

CONTEMPORARY WORKS
BY TODAY'S TOP ARTISTS

pure PASTEL

edited by ANNE HEVENER

pure PASTEL



▲ **KITCHEN HERB GARDEN**

Felicity House
Soft pastel over watercolor underpainting
on Art Spectrum Colourfix pastel paper
19" x 18" (48cm x 46cm)

FELICITY HOUSE

Outside my friend's kitchen door I noticed a collection of different herbs in dappled sunlight; it was a picture before I began. I set up an easel on-site. Working within a window of time kept the marks lively and spontaneous, and it meant I focused on what interested me most—the different textures of the herbs, the enjoyment of the shadow shapes and hanging garden tools. It's important to me to regularly correct the drawing, so graphic marks made with pastel edges and pastel pencils become a strong element in the work.

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NORTH LIGHT BOOKS

CINCINNATI, OHIO

artistsnetwork.com

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▲ **CEREMONY**
Daniel E. Greene
Pastel on wood
32" × 50" (81cm × 127cm)

DANIEL E. GREENE
This painting is a metaphor for passing the baton from the older artist to the younger. This is my seventh decade working in pastel, and I envisioned two models in an initiation, featuring a head-and-shoulders-sized stretcher suspended over the head of the younger artist. Another title could have been *Passing the Torch*.

▶ Introduction

The pastel medium appeals to the art practitioner for many reasons. For the artist who loves both to draw and paint, pastel allows for a direct application of pigment that requires no brush or palette knife. No mediums. Just the artist's hand, a sheet of paper and a stick of pure color. And, because it's a dry medium, pastel offers real convenience. An artist can step away from a painting at a moment's notice—with no brushes to clean, no palette to mess with—and return later, picking up again with everything just as she left it. That's a rather nice perk for the part-time painter with limited windows of time for making art. Also, thanks to its compatibility with most other mediums, pastel is a friend to mixed-media artists and artistic innovators, who enjoy an ongoing exploration of new techniques that take advantage of the medium's unique characteristics.

The true beauty of pastel, however, has nothing to do with practicality and convenience. The standout quality of pastel is the sparkling, radiant, luminous color. It's this freshness, brilliance and vibrancy of color in contemporary pastel painting that we celebrate in *Pure Pastel*. The talented artists featured in this new volume share insights into their pastel work, explaining how they've used the medium to capture a moment's light and mood, to invite contemplation and to stir the imagination. These paintings demonstrate the extraordinary potential of a fascinating medium and reveal all that is possible when an artist's hand pulls a stick of pure color across paper.

Anne Hewener

▶ COTTONWOOD RIVER VALLEY

Kim Casebeer

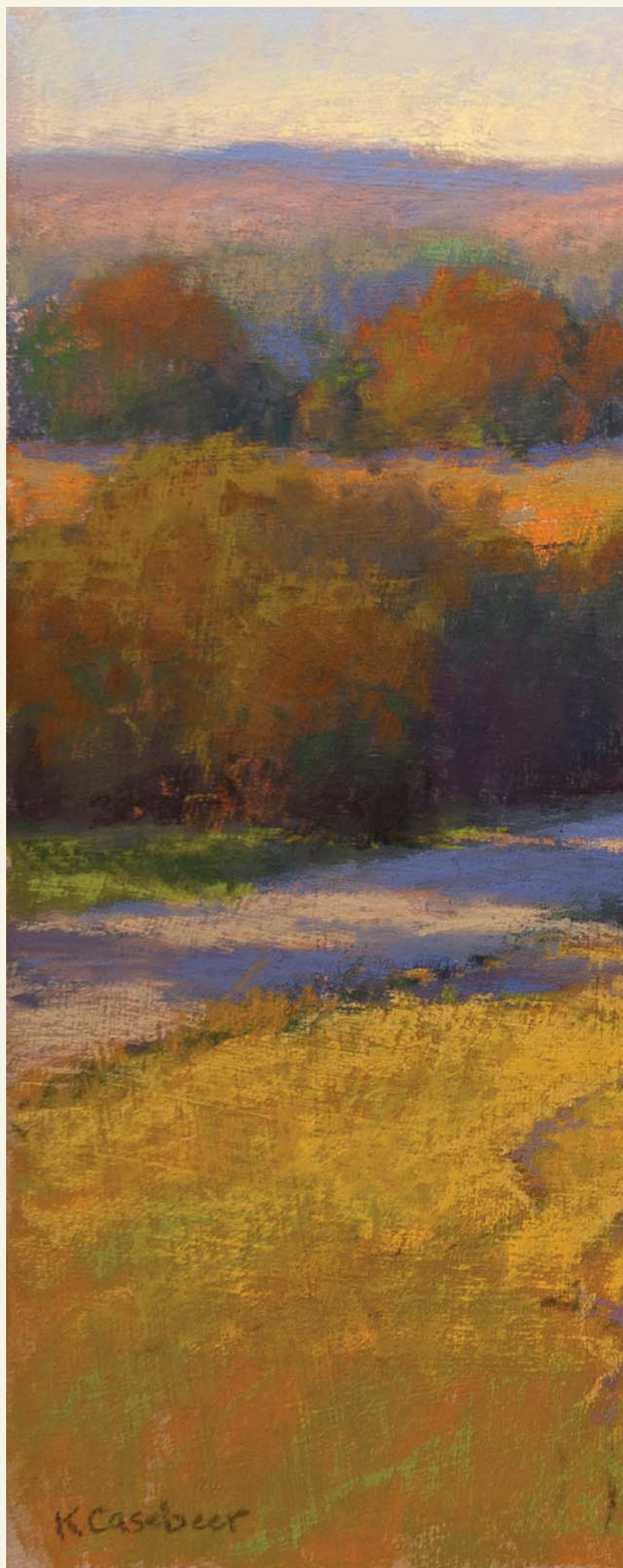
Soft pastel on prepared museum board

16" × 20" (41cm × 51cm)

Collection of Bob and Dale Ann Clore

KIM CASEBEER

I've painted from this location several times. The view is from the top of a hill overlooking a valley through which the Cottonwood River flows. It's a big view with a lot going on. I like to take a scene such as this to the studio in order to edit out the noise and create a strong composition, in this case, removing buildings, fences and farm equipment. I don't necessarily think of focal point first as much as finding ways to move through the painting. The diagonal road provides that movement, while the cast shadows help break the foreground so your eye moves toward the distant part of the road. Layers of trees add depth and a little mystery as to where the road is going. The cattle paths add some perspective lines as well as an indication that there's life on the prairie.





1

Color + Light

“Color is my day-long obsession, joy and torment,” said Claude Monet. Indeed, having a healthy obsession with light and color is part and parcel of being an artist. Anyone with an eye for beauty is drawn to the splendor and drama of certain lighting situations: the shimmer of sunlight on water, evening light breaking through trees, the human face bathed in a glow of warm light. These magical moments of luminous color simply beg to be painted, and pastel is a wonderful medium with which to render them.

In this chapter, you’ll find examples of artists who use color and light to intensify the power of their visual statements. In some pastels, the artists have opted to exaggerate color; in others, they’ve chosen to tone it down. Similarly, some artists have decided to accentuate the lighting of a scene in order to heighten the drama or, conversely, to manipulate it to create something more quietly nuanced. Making choices that express not only what’s seen, but also what’s felt, is the work, the privilege and the joy of the artist.

▶ BRIGHT COLORS ON A WHITE CLOTH

Sarah Blumenschein
Soft pastel on paper
20" × 24" (51cm × 61cm)

SARAH BLUMENSCHN

As an artist, I particularly enjoy capturing light and reflections. This painting was done from life and represents one of several that I did where I contrasted bright, vivid color in fruits and flowers with a white cloth and silver vase. The way light and colors reflect in silver is especially interesting to me, and I enjoy the challenge of capturing the reflection. I used UArt paper, which I toned to a medium red wine color using Alizarin Crimson and Payne’s Gray watercolors. After toning the paper, I mounted it to a museum board using 3M Positionable Mounting Adhesive. In general, I use Girault pastels for the first layers and the softer Unison and Schmincke pastels for the final layers.





