

It's all about

ART

returns to London
22nd-24th July 2010

A New Medium

SAA Artist of the Year
Hashim Akib puts the
new Acrylic Mediums
from Winsor &
Newton to the test

Oil pastels - getting the best results

PA Tim Fisher
introduces some
basic techniques for
creating successful
oil pastel paintings

Capture the Moment



Fast hands, a keen eye and a nimble set of sketching materials enable France based PA **Allan Kirk** to work with pace and flexibility

It's a frustration every artist feels at some time; you're out and about (maybe on holiday) and where most people see beautiful views, with buildings, boats and landscape, you see great subjects for work. You can get a digital image, but inside, you know that a camera cannot replace time spent looking and drawing in the open air. Don't miss these opportunities; with some basic tools you can achieve both a day's enjoyment with non-painting friends and produce some worthwhile outdoor sketches.

To solve this dilemma I always carry with me my Stabilo Point 88 Fineliner water-soluble pens, a Pentel Water Brush and a hard backed A4 sketching book. These light, easy-to-carry components enable me to enjoy the day out and complete some worthwhile work.

Why not just take a pencil and paper?

The edge that the pens, sketch book and Pentel Water Brush give me over pencil and paper is that they deliver results quickly and cleanly. I can produce lively sketches that stand on their own as finished works in less than an hour and I can use these sketches later as the source for a studio work, in my case, usually a watercolour painting.

Getting started

I live in the Southern Tarn region of France with my wife, where together we run Tarnincolour painting holidays. On days out I am drawn to the villages with their markets, crumbling walls, churches, buildings, street cafés, bars and boulangeries.

Before I start painting I always find an inspiring subject; usually a building or some street furniture catch my attention. If I am really lucky I can sit at a table in one of the outdoor cafés to capture the view. Otherwise I find a bench, a bollard or step upon which to perch myself. Sometimes I stand, but I prefer to sit. Then for thirty minutes or so I work with a quick and concentrated burst of activity. I am not careful when I work; I like my work to be carefree and lively, not careless, but not rigid and ponderous.

How I work

I usually use my Fineliner pen to complete a quick line drawing, upon which I add tonal values using my Water Brush. Generally, I will then complete some more line work over the shaded sections, again using my pen.

The results

I love the results this sketching process gives me, and it enables both my wife (who does not paint or draw) and I to enjoy the beautiful Tarn region where we've settled.

▽ 'Montgey'



Barn
18 Nov 2009

Allan Kirk

Montgey

This old, uninhabited farmhouse lies in decay on the route up to Montgey. I have always been attracted to it and one sunny November morning I sat and sketched the gable end. The lack of upper walls gives an interesting cross-section view of the old, wooden frame of the house.

▽ 'Revel Market'



Revel Market
14 Nov 09

Allan Kirk

▽ 'Auriac'



Auriac
18 Nov 2009

Auriac

This old 11th Century bridge straddles the river running through the town. An old Frenchman explained the bridge's history to me then promptly jumped back on his bike, returning five minutes later to present me with an old sepia postcard of the bridge in pen and ink. I felt the pressure to do this scene justice.

Revel Market

Revel's Saturday market is one of the wonders of the region. In November the winter sun was a welcome visitor and I captured this busy scene quickly from one corner of the medieval square; I had to stand to achieve this.

Allan's Step-by-Step lessons can be found on his website <http://www.stepbystepwatercolour.com/> where you can also find a free lesson to complete a watercolour painting "Blue Window". Watercolour painting holidays <http://www.tarnincolour.com/> cater for small groups from complete beginners to professional artists and run from spring until autumn.

For watercolour help and tips visit: <http://tarnincolour.blogspot.com/>

An exercise for you to try

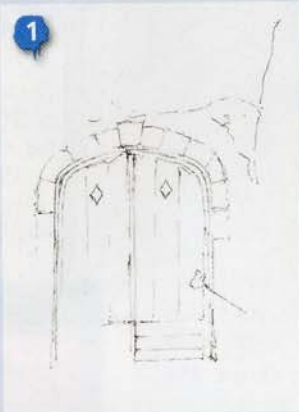
Arched Door in St Felix de Lauragais – Southwest France

Materials

- Stabilo Point 88 Fineliner pen (black)
- Pentel Water Brush
- Hard backed A4 spiral bound sketchbook

1 Initial line drawing

Make sure that you're comfortable and relaxed, and hold your pen loosely about halfway up the stem. Try to begin inside your drawing (in this instance the keystone) and work outwards. With the keystone placed, start work on the arch. It must look accurate so using your pen measure the distance from the middle of the arch to the sides. The drawing rests on getting this right. Don't be too tentative – let your pen glide loosely to create the vertical lines and arch span. Draw broken lines and don't worry if you make a mistake and need more than one broken line to indicate the position you want to draw. Don't worry about where the bottom of the arch ends; just try to avoid very crooked lines. Jump around the paper, adding bits of the wooden door and rose branches. This step fixes the fundamental structure of the drawing.



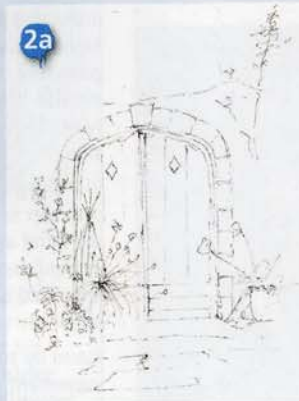
2 Let loose with your Fineliner pen

This step is always fun. With your structure in place you can jump around the drawing to add the marks and lines to indicate the pots and plants that adorn the arch. Work confidently and freely. If you work slowly and are too careful your work will lose its liveliness. Remember that with your basic structure in place you do not need to be so careful.

I rarely draw a single leaf and suggest that to indicate the foliage you doodle freely and quickly. It is a jumble and should be drawn as such.

For the canes and spidery plant in the doorway add your lines quickly and loosely. Finally indicate part of the pavement (not every slab), and use the pavement to add a little foreground perspective.

Tip: with plant pots never draw one complete pot; they exist within the jumble of leaves and flowers and are often partially obscured. It is so much easier to draw a pot when you don't have to worry about the perfect symmetry of its shape.



3 Your first Pentel Water Brush work

Adding your first Water Brush wash can be heartbreaking as you see your beautiful lines dissolve. However, you must hold your nerve and be bold. It will be worth it in the end.

Keep your Water Brush well full by squeezing the water holder as you need. To create the shadows you need to place your brush on an existing line and drag your brush gently. Make sure that all the shadows are to the left of the bushes and arch to maintain the direction of the sun.

Work around all of the drawing (always remembering the direction of the sun) to create a pleasing wash effect. You will find that it is darker in some areas than others, but don't worry about this yet.



4 Adding shading to the drawing with your Fineliner pen

You now want to add the crosshatch shading to the door and more doodle shading to the plants. This is needed to allow you to deepen the shadows in the next step using your Water Brush.

Look at the shading on the door, it is not neat and it has been completed freely. This is the best approach, as once your Water Brush gets to work upon the shading it will disappear into the dark shadow tones required.

Add more doodle work to the plants and flowers.



5 Deepen the shadows from the sun with your Water Brush

This step is identical to step three. Use your Water Brush to darken the existing shadows.



6 Final drawing with your Fineliner pen

Use this final step to re-introduce some of your key drawing lines. Be careful not to overdo this step. Look carefully at the differences in my drawings between steps five and this step; broken lines have been gently added to the door and frame and a number of lines have been added to the roses and plants.

Keep work to a minimum, and glide your pen across the surface, rather than being heavy handed.

In this finished work there is a lot of white space, and this adds to the sunny light and lively feel.