



## Maryland Pastel Society Summer Newsletter

July 2014

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### MPS Board & Volunteers

**Pres:** Dawn Capron

**VP:** Vacant

**Treas:** Mary Anne Warner

**Corr.Sec:** Linda Light

**Rec.Sec:** Barbara Steinacker

**Membership:** Kathleen Risk

**Workshops:** Joyce Lister

**Exhibition Chair:** Susan Gleason

**Web:** Mary Boeh

### Planning Calendar

#### 2014

**Jul 19:** Summer Members' Meeting

**Aug 9:** Fall deadline to apply for Signature Membership

### From the President's Easel

Happy Summer to all artists! Whether you are painting in the cool temps of your air conditioned studio or under the spreading branches of an oak tree, I hope you are painting a lot.

#### Jury Committee News

There are five very, Very Important Persons to whom we owe a great deal of thanks. Barbara Hails, David Lawton, Lisa Mitchell, Jack Pardue, and Chris Powell have unselfishly served as our first Jury Committee, completing their two year term this month. We are grateful to each for their unflinching and continuing commitment to MPS.

Our new Jury Committee is comprised of three individuals whose names are also familiar ones to our members for their contributions to MPS over the years and their admired artistic skills. Ray Ewing, Lisa Sheppard, and Stan Sperlak have agreed to serve, and we couldn't be more pleased.

As a reminder, Artist Members interested in becoming Signature Members may either apply by sending five images to the Jury Committee via our Membership Chair, Kathleen Risk [MPSmem@gmail.com](mailto:MPSmem@gmail.com), or by being accepted into three juried MPS sponsored shows. Details can be found on our MPS website <http://www.marylandpastelsociety.com/>

#### A Change on the Board

The Board said "goodbye" to a very special person this spring. JoEllen Murphy has been Corresponding Secretary for six years. As such, she handled more than our correspondence, especially during the SOPs when she solicited the many donations from sponsor after sponsor and then packaged each for the prize-giving.

Thankfully, Linda Light has stepped up to volunteer for the Corresponding Secretary position. Linda is a familiar MPS volunteer,

**Sep 20:** Fall Board Meeting  
**Oct 18:** Fall Members' Meeting  
**Nov 1:** Winter deadline to apply for Signature Membership  
**Dec 13:** Winter Board Meeting

#### Directions to Glenwood

[Directions to our meetings at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center at Glenwood](#)

especially during our juried shows. It will be very helpful to have Linda participating as a regular, contributing member of the Board.

*Dawn*, MPS President

#### Next Meeting

Our summer General Meeting is July 19th!  
Come join us for a fun, artistic hands-on experience!

What to Bring:

- One photo
- 12 (and ONLY 12) pastels with which to paint that photo.
- One old towel to put on the table, at your workplace, under your pastel.

A PASTEL SURFACE WILL BE PROVIDED FOR YOU!

In fact, you will have the opportunity to sample several surfaces, although you need only ONE photo. All will made clear at the meeting.

And, as always, please remember to bring

- lunch for yourself.
- food to share so you can put your name in the box and perhaps win a prize.
- samples of your recent work.

See you on July 19th at Glenwood! ([Click here for directions to the Gary J. Arthur Community Center](#))

#### Upcoming Workshops

**The Desmond O'Hagan workshop is currently full.** Please contact Joyce Lister at [lijsterstudio@comcast.net](mailto:lijsterstudio@comcast.net) if you would like to be placed on the waiting list.

The **Desmond O'Hagan** workshop is a 3-day inside workshop for the MPS, November 6, 7, and 8, 2014, at the Howard County Center for the Arts in Ellicott City.

#### Upcoming Exhibitions

We hope you will consider entering the MPS' first ever pastel and mixed media juried exhibition, scheduled to open in November at Strathmore Mansion in Bethesda. Our juror will be Stewart White, a nationally known watercolorist and architectural designer and illustrator.

