Featured Artist: ‘Nigel Lee’ Club Treasurer

Nigel is one of the people in the Committee that manage our club, allowing us to enjoy painting together and sharing our successes and failures, with like minded people, and as Treasurer, makes sure the club is solvent.

Nigel has been interested in art from an early age, helped and guided by a very good tutor at his Secondary school. He even allowed them to listen to the rock music of 'YES' among others during lessons. Lucky chap, wish we had tutors like that. There was a gap in his painting whilst he concentrated in growing his family, taking up his brushes and pastilles when his children were a bit older.

Taking art lessons from Val Briggs, one of the professional Artist in the Club was he feels the turning point, and joining WSA about ten years ago took his art to a higher point.

His favourite piece of art had to be a watercolour of an owl, shortly after starting lessons with Val. He feels that that is probably the first decent piece of work that he completed and the proof if one is needed, is it still hangs on his wall.

On being asked what the best advice on art he has been given, he said “work through the ugly stage of the artwork, do not give up and enjoy everything you produce, and try and take positives from every- thing you do”
Looking at Nigel’s work, one can deduce that he can be classified as a realist, with every stroke and line and colour only used because it is needed to make his pictures as close as possible to a photo, capturing the character and mood. With that in mind I asked him if he would like to share with us a tip or technique that he finds very helpful. “Don’t fiddle about with details too early in the process and try and capture the under layers of the image and give your work some depth”.

All artists have disasters when things just do not go right, or when you have made a critical error, so I asked Nigel what his secrets were, to pulling the iron out of the fire. “If your charcoal or pastel drawing is marked by droplets of water, then let it dry thoroughly before you attempt to repair it. You can also use scotch tape to lift off small amounts of charcoal or pastel”. I then asked him what art material could he not live without. He said his pastels. Not surprising, as you can see from the pictures above.

Nigel has a wide repertoire of subjects so I asked him which artist’s work influenced him most. Marion Tubiana, the animal pastel artist. Nigel does not follow any particular artist, but Marion Tubiana’s attention to detail must be an influence on the high quality of Nigel’s work.

Marion Tubiana
Out and About
Exhibitions worth seeing

1. John Walker  Icon Gallery Birmingham  4th Dec
2. Watercolour Exhibition  Royal Porcelain Works, Worcester
3. The Renaissance  The Mill, Digbeth 14th Dec
4. Art Fair  Local artists, The Farm shop in Ludlow, now to 31st Dec

Dot painting from Penny Webb

Well done Penny for trying and specially using resin in the second picture. We hope more members try out this style of painting in symmetry.

3D painting, an optical illusion? yes just perspection

3D painting, an optical illusion painted on flat surfaces. Try your hand at it. Need to find a demo, go to YouTube and search 3D painting, you will be surprised by what is there in the cloud.

Tutorials available on YouTube, FREE!
search for what you want

All painted with acrylic ink
“Quotes” on Art collated by Steve Riley
This takes you to another level. A strong sector of the art market is now devoting space to this mixed media. It stretches your imagination. There are no limits. Here are a few to tempt you to try this Avant grade art.

Recently I have taken to noting down little quotes that I see in various places. I think they are a really good thing to read before you begin a painting, to make sure you start in the right frame of mind.

"The greater the artist the greater the self-doubt. Perfect confidence is granted to the less talented as a consolation prize".
"They say a painting is never finished - only abandoned"
"If you paint your work to look like a photo, then the chances are you are missing out on visual strength"
"To be true to an idea you have to value expression over perfection"
"The most important bit of kit is a chair in which to sit and contemplate your work"
"Anything painted with conviction and passion can get by with a few rough edges"
"Just because something was 'there' in reality, doesn't mean it should be a part of your painting"
"The real skill is not seeing new sights, but looking with new eyes"
"Don't let the subject dictate the painting - don't copy what you see, use it"
"An artist's best work is very rarely his largest work"

"For many people, painting something that looks like a photo is the aim. I think that paintings OF things are always weaker than paintings ABOUT them".

