



## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2010

### Editor's Note

Because the date for the Summer newsletter was advanced so that its mailing could be combined with the sending out of the entry forms for a July exhibition this issue fills the long gap until the November newsletter.

### Exhibition 2010

The superb new stands designed by Terry Ralph made it one of the best looking of our exhibitions ever. The private view evening had the best attendance ever due to the well advertised official opening performed by Sandi Toksvig who was in tremendous form and gave a thoroughly researched and very witty and funny speech. It will be difficult to top this coup for next year's opening of what will be our fiftieth anniversary exhibition.

Regarding the Exhibition:-

214 Pictures entered, 41 Portfolios entered, 13 Pictures sold, 6 Portfolios sold, 50 Cards sold, 137 visitors voted for the Peoples Choice and the winner was Jill Guppy's "Poppies" with a total of 7 votes. Winner of the Winsland award was "Trafalgar Square" by Sera Knight. The winning themed painting was Michael Frost's beautiful graphite drawing "Journey's End". Unfortunately it looks as if we will have made an overall loss of about £163.

The winning raffle ticket was number **333**. If you had that ticket speak to a member of the committee or contact Tom Moss to claim your prize of the Paul Howard painting of Porlock.

### News Of Members

Sadly, Renee Deane has died. She was a petite French lady who especially liked painting animals, and was a regular at Friday night DYOTs and, with her husband, at our Christmas parties.

FCSA was well represented at the recent SWA Exhibition in the Mall Gallery where Rosemary de Goede, Liz Seward, Elizabeth Bradshaw and Sera Knight (who won the Frank Herring Easel award for "Towards Whitehall") all had paintings hung.

We have four new members: mother and daughter Rosemary and Helen Gyselman, Stephanie Bentley and Diana Cheeseman bringing the membership to 128. Please extend your customary warm welcome to them at the studio on Friday evenings to make them feel at ease.

### Reviews

Except where otherwise attributed, all the reviews are based on Sam Dauncey's write-ups for the website.

### Talk on Framing by Richard Bond of Bonds Framing Deepcut, 21 May 2010

A disappointingly few members were treated to a fascinating talk on framing. Even those who were experienced and may have thought that they knew all about framing found something new to learn and there were many questions from the audience.

Richard started with the Frame materials explaining the importance of cutting the whole frame from the same piece of moulding. Also narrow frames such as those usually used for watercolour are moulded in pairs which are differentiated by giving one half of the pair a groove on the reverse and it is essential to use either one half or the other and not to mix them because of the risk of a mismatch..

Richard then demonstrated the importance of the right choice of moulding in terms of colour and weight to match the artwork and of accurately cut corners. Saw-cut mitres are seldom

satisfactory and, besides not giving true and snug joints, often have chipped paint or varnish along the edge of the cut. Professionals use a wedge shaped blade fitted to a power cutter which cuts both side of the mitre accurately at once. The mitre is then glued and zig zag nailed using a power tool.

Next came the subject of the mount. Professionals use a double mount with a mountboard back to which the artwork is fixed with glued rice paper tape. Masking tape can stain the artwork. In any case masking tape dries out over time so that the artwork can slip out of position. The part of the mount surrounding the artwork is hinged to the back mount board, again by glued rice paper so that art and mount are accurately positioned. The glue used with the rice paper tape is water soluble, so that it can be removed if required.

Great care is needed when sourcing mounting materials which must be acid free.. Mounts supplied with the ready made frames generally are not and are likely to turn to dust over time.. If the artwork is particularly valuable conservation grade board is used.

Mount cutting can be done successfully by the artist as purpose made cutters are available at reasonable cost. If the blades are not razor sharp they will fur up the surface of the cut and this will find its way on to the inner surface of the glass.

Pastels and other dry pigments need at least double mounting to prevent loose particles from getting on to the inner surface of the glass. A triple mount, where the second layer has a reverse mitre and is placed slightly proud of the inner layer to provide a trap for loose particles is even better. This led to the subject of frame-glass of which there are several types.. That supplied with made up frames is usually sheet and not float glass. Sheet glass has noticeable surface irregularities and may have visible inclusions. It is also more brittle and will break more easily. Anti-reflective glass will make the artwork look misty but, if used, should have the texture on one surface only. Different transparencies are available and it is worth examining all these options as the clearest dramatically improves the look of the work, although it is much more expensive.

The utmost cleanliness must be observed to avoid the annoyance of sealing up only to find that a speck of dust has found its way on to the inside of the glass. Gummed tape should be used to seal the backing board to the frame as this is easily removable and, when wet, can be moulded neatly to the contours of the back of the assembly.

The hanging hooks are set about 1/3 from the top of the frame. Lie flat fittings should be used rather than screwed eyes. Nylon cord is preferable to wire as it is stronger. The cord is joined with a reef knot (for the sailors and ex scouts and guides among us) and finally the loose ends neatly bound with tape for a professional finish.

Protective plastic/vinyl stops are then placed at the back of the lower corners of the frame to prevent damage to walls and to provide some resistance to tilting of the frame

Contact details for Richard are:

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[Tom Moss]

### **Demonstration by Sharon Hurst: "Fantasy" using Shin Han Watercolour, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

The basis for Sharon's painting was a photo of a girl, Rebecca, seen at the Bodmin Faery Fest surprised in the act of arranging her hair. This led to the idea of tonight's picture of a "girly warrior", 'Chance Encounter'. Sharon worked on 140 lb unstretched Bockingford sized right through and very tolerant of rubbing out. The paint was Shin Han Special Watercolour. All its colours are said to be transparent and to have no "chemicals" – have a lovely creamy texture and are available very cheaply on-line at Jacksons.