"Pastel Unleashed: A Mixed Media Approach" is such a fun and interesting challenge! The opportunity to use another media to work harmoniously with pastels is mind blowing! It truly is a freeing exercise and a free pass to think outside of everything we know to be traditional pastel painting.

Our Exhibition Chair, Susan Gleason, reports that she has heard from

many fellow members on their progress for this show, and while many are still tweaking their technique, everyone has been having fun experimenting with different medias. Thank you, Deborah Maklowski for sharing your journey for the mixed media show.

The deadline for entry is July 22, so go get cracking and have a lot of fun playing around with your pastels in a new and exciting way! You just never know what you may discover!.

Click [HERE](#) to download the prospectus and entry form from our website.

### Featured Artist: Alice Kelsey



Windy Day Fall Fields

Betsy's Pear

Pastel struck a chord with Pennsylvania artist Alice Kelsey when she first tried it a decade and a half ago, and it has become one of her favorite mediums. She bought a few pastels to experiment with color on studies for large works, and loved the freedom and richness of expression with this medium. "The ability to both draw and paint with pastel sparks my creative process," says Kelsey. "I like harnessing both line and mass as the work develops, and the immediacy of color with pastel, literally at my fingertips, helps me to integrate color and composition throughout the process. I also really like the surface qualities of pastel, where finished works refract soft, luminous color and layers of expressive strokes mingle with paper texture." Following her passion for pastel, Alice joined the Maryland Pastel Society to share and learn from other pastelists, and especially appreciates the educational aspects of the meetings, from demos to tips about adjunct tasks such as photographing artwork. She has been a full-time artist for the past eleven years, and exhibits regularly and has received awards in regional and national juried shows. Her work is represented by several galleries (Lancaster Galleries (Lancaster, PA),

Faustina's Gallery (Lewisburg, PA), and The State College Framing Company and Gallery (State College, PA), and she was selected as a featured artist for the Palmer Museum of Art 2014 Gala Event. She is excited about her current solo exhibition at Penn State, where thirty works are exhibited through July, 2014, and an upcoming Invitational Exhibition at the Art Association of Harrisburg (October 24 - November 28, 2014). Sharing her love of the pastel medium, Kelsey teaches workshops periodically, most recently with the Central PA Pastel Society and Lewisburg Arts Council.

Alice Kelsey grew up in Chester County, PA, where the rolling piedmont and open land nurtured her artistic eye. She studied art intensively in high school (Westtown School) with S. Warren Krebs, and college (Hamilton College), focusing on oil painting and etching. After practicing medicine for a decade and painting whenever possible, Alice followed her deepest calling and closed her practice to be a full-time artist. "I am so grateful to create visually," says Kelsey. "It is deeply fulfilling to put down on paper and canvas the images of places which so inspire me." She lives with her husband and three children on a small farm near State College, PA, and her work focuses on the surrounding landscape. Most works are begun en plein air, as she travels on foot with a backpack of pastels, sometimes several miles from roadways. Kelsey notes that "...working outdoors, I feel a connection with the land which fuels my painting and seems to fill it with a sense of the place and day. I learn so much from nature, especially while painting." She also appreciates reflective time back in the studio, a converted mudroom of the Kelsey's 1870 farmhouse, and refines the plein air piece or creates new works in oil or pastel. Alice usually uses pastel for plein air painting, finding it to be very versatile, and the immediate access to color helps her to keep up with the changing light conditions.

"As I work in pastel," says Kelsey, "I am free to focus on the abstract as well as representational aspects of the subject, and the luscious sticks of pigment are wonderful tools for gesture." She seeks an overall harmony in her works, where color, shapes, and gesture work together to not only describe a physical place, but also the mood, or 'what was stirring there'. Alice finds that pastel enables her to engage with all of these aspects of creating, and she can also see traces of her familiarity with other media. "I've realized that the mark-making which I learned in etching shows up in my pastels, as well as an appreciation for color masses which comes naturally with oil painting." She is grateful to have discovered the pastel medium, which feels like a natural extension of her hand, and is excited to see where it leads next. Kelsey reflects that "The works seem to be getting bigger and brighter, and more and more to paint themselves... what an enriching journey!" Examples of her work and information about upcoming exhibitions can be seen at [www.alicekelsey.com](http://www.alicekelsey.com).