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The Death of the School of London
By Rob Perrin

As spring ended Kossoff died
Bringing the school of London nearly to an end
Auerbach is hanging on, to life too much tied
Such an influence I feel they're friends
Tim Behrens went in '017 ended his days in Spain
In '92 the Colony room a patron missed
Bacon won't be going there again
To lark about and get pissed
Lucian Freud a figurative genius
Died in '011. Left fourteen children
And lots of paintings for the delectation of us
Michael Andrews his mysterious figuration
He died in '95 a pupil of the Slade
and Hodgkin died in '017 in time will they all fade

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Fancy painting the Owl?

It even has a grid
Photo by Errol, before he started painting
How many versions can be painted?
Painting Abstracts:  

How many times have you looked at an abstract painting and heard someone say, "I could do that!"? While abstract painting looks easy to some, it can actually be more challenging than traditional or classical painting. This is because abstract art defies rules and conventions. It’s up to you as the artist to break rules, be expressive, and decide what is art.

First, prepare to paint. Then, decide if you’d like to create a random geometric abstract painting (in the style of Paul Yanko or Thornton Willis), a minimalist geometric abstract painting featuring bold geometric shapes (in the style of Piet Mondrian or Paul Klee), or if you’d like to focus more on the process of painting (in the style of Jackson Pollock or Mark Rothko).

Find your material of any size. It will be prepared for immediate use; however, there are no rules saying you have to use a primed and stretched canvas. In fact, abstract artists often use unstretched, unprimed canvases. If you prefer a coloured background, buy Gesso to prime the canvas and give it a touch of colour. The primer should dry quickly.

Choose your paints. Decide whether to use acrylics or oil paint. Acrylics have no colour and are easy to work with since they dry fast and can be painted over if you make a mistake. Oils, on the other hand, aren’t usually used because they take longer to dry, have an odour, and do not allow you to paint over mistakes.

Gather brushes and other tools. Pick whatever brushes you like to use with the paint you’ve already chosen. You might also consider using a palette knife to apply paint, giving it a textured look. While some artists like to use an easel, many abstract artists choose to place their canvases directly on the floor in order to be closer to the work.

If you’re unsure about what colour work well together, think about picking up a colour chart/wheel. This will actually show you which colour compliments each other. Depending on how messy you’re planning on getting, it’s wise to change into an old shirt or painting smock. Wearing something you’re not worried about will allow you to focus more on the painting or process of abstract art.

You may want to lay down newspapers to prevent drips or spills, especially if you plan on flicking paint or laying the canvases on the ground.

Get a colour wheel. Quite simply, a colour wheel is a circular tool that features a variety of colours. It’s useful for showing the relationship between colour - what looks good together, what clashes, and so on.

Find a colour wheel at a local artist supply store, craft store, or paint department.

Understand primary, secondary, and tertiary colour. At their most basic, a colour wheel is divided into three parts: the primary colour (red, blue, yellow).
Glazing Paintings: A professional painter’s secrets

The secret to successful glazing is a combination of several factors. This is a list of the things I’ve learned about glazing by trial and error over several years. I usually plan the composition and how I’m going to glaze my colours before I start the painting, at the gesso stage.

Glazing Tip 1
A smooth surface is important to avoid a blotchy or streaky look. Panel may be better than canvas for this until you get enough practice. Canvas has that bumpy surface and paint pigment tends to settle in those little pot holes.

If a painting is going to have water in it, for example, and I want to create a glass-like appearance I often do the painting on panel without a canvas or muslin cover over it. I sand the gessoed layers to a smooth finish especially where the sky and water areas will be. I will use 220 grit sandpaper at first and then use 400 grit sandpaper to get the smoothest surface possible. This is important to get that glassy water look.

Glazing Tip 2
Use a mid-tone (similar in colour to what will be a mid-tone in your finished painting) in your primer, gesso layer and/or base acrylic layer. When you glaze don’t add too much paint (or so many layers) so as to lose this base colour totally.

Glazing Tip 3
Use a liquid glazing medium to dilute your paint (Golden’s gloss glazing liquid is my preference) not just water. Glazing medium disperses the pigment more evenly and you’re less likely to get blotchy areas. Glazing medium contains the binder ("glue") used in acrylic paints which helps the paint to stick, whereas too much water leaves a weak structure or layer of the paint on the panel or canvas with the risk it may peel off.

Glazing Tip 4:
Make your glaze mixtures approximately 90 percent glazing liquid and 10 percent paint.