The paper was thoroughly wetted using a big hake to apply several layers of water over all the sky (masking fluid protected the rest fairly well). Still using the big hake Sharon picked up lots of "yummy cerulean" and a little burnt umber and put a wide strip across the top. She continued down the paper, leaving gaps so that the blue ran into the wet paper and the still-running water ran into the blue. High speed was essential as it was a warm evening. Unwanted runs were removed with a damp sponge and some other too-flat or too-dark areas lifted out with a smaller hake. Texture was added by throwing salt on to some re-wetted areas ("Use table salt for fine texture,

grinder salt for medium and dishwasher salt for coarse - and be very careful to keep it away from palette and water pot").

After removing masking fluid from the skin areas a flesh mix comprising burnt sienna with small amounts of alizarin crimson and burnt umber (add yellow for Asians, more burnt umber for Negroes, more watery alizarin for "English rose") was applied. Divide the body into separate parts and start with thin flat washes of the palest colour, omitting finger nails. Apply and let dry - don't try to correct. "There is no such thing as a mistake - only an opportunity you've not yet dealt with".

More glazes define the shapes. Repeatedly paint with slightly darker and/or bluer mixes into edges and into the shadow wherever one surface is above another, immediately blending the new paint with a damp brush. The darkest shadow edges were fine lines of Paynes Grey (blended out). Shadows also shape the face. On curved surfaces, the shadows themselves also curve. Special care is needed with lips and eyes. The upper lip has a pale line all the way across the top, separating it from the indent under the nose, but the paler bottom lip merges into the skin below it. Large pupils are attractive and give more space for highlights. Many little marks and shadows went into the eyes: from Paynes Grey washes to white gouache flecks, red and white touches in the corners and so on.

During the interval Sharon put in an alizarin arm and the blue trousers and shaped them with darkening glazes at the edges, softening always from dark to light. She later gave them more depth by lifting out the light on her left leg and highlighting the edge of the right thigh with white gouache.

The hair began with a pale wash of Paynes Grey. Then followed a process of repeated darker (and pink) patterns following the direction of the hairs.

Sharon softened edges and let the paint dry completely before going back into the same area. This left time for some more general inspirational chat on using magazine pictures to help compose people; advice on getting thoughts down on paper however you feel; remembering "dark against light"; wherever surfaces are one above the other there will be a shadow; for fantasy paintings one can be more imaginative about light sources than in the real world

A magical evening!



### **Demonstration of Acrylics and gels by Dee Cowell, 23 July 2010**

Dee aimed to enthuse us with the capabilities of water-based mixed media, including the use of various gels and pastes and since her discovery that the same pigments are the basis of all types of paint she mixes them freely.

Dee uses acrylic paper for acrylics but also recommends it for beginners in watercolour as it is not absorbent like normal watercolour paper so errors are easily corrected and the timing of wet-into-wet is not as critical. However the colours are more easily removed so the finished painting cannot be wiped clean with an even slightly damp cloth so she recommends protecting such works with Schminke universal varnish.

She put blobs of blue, yellow and red onto her disposable palette plus a separate blob of gel. There are many types of texture gel, ranging from what is virtually a glazing medium to very heavy impasto gels. "Golden's" come in packs of 6 different types but Dee finds three is more than enough. The gels all look white in the pot but they dry completely clear, so that colours aren't changed by being mixed with them, except for being more transparent. Retarding medium and texture gels both slow down the drying process. Texture pastes also look white in the pot but dry opaque white - colours applied over them look as they would on white paper but if mixed in (which includes painting them on before the paste is really dry) they lose transparency and are diluted (so

that red becomes pale pink).

Pastes and gels both stay flexible indefinitely (but not workable once they have dried) whereas Polyfilla-like products will crack off a flexed support. Dee passed around a sheet with small examples of different techniques:

- i gel or paste applied and then a knife scraped through it.
- ii gel dabbed with the flat of the knife - "plonking" was the technical term!
- iii a plastic doily used to give paste a regular textured pattern.

A good sequence is to start with a sketch, add texture, add colours, finish with detail. A tiger's head was the members' choice of subject. Using an Inktense watercolour pencil, she defined the top and bottom of the head on the paper. After marking the curved centre line of the head the width between the eyes was used as a reference dimension for the remaining features, all marks were short straight lines as easier to correct if things don't look right. Dee then added a little thin texture gel and when dry washed some orange over much of the head with a sponge. Before putting on texture paste she strengthened some of the lines with w/c pencil, introduced some brighter colour with soft pastel and sponged in a complementary blue background. Light touches with the (cleaned) sponge made the colours follow the contours of the texture gel.

The purpose of the texture paste was not just to give texture but also to prepare a white surface on which detail could be drawn without the underpainting showing through and dulling the new colour. Dee used a rigger or pencils for most of the detail. She came out with a stream of comments about such things as the shadow cast by eyelids on the eyeball or the frequent failures we all make but which can easily be overpainted entirely. Throughout the whole demo the stream of advice and comment was leavened with interesting and amusing anecdotes about her earlier life in Africa and Asia. Below left is the stage reached at the end of the demonstrat. Below right is the final version, completed by Dee after she got home.



### **Contributions to the Newsletter**

Any contributions to the newsletter (eg. about exhibitions you have visited, art courses attended or any comments about the running of the Society) should be sent to Brian Richardson at 6, Spring Woods, Sandhurst, Berks, GU47 8PX, or by email to [BRicha3691@aol.com](mailto:BRicha3691@aol.com) The deadline for the next issue is 20 November 2010