Spruce Creek - March Rises



Between Seasons



Winter Fields and Wild Cherry

***We are looking for Featured Artists!*** Signature Members may sign up to be a Featured Artist by sending an email to [mdpastels@gmail.com](mailto:mdpastels@gmail.com).

### Inspiration Corner

***Inspiration Corner*** is a new addition to our newsletter. Each quarter, we will feature articles that inspire and encourage MPS artists to explore the art world, improve skills, and just try new things. In this issue, our Inspiration comes from member, Helen McComas.

## For a moment, forget the composition rules

By Helen McComas

Imagine a painting by Whistler. Quiet patterns of a few colors. Titles that name the palette rather than the subject. Mysterious musical titles. Blurred images of speed and violence.

A far cry from the pastel paintings by the modern masters that we admire and try to learn from.

James Abbott McNeill Whistler is remembered most for his partly abstract cityscapes and full-length portraits. His "mother," seen in profile sitting in a chair in the painting titled "Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1."

We are lucky to live near the world's largest collection of works by Whistler, the Freer Gallery of Art on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Some of the freshest and most appealing of those are in pastel.

Whistler carried on his famous experiments with color and composition in oil

paint. His famous "mother" was one of those, as were his cool, moody "Nocturnes" and his swirling paintings of ships and express trains.

His pastels belong to a different stage of his career, including 14 months he spent in Venice beginning in 1879, when he was 45.

Here is the Freer's description of these works, which were shown in a 2003 exhibition: "Whistler preferred to work outdoors but the unusually cold winter of 1880 made holding an etching needle or painting en plein aire with oils or watercolors impractical. Pastels, however, were an ideal medium."

Whistler completed 90 pastel works in Venice, telling his dealer they were "totally new and of a brilliancy very different from the customary watercolor."

The Freer again: "Whistler's Venetian pastels were strikingly sketchy, with large areas of paper left blank. Criticized by a conservative contemporary critic as "vaguely incoherent, the pastels are appealing to the modern eye."

A story from my own art is relevant here. I was studying a reference photo of a tall, fragmented waterfall, looking for a composition. The problem was mainly around its edges. The center of the image was terrific, a dramatic vertical, but the margins were dull, random.

I remembered Whistler's sketchy paintings of Venice, done on tinted paper. An interesting, geometric center pattern, rendered with sketchy line work. Some strong, light patches of color draw the eye to the center of the painting.

My solution to my waterfall problem came easily once I laid aside the usual rules of composition. Instead, on gray paper, I drew rocks, water and trees simply with a dark gray pastel pencil. Medium soft Girault pastels made quick work of the most interesting spots of dark and light color: flashes of white water, patches of sky, sunlit rock facets, various greens of some of the trees.

It was like getting back to my old love, accenting a sketchy pen-and-ink drawing with watercolor washes. The line work provides the scaffold; the colored objects provide the contrast and energy.

If you like drawing and enjoy creating a sparse painting that suggests as much as it depicts, try Whistler's pastel method.



Helen's Waterfall Pastel

## For more information on Whistler's pastels:

Freer's Whistler in Venice exhibition is described in Resource Library Magazine: [www.tfaoi.com/aa/3aa/3aa464.htm](http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/3aa/3aa464.htm)

Frick Collection's 2009 exhibition of Whistler works, including Venice pastels: [www.frick.org/sites/default/files/archivedsite/exhibitions/whistler/pastels.htm](http://www.frick.org/sites/default/files/archivedsite/exhibitions/whistler/pastels.htm)

### RECOMMENDED BOOK:

"James Abbott McNeill Whistler: Pastels" by Robert H. Getscher (1991) published by George Braziller

