'wire').
- Make a template to speed up repetitive outlines.

Jo showed this by painting a very simple landscape with a zigzag of blue and white shadows and snow, a few very soft vertical lines (wet-in-wet) for distant trees and a mass of tiny brightly-coloured people playing in the snow.

Reproduction

If you have painted a custom card, no reproduction is necessary, although there is no reason why you can't print copies it for wider distribution.

You can get a more sophisticated card by printing a reduced version of a larger painting. Jo had several examples - all nearly monochrome with just Ultramarine and a touch of Burnt Sienna. These were of different complexities: from simple snowy mountains to quite complicated tree and/or river-scapes. Convert a scene to winter simply by using cool winter colours.



Drip, Scumble n' Splat; demonstration by Ronnie Ireland, 15 November 2013

Ronnie's aim is to investigate the relationship between control and chance in painting. Chance can help find ideas or to implement them, so it is useful for even the most precise artist.

- "If you know before you look, you don't see"
- "Chance favours the prepared mind"
- "The more you practise, the luckier you get"

Artists use chance in different ways.

- For Jackson Pollock (Jack the Dripper) the way it is done IS the painting.;
- For Mark Boyle, chance decides his subject, <http://www.boylefamily.co.uk/boyle/texts/journey.html>. Darts thrown at maps decide exactly what he is to reproduce, but it is then done meticulously.

Ronnie had examples of his work, ranging from almost conventional impressionism through surreal to abstract.

The chance splatters of paint that get you thinking may all be painted over in the end.

Ronnie introduced a messy black and white canvas that looked like the under painting for the demo. There was much discussion about which way up it should go and once this was agreed people said what they saw in it: Trees? People dancing? A windy day? A match-seller with tray? Buildings and reflections? A bridge over a river?

Ronnie even started to draw the curve of the bridge but somehow seemed to be diverted into more general observations:

- If you decide to use chance, you MUST accept what it gives you
- If you make a mistake, use it to inspire something different

- Use white emulsion and Polyfilla for texture - adds interest
- Use failed drawings or paintings: paint over them or tear and re-stick
- Do several at a time - they will keep until you need them
- Ideas could come from magazines (eg what's on page 62?) or from odd things you've seen
- Try using Dulux Match Pots (interesting colours)
- Don't forget palette knives, and that a brush handle can move paint around.

Originally Ronnie was most interested in the interactions between figures but realised that there could be interactions between objects too. "Everything is interesting to look at".

In line with his idea that it's best to be doing something that's new for you, to be just outside your comfort zone, maybe almost far enough out to annoy you a bit, he is now enjoying landscape.

After the break the original canvas disappeared, to be replaced by an old one, thinly covered with gesso. He had a few almost all black photos of eroded roadside roots. With imagination you see faint trunks behind and interesting patches of light. We chose one as the inspiration for the demo painting. Paint was thrown and dabbed on more or less at random (?) by a couple of members of the audience before Ronnie started in himself.

The process is to look at what you have, maybe compare it with the source photo to see if anything matches up, and modify appropriately. Most of the time Ronnie was using one end or the other of a big filbert, some palette knives or occasionally towards the end, a smaller (No.10?) round brush.

He attacked the initial blobs of paint with the handle end of the filbert, scrubbed some burnt sienna over much of the background (knife or brush?), dragged the filbert end down with some of the lighter colour to reflect the background trunks, put in a lot more dark (brown and black) into the negative spaces behind the trees and added blue and yellow for interest.

A painting is probably finished when nothing in it annoys you.

Of course this one is far from finished but Ronnie found it was giving him ideas, and that's what it is all about. He may well do more.....thin multi-colour glazes to get a lustrous black..... some detailed shape.....more contrast? If he does he will aim to send us a photo, but we were warned that we may well find little of the original one left - for example, the R.I.P. that some people saw in it may go.

It was a very interesting evening which got us thinking of new ways of thinking!



Picture at end of demonstration



Picture as worked post-demonstration!

Visit to Boston (USA) Museum of Fine Arts

We finished our Summer holiday in the city of Boston where I managed a short but very interesting visit to the Museum of Fine Arts. There were several paintings by Van Gogh, one of them being of " Le Poste"

. Those of you who attended the illustrated talk " the Yellow House" by Brian Sayers on 10th May might remember that Le Poste, who was a friend of Van Gogh, was mentioned. It gave me great pleasure to see the actual painting.