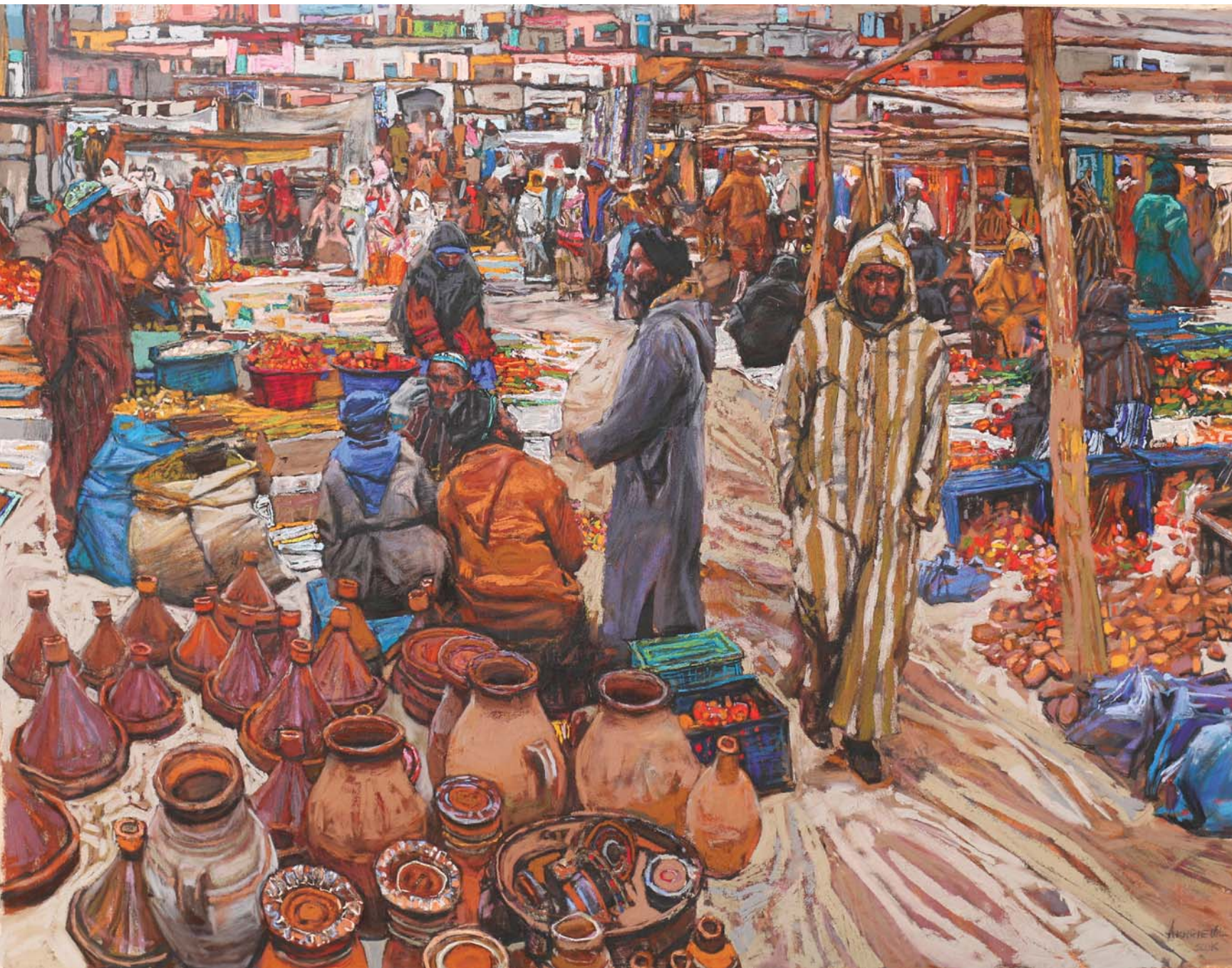


▲ **MONTAÑA DE ORO AFTERNOON**

W. Truman Hosner
Soft pastel on sanded paper
16" × 20" (41cm × 51cm)

W. TRUMAN HOSNER

For me, technique follows concept like form follows function. A concept might be the effect of light and the color I see. I search out a line of beauty in the light and paint what I think and feel about what I'm observing. I made this painting on-site in one sitting on a late February afternoon in California. Painting outdoors is never easy, and to deal with constant change, I use impressionism to create a kind of dynamic incompleteness. I like pastel because it's very resilient to weather conditions.



▲ **HIGH ATLAS MARKET**

Daud Akhriev

Pastel on paper

23" × 31" (58cm × 79cm)

DAUD AKHRIEV

My wife and I visited the High Atlas mountain of Morocco for three weeks with a young guide. It was as if we traveled back in time. The landscape was a quilt of muted earth colors: plowed fields in winter, rugged mountains, and handmade bricks and plaster of the houses. The landscape reminded me of tarnished silver. In contrast, the colors of the Moroccans' clothing and artisan wares were usually brightly colored and ornamented. The intense colors of textiles and crafts of this outdoor market at high altitude allowed me to distribute color around the composition as desired.

“Rather than painting ‘things,’ I strive to capture the effect of light and shadow as it falls across those things.”

— BARBARA JAENICKE



▲ **UNITY**
Brian E. Bailey
Soft pastel on paper
26" × 40" (66cm × 102cm)

BRIAN E. BAILEY

The darkness of the background helped intensify the effect light played on the still life. In this work, I used natural objects to act as a metaphor for my family in turmoil and discord during my father's grave illness. The somber color harmonized the painting and was reflective of our sadness and the ultimate outcome.

In my painting, there's nothing I take away nor give artifice to enhance the quiet permanence of a subject's beauty.



▲ **THE WINDMILL ON THE HILL**

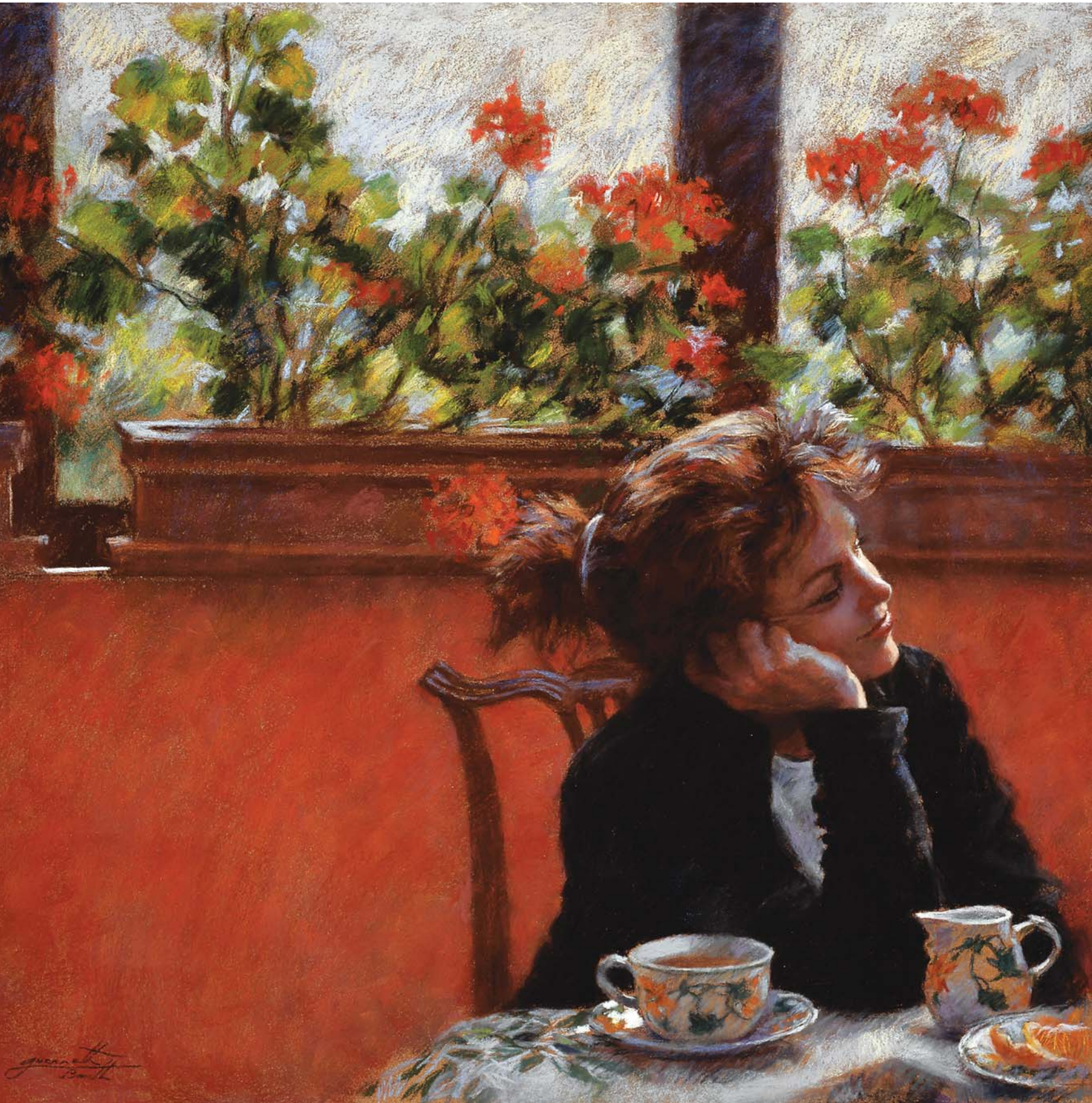
Barbara Jaenicke

Soft pastel over oil stain underpainting on paper
mounted to acid-free foamboard
18" × 18" (46cm × 46cm)

BARBARA JAENICKE

What captivated me about this spot and moment in time was the intense evening light that almost visually washed out the windmill. To accentuate that light, I set up the composition with the light-filled area concentrated into a small space at the top; most of the remaining landscape is in shadow.

Although not my typical method, I underpainted with an oil stain of mostly Transparent Oxide Red. The majority of the underpainting was kept warm, providing a strong glow beneath the sunlit areas and a shimmering vibration for the cooler temperatures applied on top.



▲ **TEA AND GERANIUMS**

Gwenneth Barth-White
Hard and soft pastel on paper
20" x 20" (51cm x 51cm)
Private collection

GWENNETH BARTH-WHITE

When I looked around while having breakfast in our dining area, it was as if I saw the geraniums for the first time. I had just fallen in love with a Childe Hassam painting of a woman with geraniums. I hastily rearranged the table with my tea and breakfast, whilst reliving the lovely feeling that I'd had the day before with a good friend over tea. I wanted to suggest that without actually painting it.

▼ **FLOWERBED—EARLY SUMMER**

Glenys Ambrus
Soft pastel on mount board
33" x 33" (84cm x 84cm)

GLENYS AMBRUS

I paint in my tree-shaded garden where dark laurels and other evergreens grow like mad. To liven up the flower beds, I supplement the perennials with easy-to-grow annuals.

I liked the way the various plants sprawled over the confines of the rectangular bed and the color repetition of the bright annuals threading through the lavender's silvery gray-greens.



▶ **INVOCATION**

Mary Aslin

Soft pastel over pastel primer on canvas mounted to board
72" × 48" (183cm × 122cm)

MARY ASLIN

Invocation: I will ask, then I will follow. When I asked my model Rachel to step into the rose garden, I couldn't have foretold how the rim light on her hair and shoulder, and the rich color in the shadows, would make my heart stop. In asking and then following where beauty was to lead me—and Rachel, too, appears to be in the act of seeking—this painting embodies a story far greater, much to my surprise, than the sum of its parts.