## Member News



Night Passage,  
Monoprint with Pastel

**Susan Due Percy** was accepted into the exhibit STONE, juried by Sy Gresser, at The [Hyattstown Mill Arts Project](#), opening Sat. June 28 from 2-4 pm. The Mill is part of the Heritage Montgomery Tour and is located at 14920 Hyattstown Mill Road, Hyattstown, MD 20871. Her work also continues to hang at the [Milkhouse Brewery at Stillpoint Farm](#),



Beginnings



Peek A Boo

**Judith Einstman** had one pastel selected for the Southeastern Pastel Society's 16th International Exhibition at the [Oglethorpe University Museum](#) in Atlanta, Georgia. The show ran from May 15th to June 22nd. Her painting, "Peek A Boo" was selected for the [North East National Pastel Exhibition View in Old Forge, NY](#), that runs from June 28th to August 3rd. A picture of that pastel is attached.



Evening Gaze

**Andree Tullier's** painting "Evening Gaze" was juried into the [Maryland Society of Portrait Painters](#) (MSPP) show, 'A Moment Expressed'. The juror was Kerry Dunn, international award winner (Best in Show, 2013) of the Portrait Society of America. The show ran from May 27 - July 3 at the Chaney Gallery, Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, Annapolis, MD.



Treasure Hunters

Sparrow Nest Dock

**Kim Stone** was accepted into the 47th Annual Juried Exhibition "[Art of the State 2014](#)" at [The State Museum in Harrisburg, PA](#) with my painting "Beginnings". It runs from June 22 to September 14.



**Linda Harrison-Parsons** will have work on display in the gallery at McDaniel College, Westminster, MD during the Common Grounds on the Hill Music & Arts Events July 6-11. Currently work is on display at [Holtzman Alumni Center Gallery, Blacksburg, VA](#). The show runs through September 22 with closing reception Thursday, September 4th 5:00-6:30. New art is on display at [The Little Gallery on Smith Mountain Lake](#) and Mountain Lake Lodge Gallery, Pembroke, VA.

**Eve Miller's** "Sparrow Nest Dock" has been juried into the [Pastel Society of Colorado 10th Annual Mile High International Pastel Exhibition](#).



Portal

**Gretchen Moyer** currently has two pastels, "Least Bittern" and "Portal" in the [Northeast National Pastel Exhibition, View Center, Old Forge, NY](#). The show runs from June 28 - August 3. Gretchen's pastel, "Eleazar" was recently in the show "Less is More: Small Works Exhibition" at the [Mitchell Gallery, St. John's College, Annapolis, MD](#). The show ran from May 28 - June 15. Her linocut print, "Intertwine" was included in the [Art of State '14, at the State Museum, Harrisburg, PA](#), from June 22 - September 14. Three of Gretchen's woodcuts, "Artist's Dog", "Virgil's Dream" and "Heimer", have been included in the [Creede Arts Council National Print Show](#). "Heimer" is part of the travelling exhibition.

Three of **Mary Boeh's** pastels were juried into the [Maryland Society of Portrait Painters](#) show "A Moment Expressed."

## DID YOU KNOW?

**MPS NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!**

We need someone to help with Hospitality, to pick up ice and beverages for the quarterly meetings. Please let us know if you can lend a hand!

Like to write? Why not submit an article to the news letter? Reviews of art books, local exhibitions, and ideas for our "Inspiration Corner" are all welcome.

Just send an email to: [mdpastels@gmail.com](mailto:mdpastels@gmail.com)

### **More Member News!**

**Philip Bennet** recently received a very positive [review by an art critic of the Washington Post](#) for his 16 painting solo show that just ended at the Old Print Gallery in Georgetown, Washington, DC

**Lynn Goldstein** was one of 15 artists in the United States selected to participate in CARAVAN, an exhibition of artwork that will be shown first at Washington National Cathedral, and then at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in NYC. With the theme "AMEN-A Prayer for the World," the exhibition seeks to express the deep, fundamental human acknowledgement of power and hope in the universe, for all peoples. Goldstein's work will be exhibited with work of 30 artists from Egypt, two from the United Kingdom, and one artist from France. The D.C. exhibition runs from August 31-October 6 and New York City - October 12-November 16. At the end of the exhibition in NYC, an auction will take place, led by a Sotheby's auctioneer, and part of the proceeds from the sale of the artwork will be allocated to help fund a school for girls in one of the most impoverished areas of Cairo.