One of the other paintings I particularly liked was "Picture Gallery with Views of Rome " by Giovanni Paolo Pannini. It depicts the Duke seated in the centre of a fantastic art gallery surrounded by sculptures by Michelangelo and Bernini. If you find yourself in Boston MA I recommend that you make time to visit the museum. The entrance fee of \$24 is well worth it. Peter Tuitt

“Facing the Modern. The Portrait in Vienna 1900” at The National Gallery until 12 January 2014

As a prelude to a visit to the Royal Opera House to see Richard Strauss's “Elektra” I visited this exhibition on its opening day, 9th October. I had expected it to be crowded but the number of visitors was comfortable and allowed leisurely study of the paintings. These included some by Klimt, Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoshka as might have been expected, but also some by Arnold Schoenberg, the composer, which I thought showed that he should have stuck to composing. I found the visit a worthwhile experience which was enhanced by using the audio guide. Brian Richardson

Masterpieces of Chinese Painting: 700 to 1900 at the V&A until 19th January

As a prelude to a visit to the Royal Albert Hall to see Lang Lang, the charismatic young Chinese pianist play to a packed hall, I visited the V&A Museum on 15th November to see the exhibition of Chinese painting. This was an eye-opener. The main impression I took from it was the slow steady evolution of style from the earliest days up to 1900. There were no revolutions of style as occurred in Europe over the same period. Again I used the audio guide but I found the layout of the exhibition rather confusing. There was a general moving forward in time as one progressed through the various rooms but the numbering of the paintings didn't seem very logical and relating it to the audio commentary took some effort. Because of the delicacy of the paintings, the illumination level is low which tends to subdue the effect of the colours.

In the first room there is a video showing an artist producing a painting, beginning with the preparation of the raw silk through to the final work. The astonishing brush control used in making the fine lines of the picture has to be seen to be believed.

It is a large exhibition and not one to be rushed.

Brian Richardson

PAINTING HOLIDAYS ON PAXOS IN 2014 – NOVEMBER OFFERS

‘SPRING PAINTING WEEK’: 5 – 12 MAY 2014

‘AUTUMN PAINTING WEEK’: 29 SEPTEMBER – 6 OCTOBER 2014

We’re emailing you to let you know that we shall now be running two painting holidays on Paxos in 2014 and that there are special prices for both holidays, if you book by 30 November.

Our ‘Spring Painting Week’ will once again be led by Jenny Halstead, who is an elected member of the prestigious Pastel Society (UK) and artist in residence at the archaeological excavations of the Roman town of Silchester. Our ‘Autumn Painting Week’ will be led by experienced tutor, Helen Halliday, who currently leads painting holidays in Dorset and has also taught painting in India and on cruise ships.

Both holidays are suitable for artists of all levels of experience and non-painting partners are very welcome. We can also arrange extended stays on Paxos, if you would like a slightly longer holiday.

Why Paxos: The Greek island of Paxos is a beautiful island and, with its stunning scenery and wonderfully clear light, it's hard to imagine a more inspiring location for a painting holiday. On the West coast there are dramatic cliffs, while on the East coast there are pretty, unspoilt villages and scenic bays.

Where you will stay: Both holidays will be based in the delightful village of Loggos, the smallest of the three coastal villages. Accommodation will be in Villas Poseidon and Amphitrite, two lovely new villas, each with its own private pool, situated in the olive groves just behind Marmari and Levrechio Beaches, and a few minutes walk from Loggos harbour.

The tuition: Tuition will be based around morning group sessions and early evening get-togethers; there will also be plenty of opportunities for individual advice. You will spend much of your time painting in and around Loggos but you will also visit other parts of the island. There will be one free day during the week to give you chance to explore the rest of the island or simply relax.

The cost and what's included: The 'Spring Painting Week' normally costs £995 per person and the 'Autumn Painting Week' £945 but **there are special prices of £925 and £895 respectively, if you book by 30 November.** The cost includes tuition, accommodation in a shared twin room in Villa Poseidon or Amphitrite, return transfers between Corfu airport and Paxos, local transport, breakfast, dinner (with wine) in a local taverna on five evenings, and welcome and farewell drinks. The 'Spring Painting Week' also includes a light lunch on five days. There is a supplement of £125 for sole use of a twin/double room. Travel to and from Greece is not included but we are happy to provide advice about suitable flights.

For further information or to book: You can find full details of both holidays and an on-line booking form on our website at <http://www.paxoslife.co.uk/painting.htm>, or contact Margaret Longes by email (margaret@paxoslife.co.uk) or phone (01444 258048).

We hope to see you on Paxos soon.

Margaret Longes and Chris Griffiths
Paxos Life Activities Ltd

Any contributions for the newsletter, preferably on an art-related theme, should be submitted to:

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or by email to: bricha3691@aol.com.

Your views on any exhibitions you visit would be especially welcome.