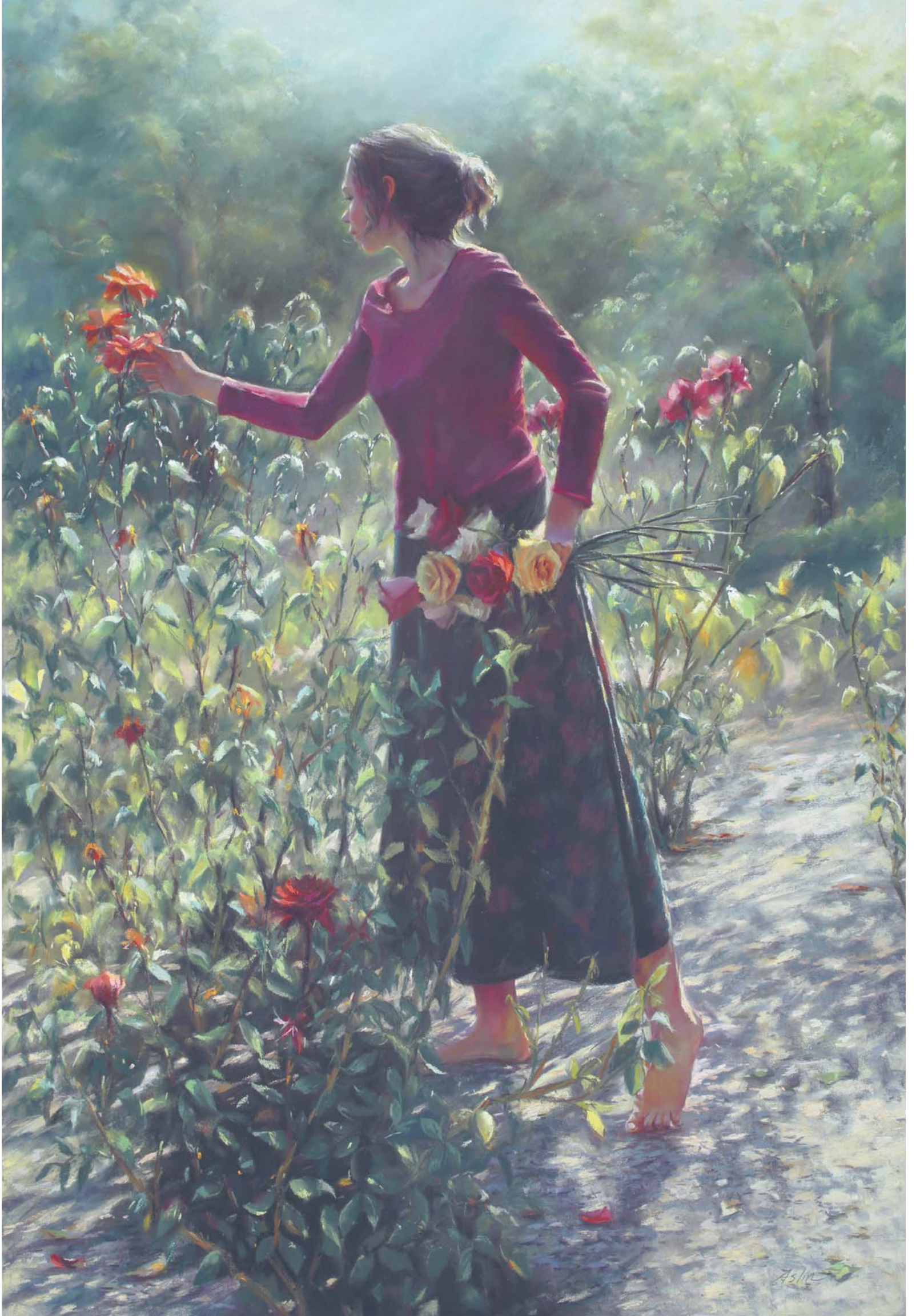
▲ **NATALIA'S DREAM**

Vicente Romero

Pastel on laid paper mounted on foamboard
20" × 25½" (51cm × 65cm)

VICENTE ROMERO

Natalia is my niece and has posed for me many times. For this painting, however, she really was sleeping. I captured the moment with photographs. The white color dominates, but there's also a subtle dialogue between complementary colors: oranges of the skin and blues on the sheet.





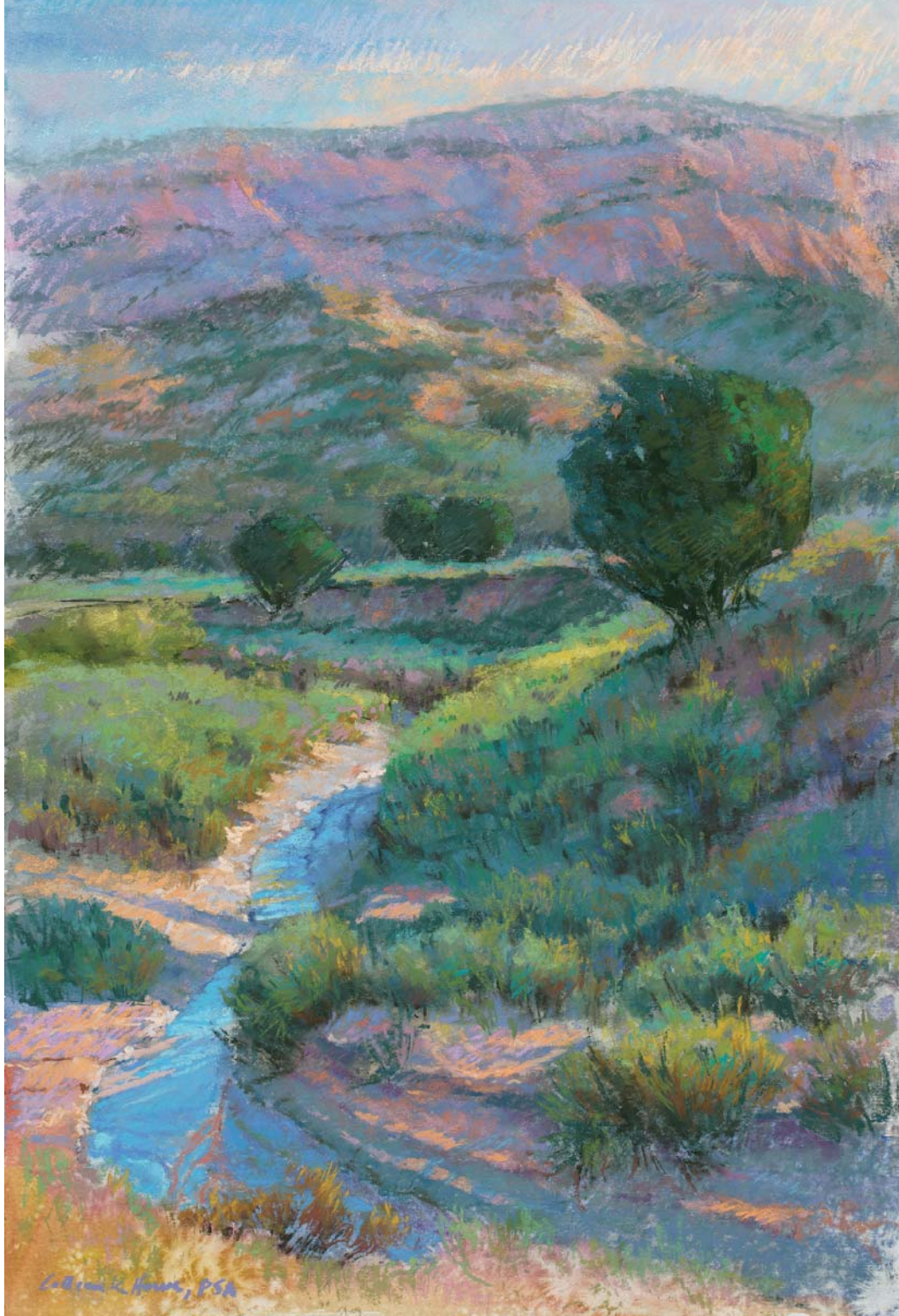
▲ **UNDER THE DESERT SUN**

Sue Gombus
Soft pastel on pastel card
20" × 30" (51cm × 76cm)

SUE GOMBUS

Outside of Africa, the most beautiful light I have ever seen is in the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. It was that light that inspired *Under the Desert Sun*. The light allowed me to create shadow and highlight, and I also wanted to capture the feeling of the heat present that day.

In the studio, I started the work with a hard pastel underpainting. Moving to soft pastels, which have the most incredible ability to render light, I worked on small sections of the painting using the photo references and sketches from the trip, as well as the prickly pear cactus pads that my husband would bring home every couple of days from a Mexican grocery.



▲ **JOHNSON'S CANYON STREAM**

Colleen K. Howe
Pastel on paper
28" × 22" (71cm × 56cm)

COLLEEN K. HOWE

The idea for *Johnson's Canyon Stream* came to me during a painting trip to southern Utah's red rock country. I took photos, made value and color studies, and then began work.

I usually begin with a light mid-value warm-violet acrylic flat wash, and then I lightly draw in the major landscape elements with vine charcoal. I use the side of a piece of pastel to block in big shapes, and then begin to use the tips to stroke color on in three or four layers. Rembrandt pastels are great to begin a painting; I finish with softer Unison pastels.

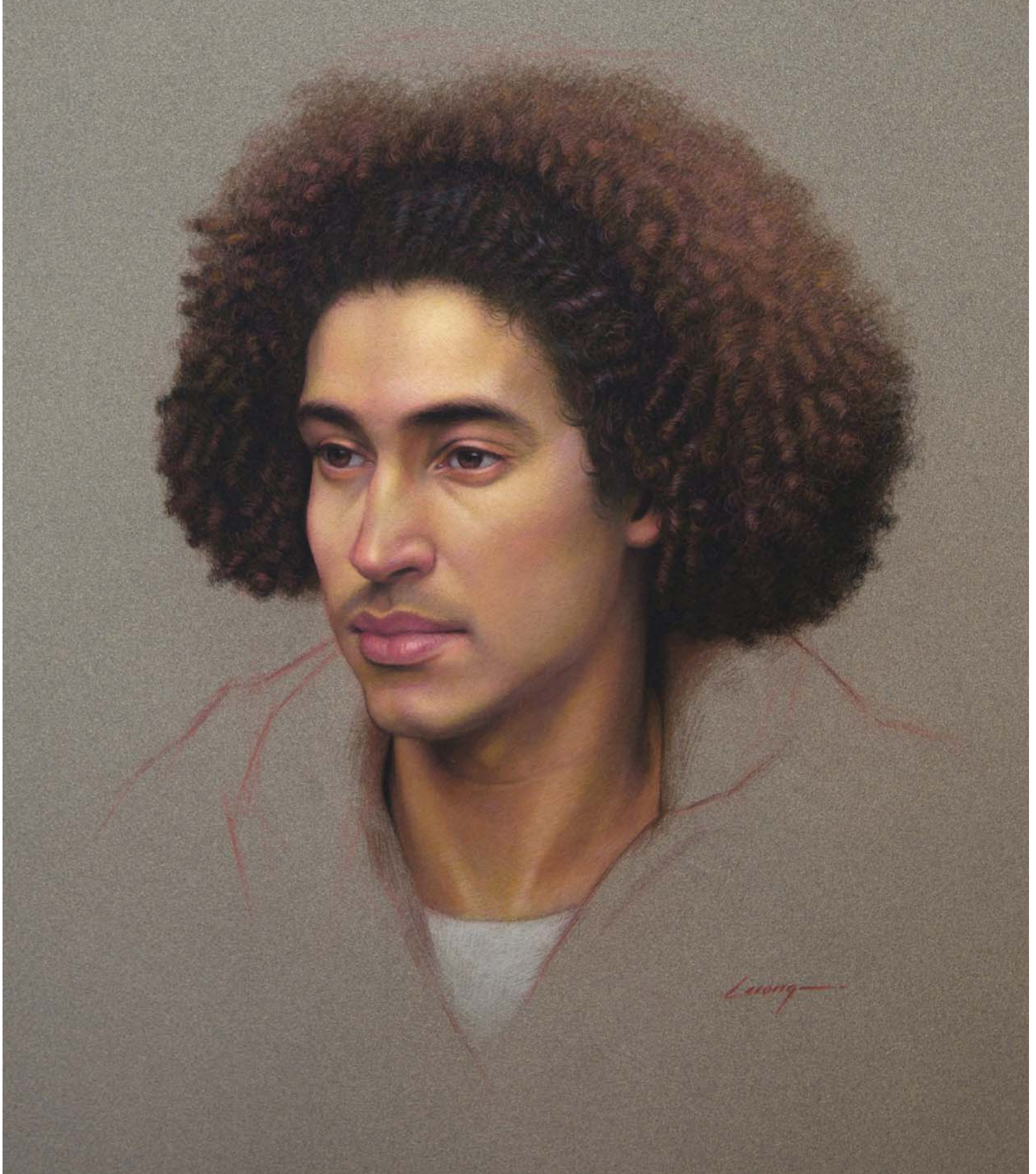


▲ **EMERALD SNOWMELT**

Elizabeth Ganji
Pastel on sanded paper
20" × 24" (51cm × 61cm)
Private collection

ELIZABETH GANJI

This piece was completed in studio from a series of photographs I shot on a family camping trip in central Oregon. I was drawn to the emerald tone of the water, the earth tones rising up from the bottom of the lake, and the reflections of the snow on the water's surface. I knew it would be challenging, but the nature of pastel helped me capture the transparency of the scene with light application and layering in specific areas.