Additionally, Lynn's work is also now represented by [Broadway Gallery](#) in Alexandria and Great Falls, Virginia. Her work is featured at the Great Falls location during the month of June, and will be featured at the Alexandria location in July. Lynn will have a solo show of her acrylic work at the [Workhouse Arts Center](#), Gallery 6 in Lorton, Virginia during the month of July. The reception for that exhibition will be Saturday, July 12 from 6-9 PM. Finally, Lynn's work was selected for the Director's Collection at the Workhouse Arts Center. As a result of that selection, Lynn's work will be exhibited in the Vulcan Gallery at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, Virginia for the remainder of 2014.

**Jean Hirons** has become a member of the Master Circle of the [International Association of Pastel Societies \(IAPS\)](#). She will be inducted next June.

**Deborah Maklowski's** colored pencil drawing "Relic" was accepted into the [Colored Pencil Society of America's \(CPSA\) 22nd Annual International Exhibition](#), being held this year in Daytona Beach, FL. This is Deborah's fifth acceptance into this annual show, for which she will be recognized with a 5-Year Merit Award at the convention in late July. Deborah has also been elected to the CPSA's National Governing Board, as the new Ways and Means Director, a position she will assume on November 1.

### **Welcome to New Members**

We're thrilled to welcome new members Laurie McKelvie, Tony Frye, Priscilla Hall and Charlyn Baillie.

Did you know? MPS now has 204 members; 102 are Artist members and 102 are Signature members.

## Past Events

### Spring Meeting:

## Wet Pigment, Dry Pigment Can Play Together

By Helen McComas. Photos by Linda Light.



Society member Raymond Ewing gave an entertaining and inspiring demonstration of his watercolor-then-pastels landscape method at the Society spring meeting April 12.

He first explained his simple, fundamental rules of composition: three planes and three values. Foreground, middle ground and background. Dark, middle tone and light. They can be arranged in any combination, for example dark foreground, light middle, mid-tone background. The fourth layer, sky, is always the lightest value -- and not necessarily blue. His sky is greener and lighter below, bluer and darker above. If a warm sky is called for, it can be yellow or pink-orange.

Before beginning to paint, Ray advises, you should decide what will be your center of interest and choose a title for your painting. In other words, know from the start what you're doing.

Ray's watercolor method is simplicity itself: two colors of watercolor, laid down in your three-value scheme. He uses alizarin crimson and sap green. Mixed in equal amounts, they make a strong dark gray. It can be diluted into useful middle and pale grays. Add a bit more alizarin to warm the color; a bit more green makes it cooler gray-green. (Another useful two-paint scheme, he told me, is ultramarine and burnt sienna, the Pike palette.)

Waiting for the watercolor to dry gives you a moment to pause -- longer on cool, humid day, shorter on a dry, warm one.

In his demo, Ray used white Uart 320 paper glued with acrylic medium onto Gatorboard. He uses standard sizes, 9x12, 11x14, 16x20 and sometime 8x10. White Wallis also works well, he said. The finer grades of Uart, 400 to 800, are not as useful with watercolor, he said, and Wallis Belgian mist (tan-gray) is too dark to allow painting light-value areas.

He begins applying pastel with Nupastels, harder sticks that he keeps sorted into his three value groups. As he goes along, developing the pastel image, he moves to his soft pastels -- a mixed bag of Ludwigs and other brands,

The brush becomes a wonderful tool for shaping the pastel, softening or defining edges and adding fine details. No paint, just a damp brush. He uses a cheap synthetic oil/acrylic brush, size 8 round. No point in spending good money on a quality brush that the paper's grit will quickly shred.

Another of his watercolor tricks is to use a small touch of white gouache (opaque watercolor) on the brush point to sharpen a highlight, brighten an edge or add small spots of snow.