Glazing Tip 5
Each glaze layer you apply should be very thin and left to dry fully before you add another layer over it. The idea is to build your transparent layers one on top of the other, making the right colour choices in each glaze layer to get that final colour you are after. It is trial and error at first but eventually you learn what colour(s) will be needed to get that final colour.

Glazing Tip 6
With acrylics, you’ve only about a five minute working time with glazing medium before it starts to get tacky (though a few drops of water in the mixture may increase this). Don’t work an area after it starts to get tacky.

Glazing Tip 7
Some colours are more transparent than others. The amount of paint added to your glaze will depend on the colour’s transparency. Titanium white, for example, is very opaque and a very minute amount should be used in a glaze. The sienna’s tend to be more transparent. I like yellow-ochre in a glaze even though it’s not regarded as a transparent colour.

Glazing Tip 8
Practice and patience are needed to get through the process of learning how to glaze. If each layer is dry before you add another glaze, the new layer can be wiped off with a damp towel or rag if it’s not working for you.

The Bottom Line
Putting the concepts "clear" and "gesso" together seemed a bit of a contradiction, so I painted some on the black cover of a sketchbook to see just how clear it did dry. I was surprised and impressed. I could see it only as texture where the light caught it. At some angles, it was barely visible, at others like a layer of fine dark-grey sand. Definitely one of those cases where it does what it says on the label: matt and transparent and gesso.

Pros
* Transparent when dry, not white like "normal" primers.
* Mixable with acrylic paint to create a coloured ground.
* Suitable primer for acrylic, oils, and alkyd paints.
* Use on paper to create tooth for pastels.
* Fluid not stiff, no need to dilute before painting onto a canvas.

Cons
* You need to remember where you’ve applied it or angle your canvas/paper to the light to see it.
7 Step Cheat Sheet to Drawing a Face

1. Begin your face by sketching the outer shape of the head on the neck. Note that the neck is almost as wide as the head.

2. Next, draw a line in the center horizontally and vertically. Place guidelines for the eyes 1 eye length apart, the nose, and mouth.

3. Draw the features and hair on the guidelines. Note that the nostrils line up with the inner corners of the eyes, and the mouth with the middle of the eyes.

4. Erase the guidelines and re-draw the features more clearly. Be careful not to outline, but use lines of varying thickness to develop areas that will be light struck versus in heavy shadow.

5. Cover the skin and hair with a base tone and blend it smooth. Keep the highlight side of the face in mind as you add tone, and keep it lighter from the beginning.

6. When the base tone is blended smoothly, add darker tone to the shadow shapes on the face. Add shadows to the hair, and begin to develop more detail in the features.

7. Refine the shadows by blending and pulling out highlights on the face. Add small details like eyebrows, lashes, and lines in the lips. Add more tone to the clothes and shadows on the neck, and continue to work until you're satisfied with the final portrait.
Members Theme for this issue “Winter scenes”

The Fox  Andrew Jenkins

Worcester in the snow  Colin Jack

Snow & Steam  Steve Riley

Whitbourne Dawn  Alina Clark

Winter scene  Janet Webb

Peggy Bould

Jane Devereux  Patrick Greenow

Andrew Jenkins  Rachel Pryke

Christmas Cottage  Steve Letchford

Karen Austin  Val Briggs

Patrick Durkin

A Big Thank you to all who sent pictures on the ‘Winter Scene’ Topic

If you like this feature we could have a topic for each Newsletter Issue. Please let me know by email

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Please let us have your news and pictures. Do you have a subject that you feel would be of interest to other club members?

Please send your pictures, articles, comments to: wsagallery@gmail.com

Annual Exhibitions
The Main exhibition for members. Start planning & painting  
7th December 2019 to 25th January 2020
At Worcester Museum & Art Gallery
Handing in Sat 30th Nov 9.30 am to 12.30 pm
Preview day: Saturday 7th December 2019
Collection: 27th January 2020; 9.30am to 4.00pm.
More details to follow

Future Club Competitions
11th November “Reflections”
2nd December “Wildlife” for the ‘Horse Head’ trophy
6th January 2020 No 5: “Pen & Wash”
23rd March No 6: “Your personal choice of subject and media”

Member’s Gallery

Abstract Steve Riley
Paul Bloxham

Colin Jack
Phil Holland

Andrew Jenkins
The kiss Val Briggs