▲ **ALEX**
Cuong Nguyen
Pastel pencil on pastel card
24" × 18" (61cm × 46cm)

CUONG NGUYEN
I was struck by Alex's unique look when he waited on me at a local restaurant, so I was glad when he agreed to be a model. To establish the skin tones, I began by applying a layer of green to my drawing. I followed this with layers of warmer colors as I continued to refine the values. The scraping of my pencil point against the existing layers when I add a new color is blending enough, and not blending allows me to achieve fine details.



▲ **ENCHANTED EVENING**

Barbara Jaenicke

Soft pastel over alcohol wash underpainting
on paper mounted to acid-free foamboard
16" × 20" (41cm × 51cm)

BARBARA JAENICKE

One of the most magical landscape scenarios for me is dramatic evening light falling across a snow scene. This particular lighting situation provides a dramatic play of warms against cools. Instead of replicating the items I see in the landscape, those items merely serve as vehicles for the capture of light and shadow patterns.

This subject worked especially well in pastel, which highlights the softness of the fine, wispy grasses and winter branches in a way that has them glisten where the light hits.



▲ **FALL RIVER**

Clive Tyler
Soft pastel on sanded pastel paper
18" x 18" (46cm x 46cm)
Private collection

CLIVE TYLER

As the evening light broke on a small river in Colorado, I was able to capture the magic of the moment through a combination of impressionism, abstraction and representation in *Fall River*. I had spent the day plein air painting and was in the right place as the light broke through the trees, creating an abstract palette of warm and cool colors that reflected on the water and resulted in the mystical charm that an unspoiled river evokes.

▼ **DEEP SHEEP**

Rita Kirkman
Pastel over acrylic-based pastel
primers on board
28" x 25" (71cm x 64cm)

RITA KIRKMAN

I love playing with words in titles. As the second in my sheep series, I already knew this would be a study in texture, color and light within a high-key value scale. As the painting progressed, the positioning and attitudes of the sheep, combined with the subtle change of temperature receding to the distance, brought this title to me as a double meaning.





▲ **AUTUMNAL FRUITS**

Leslie Lillien Levy
Soft pastel over underpainting on paper
24" x 18" (61cm x 46cm)

LESLIE LILLIEN LEVY

Every fall, the color and shape of the turban squash calls to me. I'm intuitively partial to bright colors. To prevent my paintings from screaming orange (or any killer color) at the viewer, the cognitive side of my brain intercedes. To begin this painting, I underpainted in complementary colors using soft pastels washed down with alcohol. I redrew in vine charcoal, and working with hard pastels followed by soft, I layered in local and analogous color until completion.

▶ **FLOWERED DRESS**

Sydney McGinley
Soft pastel with Conté
pencil on sanded paper
24" × 20" (61cm × 51cm)

SYDNEY MCGINLEY

Historically, it has been said that some painters are draftsmen and some are colorists. I find this division my constant struggle—I love both line and color. At times a piece strongly suggests which way it wants to go, but most often I reach a point in the process that requires a decision of me: Which theme, if any, will prevail? This piece, I think, is straddling that divide. The addition of color became essential once the strong linear elements were evident; my composition requirements as draftsman were realized. Both color and line provide balance and unity.



▲ **CASADILLA CREEK**

Jane McGraw-Teubner
Soft pastel on card
12" × 16" (30cm × 41cm)

JANE MCGRAW-TEUBNER

This painting began as a classroom pastel demonstration. The lesson was how to simplify a noisy and complicated composition by eliminating extraneous matter, taking the emphasis off objects and putting it on atmosphere and tone. I listen to my paintings, not just in what they tell me to do next, but in the music they make, especially in the later stage. By listening to the music that comes from the final image, I can tell if I've achieved the harmony, simplicity and spiritual mood that I set out to do.



▶ **DAVID**
Diane Rappisi
Soft pastel on sanded paper
24" × 16" (61cm × 41cm)

DIANE RAPPISI
I wanted to depict David just as he is: no pretense, no elaborate pose. His demeanor tells of the challenges he has faced and hints at his compassionate personality and dignity.

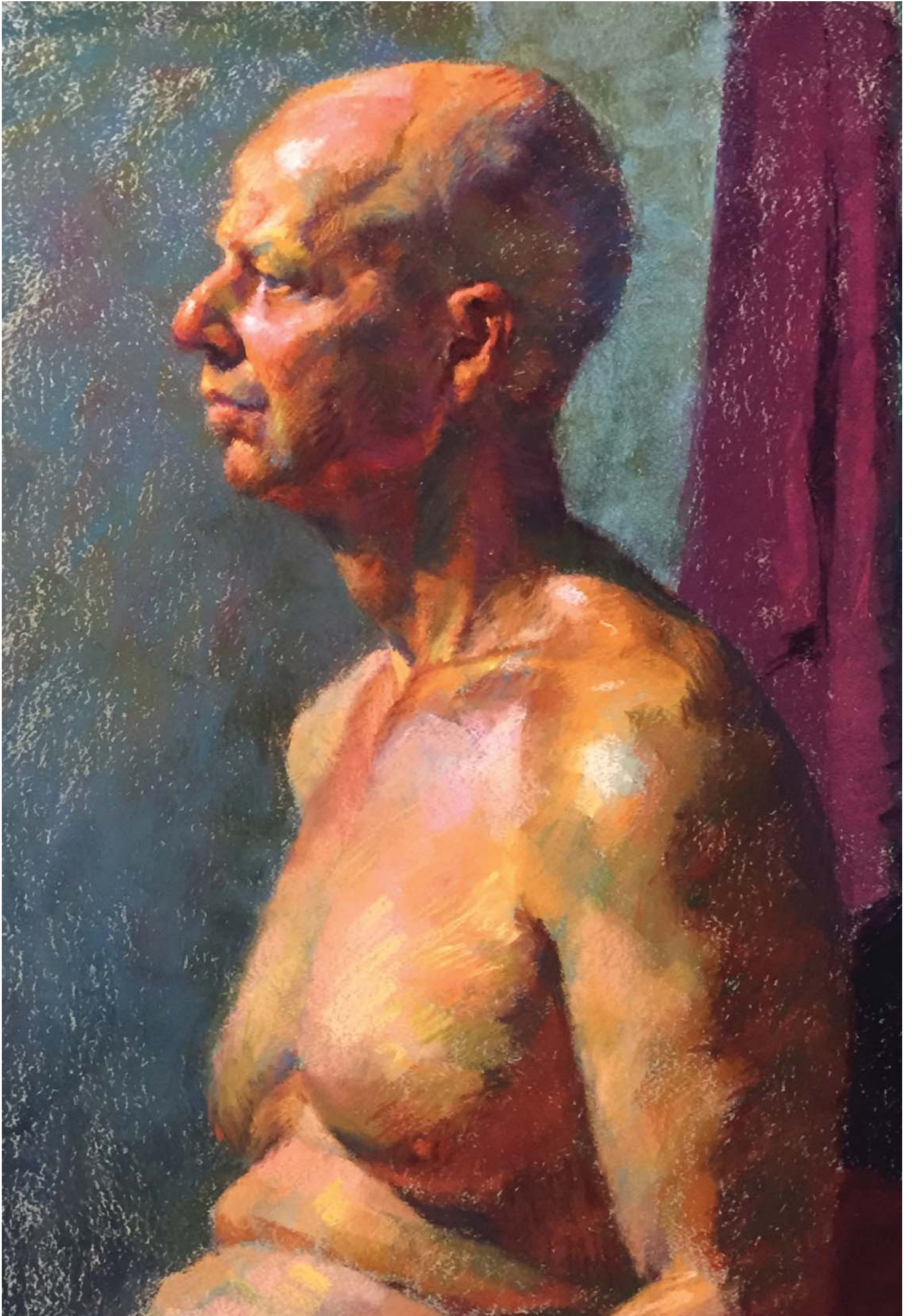
I used color to show the solidity of David's form—the warmth of the light bathes the frontal planes; the side planes go cooler before rolling into shadow. I chose not to seek a "finished" effect by blending; instead, the chunks of color tell of smaller plane changes, and the bold patches of color honor David's courage.