Ray's had specific advice for plein-air painting: Leave only the center of interest sharply defined. Painting in well-defined details at the edges (grass or leaves in the foreground) just detracts from the center. And when time starts running short in plein-air, it's best to have the center well developed before fussing with the edges.

Finishing up, he adds a small dot of bright, saturated crimson pastel to a warm area near the center of interest, then to attract the eye again, a spark of bright turquoise in a cool spot near the center.

Ray lives in Swan Point, Md. His website is [ray.fineartstudioonline.com](http://ray.fineartstudioonline.com)



## Workshop News: Elements of Plein Air with a Master Teacher

Liz Haywood-Sullivan workshop, June 9-13, 2014

By Helen McComas, Photos by Bob Slaterbeck and Mary Boeh



## Welcome to boot camp

For some real discomfort, check into a "boot camp."

Liz Haywood-Sullivan calls her full-immersion course on outdoor pastel painting a Plein Air Boot Camp, and 18 of our members found out what she meant by that. The first three days of her workshop in Shepherdstown West Virginia, gave us the full plein-air experience -- heat, humidity, breeze, sunburn, biting bugs, shifting light.

Then rainstorms drove us inside for part of the next two days.

Liz began with a tour of her plein-air equipment. She often travels by air with it, and she has very specific recommendations on packing light and logically.

It all goes in two bags: a 35-pound carry-on suitcase that fits under a seat or into the overhead bins and a roomy 30-pound rolling backpack, the "personal item" the airline allows her. The only essentials that go in her checked suitcase are an umbrella and the sturdy Gitzo photographer's tripod that holds her easel. If the checked bag is lost, either of those can be replaced at her destination, even abroad.

Her basic plein air pastels fit in a small wooden Heilman box. These are the colors she uses most often, a palette she has put together over the years and is always the same.

Additional pastels go in a few cardboard boxes. Liz plans ahead for the colors she will need on each trip -- Southwest scenes call for more earth colors and turquoise, coastal scenes for more tinted greys, winter scenes for more blues and violets.

A handy bracket from Canada, the Easel Butler, clamps to the front two legs of

the tripod and creates a shelf for her pastel box.

One essential is her viewfinder, a plastic or cardboard card with a rectangular hole. A photographic slide mount works well.

For plein air, she often uses white or colored Pastelmat sanded paper, which is bound in pads with glassine between the sheets. She also often chooses Uart 500 or Kitty Wallis sanded paper or black Canson paper.

Liz says she is moving more and more toward framing without a mat. She cuts paper to standard frame sizes (16x20, 12x18, 11x14, 8x10) and hot-press mounts it on Gatorboard (not Gatorfoam). After it's painted out to its edges, the board can drop directly into the frame, separated from the glass with thin spacers. Liz prefers to use museum glass for works she's entering in major shows, but its high price is an issue.

### **Dem Bones, Dem Bones**



Liz says that by training and inclination, she's a designer. She teaches that a good painting starts with a firm value structure, or "Good Bones." Go no further in your picture until you've established those bones. Here is how:

Once you have chosen a subject, creating that basic structure comes in two steps. First draw in a sketchbook -- slowly and carefully -- a small map of the composition's primary shapes, lines, angles and the edges of dark and light areas. These are just simple lines, no shading. Put tick marks at the 1/4, 1/2 and 3/4 points of each edge.

Next comes another simple sketch, this time of the values: dark shadows, middle tones and highlights. Draw it without referring to the first sketch. "Just draw what you see," she says over and over. Make sure the value sketch has the same proportions as the line sketch.

This work may take only 10 minutes or less, but it will reveal quickly whether the picture is worth pursuing. If the value sketch is boring or lopsided, the picture will not improve later. Just move on and try again with a different design.

If the sketches are strong and satisfying, though, Liz said they should give you the energy and excitement to carry you through into the pastel phase. "You'll find you're flying," she said.

