

IT'S BEEN A LITTLE WHILE COMING!

WELL, A COUPLE OF MONTHS. BUT THE INAUGURAL WORKSHOP WILL BE HELD IN THE LAST WEEK OF FEBRUARY

SESSIONS AND TIME

When we are operating at full strength, workshops will be held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays each week, with summer and seasonal breaks. Morning sessions will be from 10.30 to 1.30, with an option for afternoon sessions from 4.30 to 7.30 if we have enough demand.

Meanwhile, the studio has not been totally empty! There has been a demand for ABC sessions



(Absolute Beginner Classes) which has filled up the time, and the levels the students have achieved has been outstanding. The nude drawing on this page, for instance, was by a delightful lady who previously had only a modest introduction to art. And the Acrylic is a work in progress for an ABC artist who had never before put her hand to a still life.

LIFE DRAWING

I plan life drawing sessions for the future, probably monthly. Meanwhile a great alternative is for **life-size photographs** of a pose, available at all sessions, with additional A3 prints that **show the pose from every angle** so that artists can, as it were, 'walk' around the model and chose an angle they find the most expressive. *(Cont. next page)*

MARQUE

ESTUDIO & GALERÍA



**STUDIO
WORKSHOP
NEWSLETTER**

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More about life drawing.

These are two of the models we'll be using. The large figure will be a life size photo, and there can be up to 24 A3 images of other angles of the same pose. This creates a 3D dynamic aspect and helps enormously to counter the 'flat look' for which photos are often criticised. It also provides artists with the opportunity to make rapid sketches from different positions without having to move the easel; a hugely useful exercise. If you wish, I can provide an A4 colour copy of the angle each artists want to paint, on which you can draw reference lines or a grid.

Not the real thing, but a very good

alternative, and of course the pose will be indefinitely available so artists need not be limited to just a few hours to finish their work. I plan to have a new pose every month or so. If there are enough artists we can hire a live model on occasion. Pop in see my life-size concept - you don't have to commit yourself to anything!

To provide an extra little inspiration there will be other large prints of various subjects, which in future can be decided by the workshop group. A still life will also be set up - but, naturally, each artist can work on her or his own chosen subject.

Water colour

This is another beautiful painting an ABC student made from a tracing. Tracing an outline onto the painting medium is a perfectly acceptable method with which to practise a technique.



PAINTS AND SOLVENTS

The preferred paints are either Acrylic or water soluble oils (see next page). Traditional oils have a problem in group studios, because most solvents are health hazards and some people are intolerant of them. They can be used, but - please - use non toxic solvents such as Gamsol or, at a push, Turpenoid Natural. Some pigments are toxic too, cadmium for instance, but I guess that's a different issue. Water colours, pastels, pencils, chalks, charcoal etc - all welcome. But not pouring paints and the like.

Water soluble oils

Yes it is true, water and oil now do mix!

Oils are now available in two types, and it's a bit confusing especially for beginners. But, for a studio group environment, water soluble – or more correctly, water miscible - oil paints are more practical and very much preferred to traditional oils, and many studios ban the use of traditional solvents. I call them 'studio-friendly', and they will not upset other studio colleagues who may have an aversion or an allergy to traditional oil paint mediums. They also hugely speed up the cleaning process at the end of a session because you wash your brushes and palettes with just water and a bit of soap.



Let me explain

Water soluble oils are NOT 'water-based', as they are described by some people and in many written articles. They are linseed oil based in exactly the same way as traditional oils, but differ because of one tiny change to chemistry. One end of the linseed oil molecule has been altered to allow it to bind loosely with water molecules. It is the same linseed oil, but slightly altered at a molecular level.

It has the same properties, feel and manipulability as any other artist's oil paint, because it *is* oil paint. But you will be able to clean your brushes with just water and wipe your palette clean with a swipe of a damp paper towel. In all other respects, they behave in exactly in the same way as traditional oil paints and the results are just as professional, but tend to be touch dry in 3-5 days – much quicker than traditional oils.

Using the paints

As with traditional oils using a solvent as a thinner, you don't need to use much water with the paints. Just squeeze out a blob from the tube and use a damp brush to pull the paint into an emulsion. Add a little at a time. All manufacturers offer a choice of mediums that are oil based but specifically geared to water-soluble paints and you can use these instead of water if you wish. You can even mix them with linseed oil or solvents. However, when mixed with water, they can give very fast drying times when compared with traditional oils.

Which brand is best

Royal Talens Cobra water soluble oils stand out from the others because of their exceptional quality and standard price. You can buy them on the internet, and in Jávea in a couple of shops (I think). They do a study range of 40 all non toxic and all at the same price, around €4 for a 40 ml tube. You can get a 10 tube set from Amazon.es for €37 (plus delivery). The artists' quality range have 70 colours that include expensive pigments, which means they vary in price considerably.

colour chart Cobra Study water mixable oil colour



Apart from the benefit that all the colours are the same price, Cobra have additional advantages above other makes in that all the colours have the same uniform drying time and degree of gloss, 100% retention of brush stroke, the highest degree of light fastness (100 years in gallery conditions) and no colour transition from wet to dry.

Other makes are Holbein Duo-Aqua (12 tube set €87), Winsor & Newton Artisan (10 tube set €47) and Daler Rowney Georgian Watermixable (10 tube set €47).

TO GET YOU STARTED

As with all groups, artists will need to provide their own materials. Experienced artists need no advice, except thinking about the use of solvents as mentioned earlier in the newsletter, and maybe an introduction to mediums they have not used before. However, the following is a quick guide for those newer to the wonderful pastime of art.

Brushes are important

Please don't go down to the local sell-it-all shop and pick up a set of cheap ones, or buy a bargain set on the internet - they will probably ruin your work. Each of the three principle painting media have different brushes that work particularly well with them. Very, very simply, bristles for oils, synthetics for acrylics, and softer hair or synthetics for water colour.

Can they be intermixed?

Yes, up to a point. The only recommendation that really should be followed is for acrylic, as the paint tends to destroy both soft hair brushes

such as sable, and bristle brushes such as hogs hair or badger. So stick to synthetics such as nylon.

For oils you need thicker bristles to move the dense and heavy paint around. For watercolors you need a softer brush because the medium is very fluid. But it all depends on the effect you want to obtain with your brushwork. Stiffer brushes will leave visible marks on the painting, with more textural results. Softer brushes will give you smoother brush strokes, with more blending. And there's lots of advice on the internet.



This would be a good set for acrylic and water colours. A household 2 inch brush would be useful to put down a background, and a fan brush for blending.



This would be a good set for oil paints, water soluble or traditional. Again, a household 2 inch brush would be useful, and a fan brush.

The painting surface

There's a wealth of information on the internet for you to wade through, but for papers and canvases the constant message is that quality matters. My advice for canvases is that you should buy ones that are stapled on the back, not the sides, as side staples look ugly if not framed. For acrylic, oil, watercolour and drawing papers, buy a heavy weight in the texture you like, but as you will probably be working on an easel I suggest that you buy a block of papers. That is, bound on all four sides.

Other media

I will do another newsletter on materials, but basically you will need pencils, at least 2H down to 4B, plus soft (putty) rubbers, something to paint on, brushes, paints or other media such as pastels, charcoals, coloured pencils and a palette, either solid or a pad of tear-offs. For acrylics, a 'stay-wet' palette is extremely useful but I have plenty for you to use. A practise paper pad may be useful, plus paper kitchen towels, a painting apron or old clothes ... for a start. What have I forgotten?