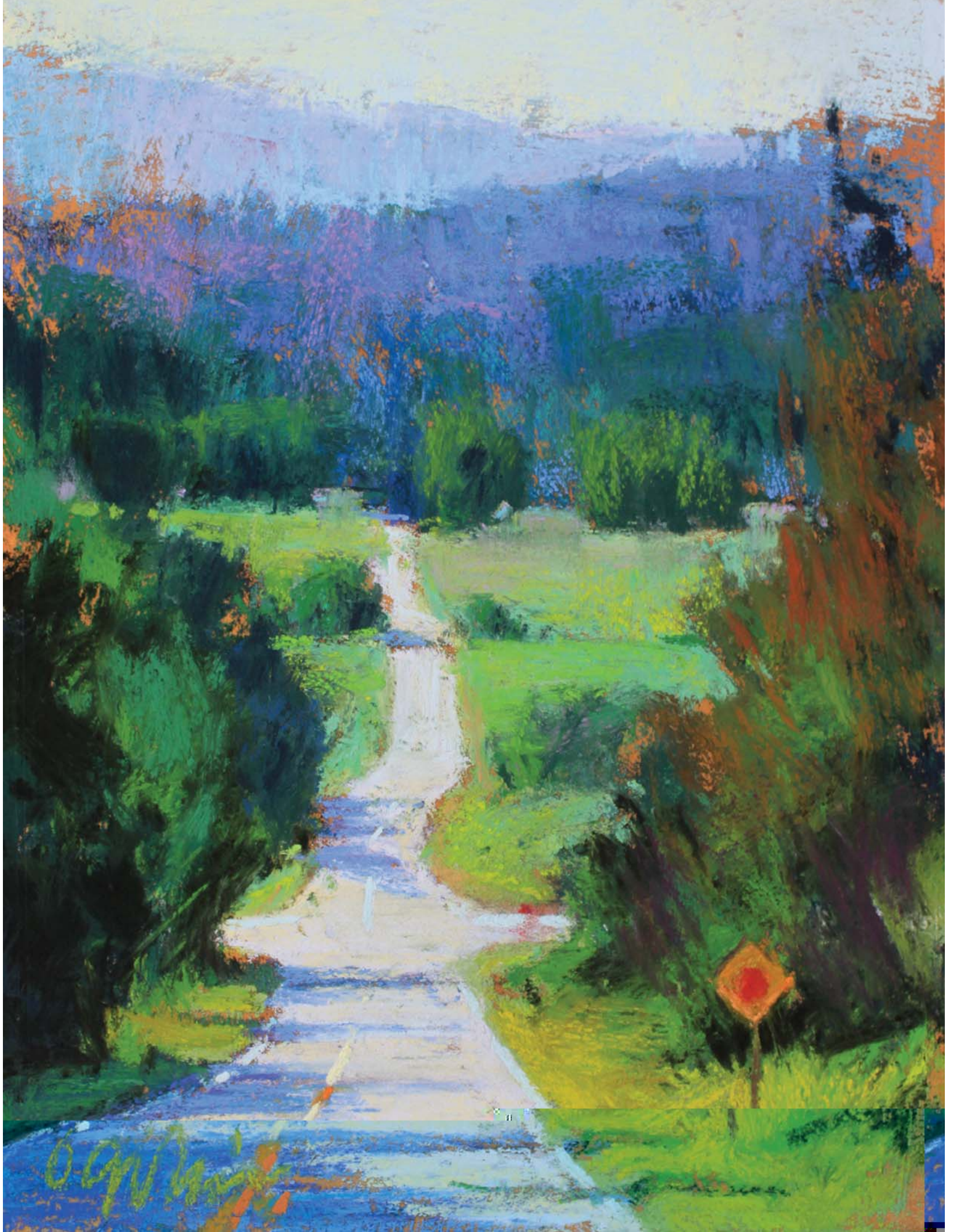


▲ **MORNING HAS BROKEN**
Nancy Nowak
Soft pastel over watercolor
underpainting on sanded paper
12" × 16" (30cm × 41cm)

NANCY NOWAK

The sun had just started to stream across the foliage, lighting the autumn leaves like a burst of fireworks. Working from a photo, I started with a very loose watercolor underpainting and massed in an interesting pattern. Light has always been my favorite subject, and I wanted to play it up by pushing the color, exaggerating that explosion of light reflecting off the fall leaves through the interplay of warms and cools and calligraphic strokes. Lightly layering cool and warm tones of the pastel, so you see the translucency and illumination underneath, adds that extra depth and richness to the painting.





◀ **HEADED HOME**

Susan Ogilvie
Soft pastel on textured
acrylic paint on panel
8" × 6" (20cm × 15cm)

SUSAN OGILVIE

Green is the dominant color most of the year on Washington state's Olympic Peninsula, so being able to create varied greens is essential. I created the feeling of natural light—and distance—in this scene by using clear sunlight and shadow in the foreground, flat sunlight in the middle distance, and hazy light on the foothills. With a small area of sky, I enhanced the hazy background by using pale pinks, yellows and blues. Some of the surface's ochre color remains visible throughout, softening edges.

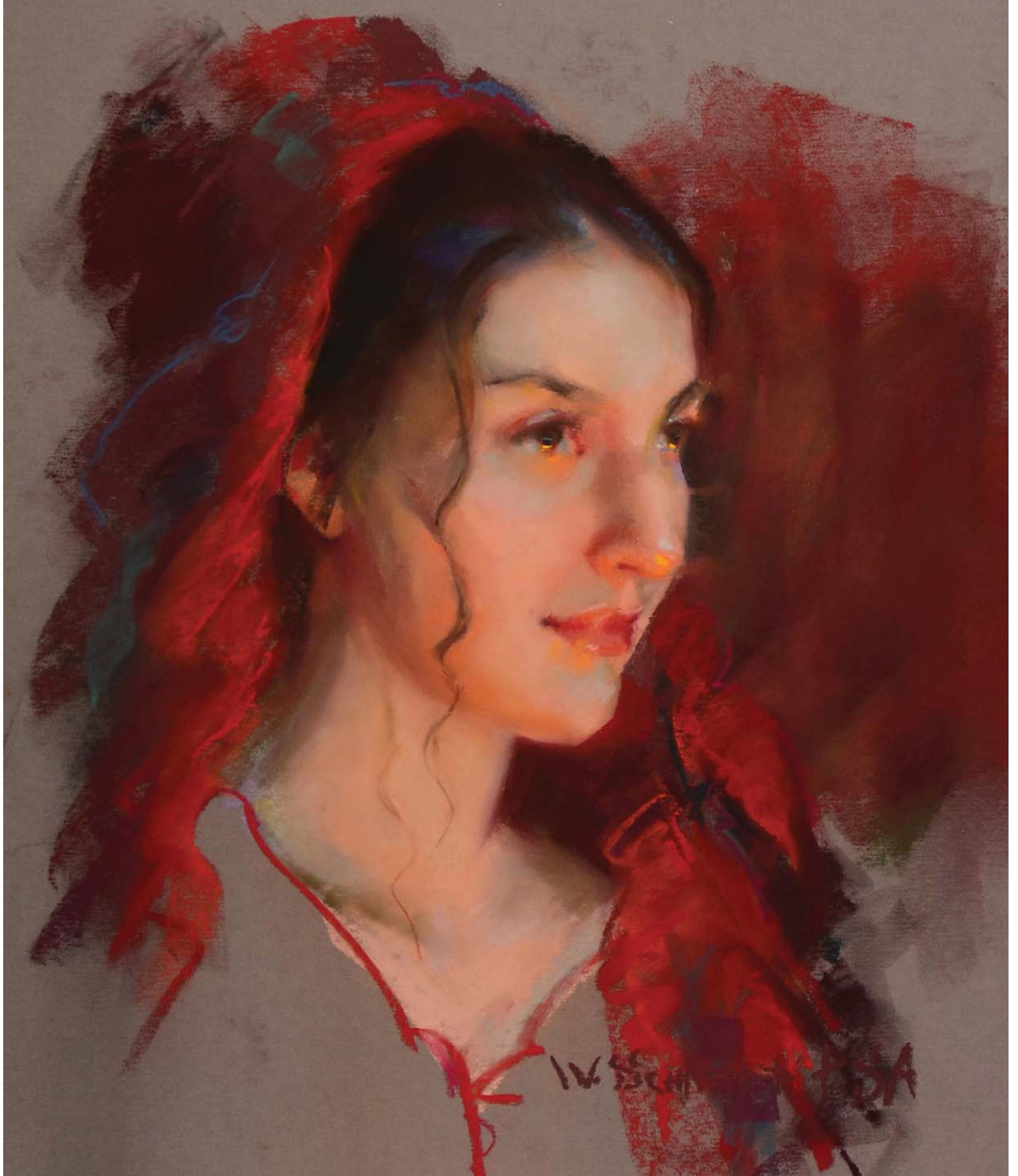


▲ **MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

Vicente Romero
Pastel on laid paper mounted on foamboard
20" × 27½" (51cm × 70cm)

VICENTE ROMERO

In this painting, I wanted to convey the joy of living on the seashore of the Mediterranean, which at times seems like a sea and at times a lake. In this morning scene, the diagonal line of sea foam and another line starting from the figure's feet reinforce the attention to the horizon. Color and light are at the essence of this scene. With the help of free strokes, I was able to express the vibrant luminosity and disorder of the sea.