Liz uses a tan-toned or white sketchbook for these planning drawings. Some people prefer gray-toned sketch paper. A pencil or marker pen works better than charcoal or pastel pencil because it will not smudge.

When she decides a composition is worth continuing into a full pastel painting, Liz transfers the line sketch to her pastel paper, making very sure to preserve its proportions. A simple way to do that, she showed us, is to draw crop marks at the top left corner of your pastel paper. Lay the sketch on the paper, aligned with that corner, and using a long ruler, tape measure or straight edge, find the diagonal line down to the opposite corner of the sketch. Extend that line out across your pastel paper. Mark where it reaches the other side of your pastel paper, and you have scaled up the sketch accurately.

Liz does not use charcoal to make her preliminary drawing on the pastel paper because it leaves marks that later pastels sometimes cannot cover up completely. Instead, she draws with a hard pastel as pale as the paper allows. "Use light blue or a neutral. It disappears into the painting," she said. While drawing these lines, she looks at the subject, not her sketches.

At this point, Liz lays in her underpainting, and her picture moves very quickly from a sketch to a vivid composition. Following the subject's values, she lightly applies pastels for the underpainting, using ONLY very soft pastels so they will dissolve completely. She tends to use saturated, intense colors here, but whatever color they are, they must follow the value design. "Value trumps everything," she said.

She then uses a synthetic-bristle brush about 1 inch wide and 70% or 90% isopropyl alcohol to dissolve the pastels and create the underpainting. "Get rid of all the white spots," she said, "and get smooth transitions in the sky."

When the alcohol dries, she begins applying pastels, starting with the darkest and lightest colors. She carefully establishes the value of the sky. Liz leaves much of the underpainting exposed because, if properly done, it fits exactly the picture's design of light and dark values. Also, glimpses of the underpainting make her colors richer and more complex.

The perennial question: When to stop painting? Liz said in the last phases of painting, she works slowly, refining the colors and contrasts. "It's a give and take. Play with it. See what works." When she is no longer fine tuning and improving the painting, she stops. She's finished.



## Plein-air 2.0

Liz also teaches a fast, simple way to paint en plein air if the weather is bad or you are pressed for time. It combines the inspiring immediacy of painting outdoors with the advantages of working in the studio.

Go out to the site, taking just these along:

- A viewfinder card
- A medium-sized piece of sanded paper mounted or taped onto a firm board
- Vine charcoal or a very soft charcoal pencil
- A small or medium-sized notebook
- A ballpoint or felt-tip pen

- 1 - Locate a subject, and use your viewfinder to find a good, strong composition
- 2 - Draw its landmarks and the edges of its dark, mid-tone and light areas onto the pastel paper with charcoal.
- 3 - Add more charcoal to establish the picture's value pattern, blurring with a fingertip for mid-tones. Keep going until you have your picture in monochrome (black-and-white).
- 4 - Put aside the charcoal sketch. Take out your pen and notebook, and slowly, patiently re-observe the subject. Study the light and colors. Start making notes -- the precise color of each area, each shadow; the exact variations in value in the important areas; the variations of intensity (saturation) between foreground, middle ground and background;
- 5 - Finally, take a photo with a phone or camera, from exactly the same spot as you stood when you framed the composition.

While you are still outside, spray the charcoal drawing with several coats of workable fixative. Now you can come in out of the weather and continue your painting later:

6 - Begin applying pastels, starting with the darkest and lightest colors.

You can do the first, outdoor part in 15 minutes, and if the weather is bad, without even leaving your car. You can do it during a short stop when traveling. The fixative will make the charcoal drawing clean to carry.

When Liz showed us this method, she told us not to take photos. Slow down and open our senses, she said, observe and remember the details of the scene. "Photography is so limiting," she said, "and it can not pick up colors and details in the shadows."

### **Out of our comfort zone**

Liz said in the workshop's first session, "You do not have to prove to me how well you paint." "Relax, let go ..."

We were there to try new things. It worked. She spent five days leading us into places we had never visited before.



To see more of Liz's artwork and learn about her workshops, visit her [webpage](#).

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