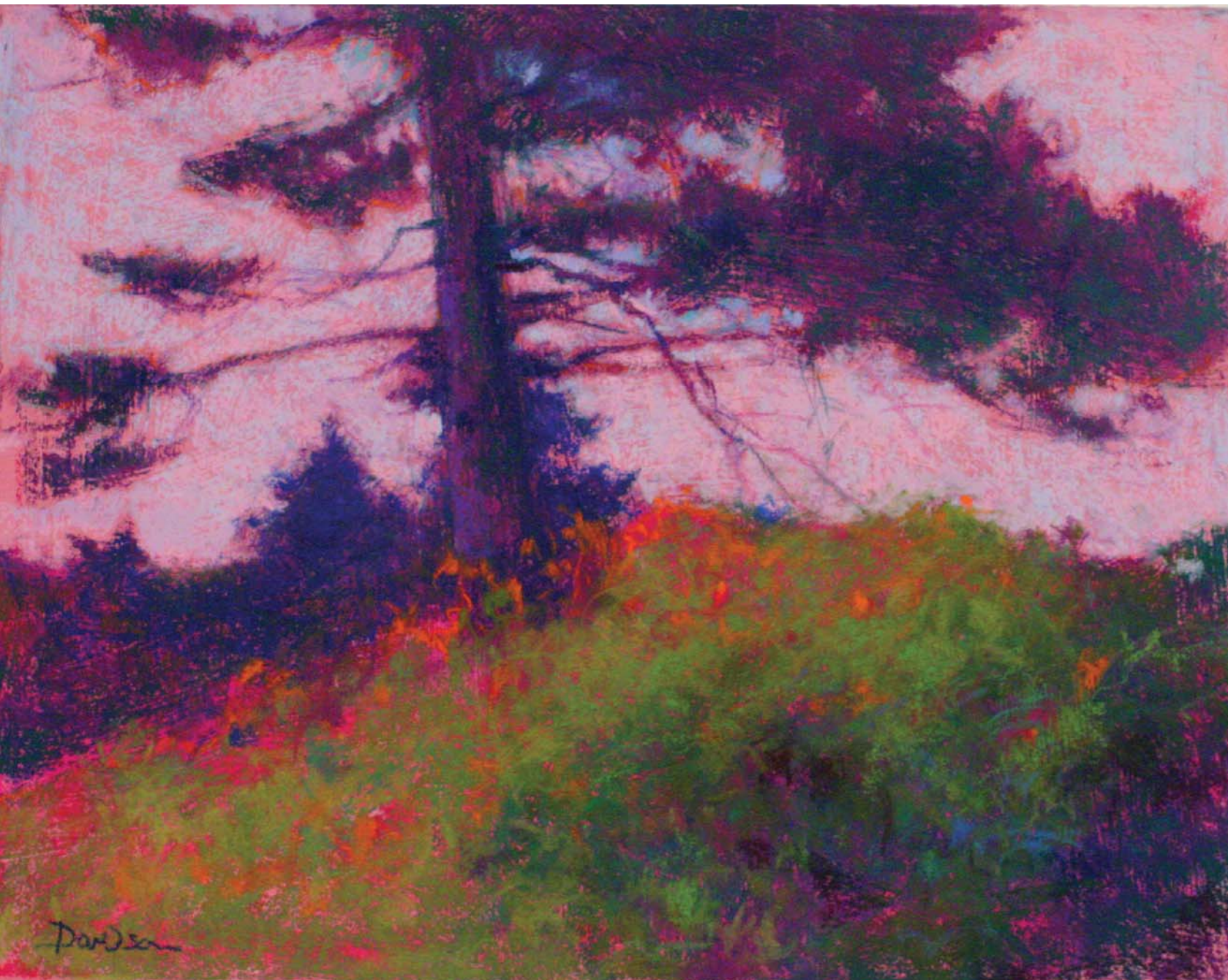


▲ **QUEEN OF HEARTS**

William A. Schneider
Soft pastel on sanded paper mounted
on archival 8-ply museum board
20" × 16" (51cm × 41cm)

WILLIAM A. SCHNEIDER

Queen of Hearts was one of those lucky few that almost paints itself. The model's beatific expression, the dominant, cool north light from above, the secondary warm light from below, and the red headdress and background created a strong emotional image. I started thinking of a line from "Desperado" by the Eagles: "Don't you draw the Queen of Diamonds, boy. She'll beat you if she's able. You know the Queen of Hearts is always your best bet."



▲ **COASTAL BREEZE**

Doug Dawson

Soft pastel over gesso pumice mixture and acrylic underpainting on etching paper

15½" x 19½" (39cm x 50cm)

Collection of the Ventana Gallery, Santa Fe, NM

DOUG DAWSON

Coastal Breeze is a painting of a tree I came upon along the Washington coast. I loved the tree's abstract asymmetrical shape and found it compelling. I was also drawn to the silhouette-like contrast of the darker tree against the light overcast sky. To push the smaller trees back in space, I exaggerated their blue color. The reds at the base of the tree are the result of not completely covering up the Alizarin Red underpainting. I added orange to intensify the effect.

▶ **SUNFLOWERS AND MORNING GLORIES**

Sarah Blumenschein
Soft pastel on paper
30" × 24" (76cm × 61cm)

SARAH BLUMENSCHN

This painting was done from a photo taken of the wildflowers at my children's school. It was late summer, and the wild sunflowers had intermingled with the purple morning glories to create a spectacular display of color. Of particular intrigue was the sunlight shining through the sunflowers and morning glories against the backdrop of an intensely blue New Mexico sky. As an artist who usually paints more traditional still lifes, this type of "organically grown" still life represents a new direction for me.



▲ **I CAN FLY**

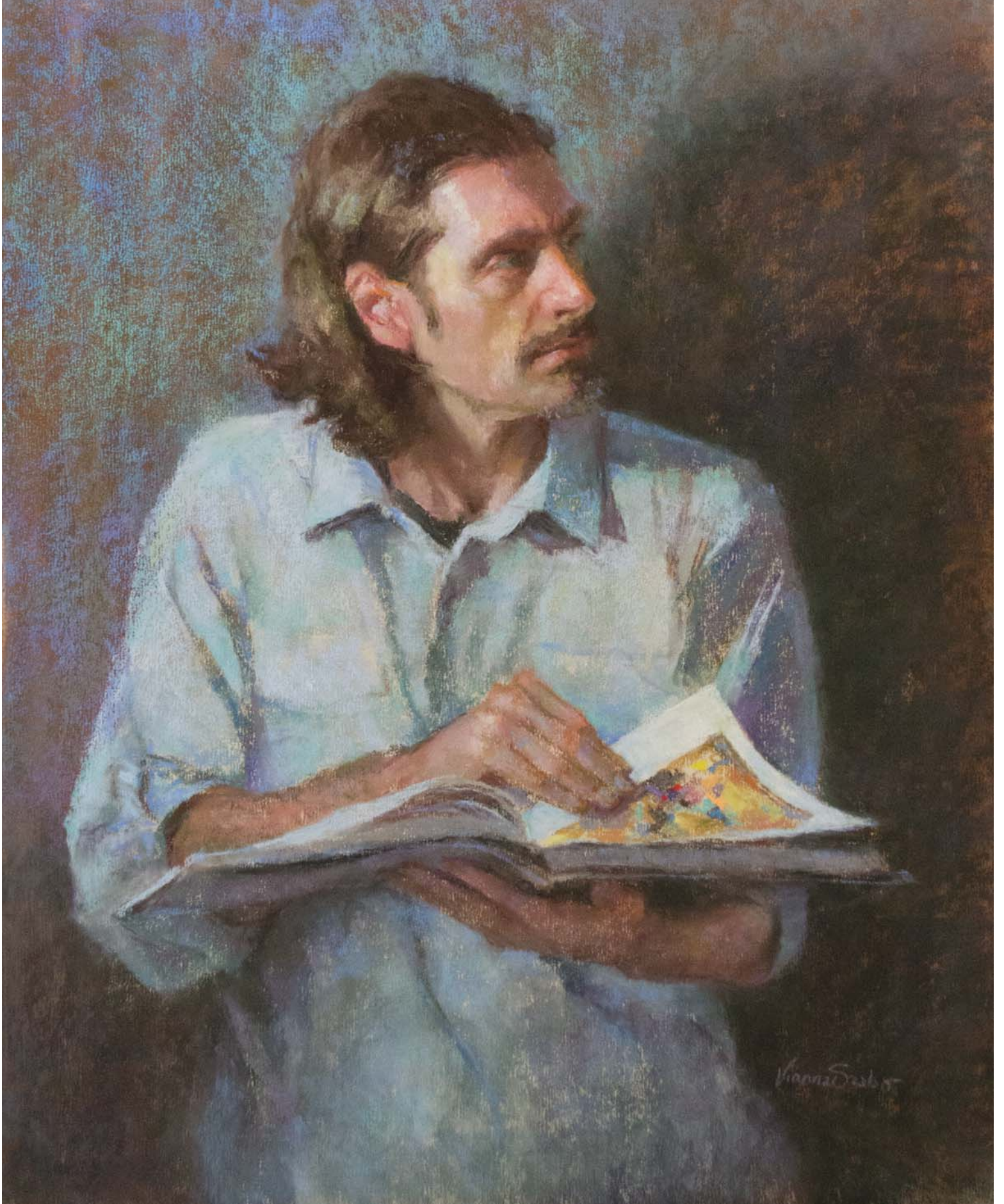
Jeanne Rosier Smith
Soft pastel on sanded paper mounted on board
18" × 36" (46cm × 91cm)

JEANNE ROSIER SMITH

For me, this piece captures the excitement of bodysurfing: that feeling of riding up and into a wave, then rushing forward, propelled by the full power of the wave. I deliberately heightened the colors and exaggerated diagonals from my reference photo to increase emotional intensity. The backlit spray and the glowing green light at the crest are the brightest and warmest points in the painting, so they heighten visual tension along the wave's breaking point. The purple-blue foam lying in subtle contrast to the dark green shadows creates a quiet but powerful sense of potency in the wave as it sweeps into the crest.



S. BLUMENSCHEN



▲ **PAUSE**
Vianna Szabo
Pastel on paper
20" x 16" (51cm x 41cm)

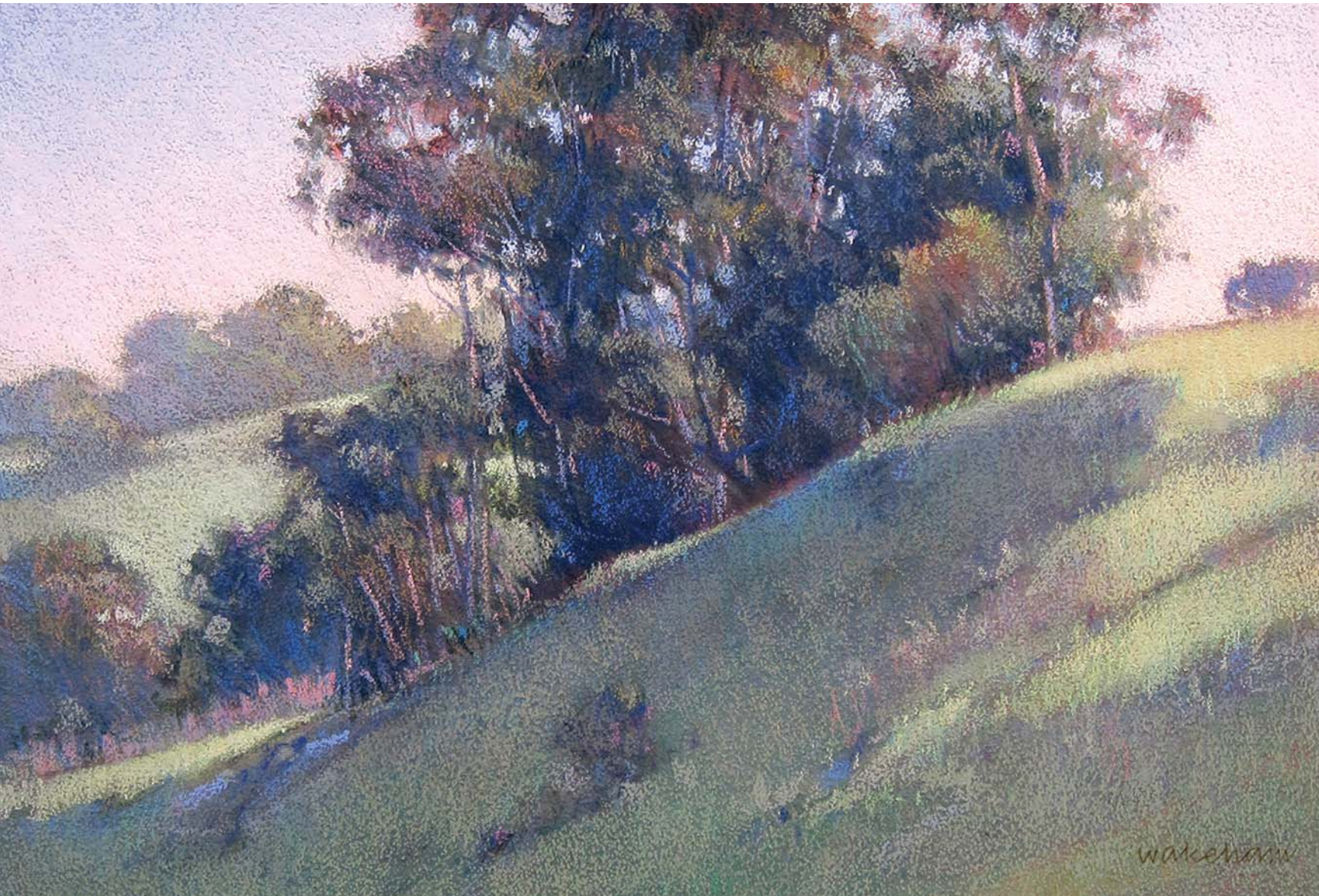
VIANNA SZABO

I worked from a photograph to create *Pause*, using color complements of blue and orange to mimic the effect of cool light and warm shadow. After drawing the figure, I began with the background by applying broad strokes of Burnt Sienna. I then brushed paint thinner over the surface to create a transparent wash. When it dried, I lightly glazed a blue of the same value on top, letting the warm wash show through. This formed a "nest" of middle value color to surround the subject. Then I began to construct the figure by comparing color values to the background. I chose cool tones for any part hit by light and warm tones in the shadows.

▼ **SPRING HILLSIDE, PETALUMA**
Duane Wakeham
Soft pastel over gesso and pumice
on 300-lb. (640gsm) paper
19" × 29" (48cm × 74cm)
Collection of Alyce Toonk

DUANE WAKEHAM

Landscape paintings are inevitably about space, the depiction of which depends upon the manipulation of color in all of its many dimensions: hue, value, intensity, temperature. For me, color and composition are the most challenging and interesting part of painting. Creating luminous color that holds its place in space depends not on selecting the right color but on layering different colors—similar in value and intensity—to produce color that conveys a convincing sense of three-dimensional space.



“ Though we are often taught not to take photos directly into the sun, I have found a strong backlit silhouette provides wonderful opportunities for describing colorful bright and dark compositions. ”

— KATHLEEN NEWMAN



▲ **INTO THE SUN**

Kathleen Newman
NuPastel and soft pastel
on sanded paper
12" × 16" (30cm × 41cm)
Private collection

KATHLEEN NEWMAN

As a sailor, I spend a lot of time on the water in Chicago's Monroe Harbor looking west toward the city and its spectacular sunset view. My goal with this painting was to create a strong abstract composition with subtle color effects as the sun drops behind the buildings and the last rim of light disappears.

I began the underpainting on sanded paper using NuPastels to lay in a cool dark/warm light composition, which I liquefied with mineral spirits to tone the background. I used a combination of soft pastels to slowly build up color detail layer by layer. A final glazing of warm, bright NuPastels added the atmospheric effect of sun flare moving across the cool, dark skyline silhouette.



▲ **GIFT OF FALL**

Clive Tyler
Soft pastel on sanded pastel paper
27" x 33" (69cm x 84cm)
Private collection

CLIVE TYLER

Gift of Fall is part of my fall series of aspens, all inspired by days of plein air painting in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. When I came across this scene, the sun was setting in a diagonal direction and lighting a wealth of subject matter, which set a wonderful mood that represented nature at its finest. Using a combination of impressionism and some abstract techniques, this painting conveys the emotional and spiritual qualities that I strive for. To top it off, I was honored that six mule deer walked gently through, allowing me to watch and be a part of their world.

2

Composition + Design

“Composition,” said Henri Matisse, “is the art of arranging in a decorative manner the diverse elements at the painter’s command to express his feelings.” To create a dynamic composition then—one that catches and holds a viewer’s attention—artists must consider the visual elements of art: line, shape, color, value, texture, form and space. Not only that, they must also use these elements strategically to convey intent. Like a musical composer arranging melody and rhythm, or a gourmet chef bringing order to an array of ingredients, an artist must organize various visual elements to create an effective whole.

At the start of the design process, for example, a painter might ask: Does the scene before me stir feelings of awe and excitement—or loneliness and isolation? Where do I want to put emphasis? How do I want a viewer’s eye to travel through the painting? Whatever the answers, the artist will make design choices accordingly. In the following selections of pastels, you’ll see how painters have used overlapping shapes, repetitive colors, contrasting patterns, varying areas of texture, sweeping marks and directional lines to create a sense of movement and rhythm in their compositions, and—most importantly—how, by doing so, they have conveyed the excitement they feel for their subjects.

▶ GROS VENTRE MOONRISE

Aaron Schuerr
Soft pastel on paper
18" × 24" (46cm × 61cm)

AARON SCHUERR

The basis of this painting was two plein air oils that I did back in 2012. In the first, I focused on the arrangement of the cottonwoods. In the second, I tried to capture the color as the alpenglow intensified and quickly faded. Recently, while going through stacks of old studies, these two caught my attention, so I brought them with me to a workshop that I was teaching. With the input of the class, I played around with different compositional possibilities, emphasizing how scale and distance affect the mood conveyed. Finally, I worked up a charcoal drawing, adding a full moon on a whim at the last moment. It was just what it needed! Back in my studio, I dove right in, applying layer after layer of pastel to achieve the luminosity of my imagined mountain moonrise.





“ I tend to choose a single word to describe the intent of each painting. This word can help guide me through choices from composition to format to color palette. ”

— LYN ASSELTA



▲ **EXHALATION**

Lyn Asselta

Soft pastel on sanded paper
14" × 18" (36cm × 46cm)

LYN ASSELTA

For *Exhalation*, a studio piece, my intent was to combine expressive color and composition to portray the drama of the expanding, upward-lifting cloud that serves as its focal point. I pushed large, chunky marks of soft pastel in the horizontal direction of the ground plane and in multidirectional sweeping marks to depict the moving, shifting buildup of the cloud. The standard rectangular format helps the painting feel classic, but the choice of colors and the extra-large mass of cloud, slightly to the right of center, keep the eye focused on the expansion of the cloud and create a more contemporary, somewhat abstract design.



▲ **MASQUERADE**

Roberta Combs
Soft pastel on pastel card
18" x 24" (46cm x 61cm)

ROBERTA COMBS

Artists often are drawn to choose a complicated image to paint, but during the planning stage, they eliminate and simplify the very essence that originally enticed them to choose the subject. In this image, the clear white face stood out only because of all the detail and sparkle that dominated the space. I was excited by the challenge it presented. Pastel is perfect to create drama, jewel tones and bright glints of light on a detailed painting like this. I found that the beads, bells and busy patterns created a visual path that guided the viewer smoothly through the picture.

▼ **ROBIN**

Wende Caporale
Pastel on sanded board
24" × 36" (61cm × 91cm)

WENDE CAPORALE

Children are naturally animated and not particularly conscious of how the artist will represent them. This enables me to capture candid, playful moments that can yield exciting compositions. For my painting *Robin*, I was inspired by an image of two children reading by Maxfield Parrish. I wanted to re-create the composition with a single child against a decorative background. My neighbor's four-year-old daughter, Robin, agreed to pose. I was pleased when I saw the rug in the playroom, with the playful circles in analogous shades of blue, which mirrored the child's palette.





▲ **WHITE EGGS**
Janet Monafo
Pastel on paper
36½" × 35" (93cm × 89cm)

JANET MONAFO

White Eggs was done on paper that has a relatively smooth surface but still holds many layers of pastel. In fact, I always tone white or light paper with ground pastel to a middle-value neutral. For this piece, I used many different brands of soft pastel to get the range of color I needed. All of my still life pieces, including this one, are done from direct observation in natural light. This particular still life setup began with the dark octagonal table and evolved gradually from there.

▼ **DAWN ON THE FELLS**

Cheryl Culver

Soft pastel over acrylic ground for pastels and diluted acrylic underpainting on mount board
28" x 28" (71cm x 71cm)

CHERYL CULVER

This painting has a very special memory, as it was the last time that my English setter Lottie was able to manage such a long walk. New recruit Baxter is now Painter's Mate in training. My on-site drawings are very precious to me, and I don't sell them or give them away. They're like a visual diary, and I can remember each experience quite clearly. The drawings are crosshatched and defined, and the result is a powerful image that has a structure and clarity showing the natural rhythms and patterns in the landscape.





▲ **PLOVERS OVER THE GULF**

Cindy House
Soft pastel on sanded paper
19" × 25" (48cm × 64cm)

CINDY HOUSE

When attracted by a landscape, I look for a composition that will best convey my excitement for the subject. For *Plovers over the Gulf*, the immense sparkling waters of the gulf needed to hold center stage with the flying birds adding life to the scene. In the studio, using reference photographs, I placed the horizon as high as possible to include the intricate patterns of water and glinting light. I placed the birds low to capture the viewer's eye, with the waves and highlights drawing the eye upward and over the water.

“ To create distance, use one-point perspective, color changes (from warm in the foreground to cool in the distance) and texture (broken mark-making in the foreground and smoother in the distance). ”

— LORENZO CHAVEZ



▲ **THE MASTER'S BOUQUET**
Lorenzo Chavez
Pastel on moonstone paper
20" × 24" (51cm × 61cm)
Private collection

LORENZO CHAVEZ

I can't resist traveling down old dirt roads in search of subject matter. So, for this particular painting, my composition was based on the idea of a journey. I love to design works that lead the viewer into the scene. The foreground shapes lead to a place in the composition just off center to the left, which is a classic "radiating line" design.

To create this studio pastel, I used field studies and several photo references. While I was painting and listening to the radio, the classical symphony "The Master's Bouquet" played, and I knew immediately it was the right title for this work.

▼ **THE STUDENT**

Gerald Boyd

Hard and soft pastel over an underpainting of pastel set with denatured alcohol on sanded paper

16" × 16" (41cm × 41cm)

GERALD BOYD

I conducted an introductory pastel class for some children at a nearby school. I wanted the children to experience good materials, and so I dipped into an old set of Rembrandt pastels for workable pieces and supplied them with small sheets of both Canson and Wallis sanded paper. Sierra, with her braids and freckles, reminded me so much of a Norman Rockwell model I just had to paint her. I was conflicted about including the hand and arm coming in from the right, but I wanted to convey a busy classroom setting.





▲ **MARIA'S PEDICURE**
Margaret Dyer
Soft pastel on pastel card
15" x 12" (38cm x 30cm)

MARGARET DYER

In a figurative workshop in France, we set up a boudoir in the studio, trying to capture the mood of a Degas painting. Of the countless photos I took, I was drawn to this image with its slightly unusual aerial view, the contrasting patterns in the fabrics, and the repetitious angles of the model and furniture. I cropped the image closely to create a sense of intimacy.



▲ **ARS LONGA, VITA BREVIS**

Ray Hassard
Soft pastel on gray pastel board
18" x 18" (46cm x 46cm)

RAY HASSARD

"Ars longa, vita brevis" is the Latin translation of an aphorism, originally Greek, meaning "Art is long, life is short." With that thought, I knew I wanted the living people to be obscured and the ancient ones clearly seen. The design is based on an arabesque, beginning on the right edge and following the arc of dark accents from the top of the vase through the central figure to the two black vases in the showcase. From there it circles up and around the relief of two figures and back to the central figure.



▲ **TIGER HILL CANAL SCENE IN SUZHOU, CHINA**

Alan Flattmann

Soft pastel on hand-prepared pumice board

22" x 32" (56cm x 81cm)

Courtesy of Ming Gallery of Art, Suzhou, China

ALAN FLATTMANN

My aim for this painting was to depict the serenity and beauty of the almost monotone scene of old Suzhou with the modern city in the distance. The composition pulls the viewer's eye into the picture with simple one-point perspective and asymmetrical design. The large buildings in light on the right are counterbalanced by the smaller group of buildings and walkway in shadow on the left. The boat in the foreground serves as a strong focal point or center of interest because of its location, movement and dramatic value contrast.

▼ **ELKHORN QUIET**

Dug Waggoner
Soft pastel over a mix of gesso, fine
pumice gel and acrylic on board
17" x 22" (43cm x 56cm)

DUG WAGGONER

The shape of a group of eucalyptus trees cascading down a hillside gave me the inspiration for this painting. This design element was my focal point to hold the image together, but it needed to have an air of transparency so the background could be seen through the branches and sky holes. I used directional lines, textures, overlapping and converging shapes, and the play of light to move the eye throughout the composition. The water element was created to add more dimension and perspective, and to bring a reflective aspect for the sky and landscape colors.



▶ **KEITH'S LADDERS, NUMBER 2**

Helen Kleczynski
Soft pastel on paper
32" × 24" (81cm × 61cm)

HELEN KLECZYNSKI

Rising majestically from the earth, this timber-framed Michigan barn was built six generations ago on land given as payment for fighting in the Civil War. I created a spiral movement through the painting, beginning at the lower left and ending at the window. Diagonal lines create energy and movement throughout the image, which has a warm glow emanating from the green fiberglass window. I used the characteristics of different grades and shapes of soft pastels to capture the texture and marks in the hand-hewn wood.



▲ **STORM CLOUDS AT SUNSET**

Liz Haywood-Sullivan
Soft pastel on sanded paper mounted on board
20" × 40" (51cm × 102cm)

LIZ HAYWOOD-SULLIVAN

I've been fascinated by the marsh paintings of Martin Johnson Heade, who painted 140 years ago in the same area where I currently live. This painting was done for my gallery—Vose Galleries—who represented Heade, to celebrate its 175 years in business. I researched a location Heade painted and returned to it to create this painting. The painting proportion is 1:2, with one-third of the composition land and the rest focusing on a dramatic sky, including a small area of blue sky in the upper right. These are all design devices used by Heade in his marsh paintings.





▲ **STORM GATHERING**

Clark Mitchell

Soft pastel on buff-colored sanded paper

24" × 42" (61cm × 107cm)

CLARK MITCHELL

Storm Gathering is a studio painting done on velvety smooth sanded paper that allowed for creamy blending in the sky, which I contrasted with the rougher texture of the brooding clouds and the near hills and fields.

The composition has a relaxing horizontal plane in the foreground, receding back over the hay bales to a strong set of opposing angles in the hills and clouds above. All this is pulled together with the verticals of the blazing autumn poplars. I find the thin line of trail coming down the hills from the right exciting, contrasting with the dark and heavy patterning of the oaks spilling down from the left.



▲ **LAST STOP**

Bev Lee
Soft pastel over watercolor
underpainting on sanded paper
21½" × 16" (55cm × 41cm)

BEV LEE

I'm a shameless people watcher. This woman caught my attention as she quietly sat waiting for a bus at the end of the day, contrasted with people bustling past. I used a soft brush to lay in a red-orange watercolor underpainting to help show the time of day. I used the golden mean, placing the focal point at the lower edge of the upper right section. I placed a secondary point of interest at the upper right with an accent in the middle lower section, creating a triangle.



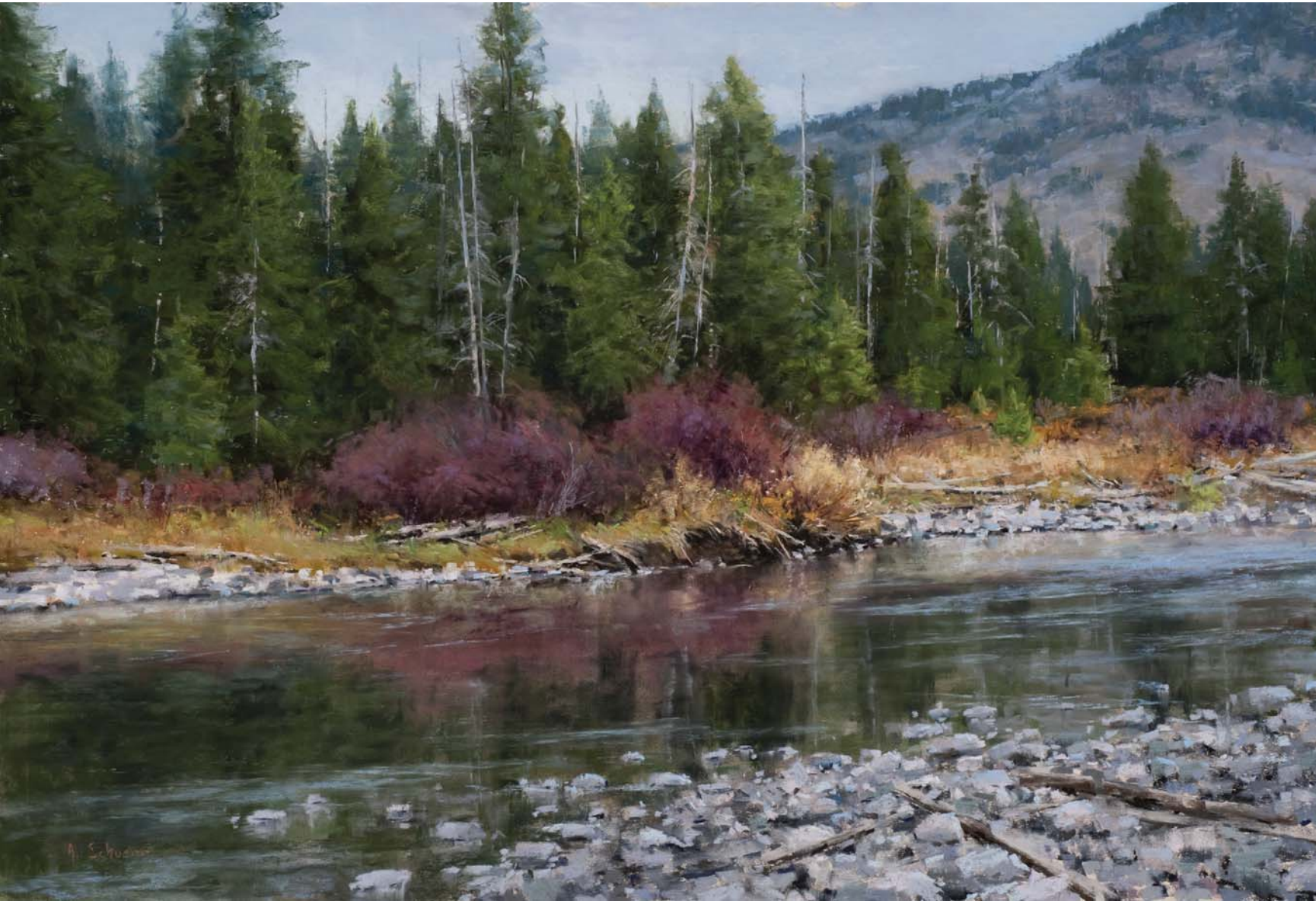
◀ **LIVING WATERS**

Denise LaRue Mahlke

Soft pastel over watercolor underpainting
on sanded pastel paper mounted on board
30" × 24" (76cm × 61cm)

DENISE LARUE MAHLKE

This painting started with my strong desire to paint a close, intimate view of water. I finished the original piece, titled *Crystal Clear*, for a gallery show, feeling I had accomplished some of what I was trying to do. The painting eventually came back to my studio, where it sat on an easel for months. I knew it needed something. With careful thought and planning, I manipulated the design, making it more defined, unifying value, deepening color and adding more movement to the water. Now a stronger painting, this renewed version needed a new title—*Living Waters*.



▲ **COLD CREEK JUNCTION**

Aaron Schuerr

Soft pastel on sanded paper
20" × 30" (51cm × 76cm)

AARON SCHUERR

To sit along the shore of the Lamar River at Cold Creek Junction is to contemplate the remote heart of Yellowstone National Park. I spent a chilly October morning painting a small watercolor while keeping a wary eye out for grizzly bears. Back in the studio, I worked up a charcoal preparatory drawing, making modest changes to the placement of the willow bushes and dead snags. My goals were to contrast the punctuated rhythm of trees, snags and rocks with the slow languid river current, and to play the violet of the willows against the deep green of the lodgepole pines. Beyond aesthetic concerns, I hoped to tap into that sense of untamed wild that I felt while sitting at that remote shore.



▲ **THE RED TABLE**

Janet Monafo
Pastel on 300-lb. (640gsm) paper
51" x 40" (130cm x 102cm)

JANET MONAFO

The Red Table was done with many different brands of soft pastels on paper that was coated with Golden acrylic ground and toned with ground pastel to neutral gray. The painting was done directly from the setup, using natural light from the north-facing windows in my studio. The color and the surface of the intricately patterned drapery were of interest to me, and I thought this particular paper was ideal for representing it.



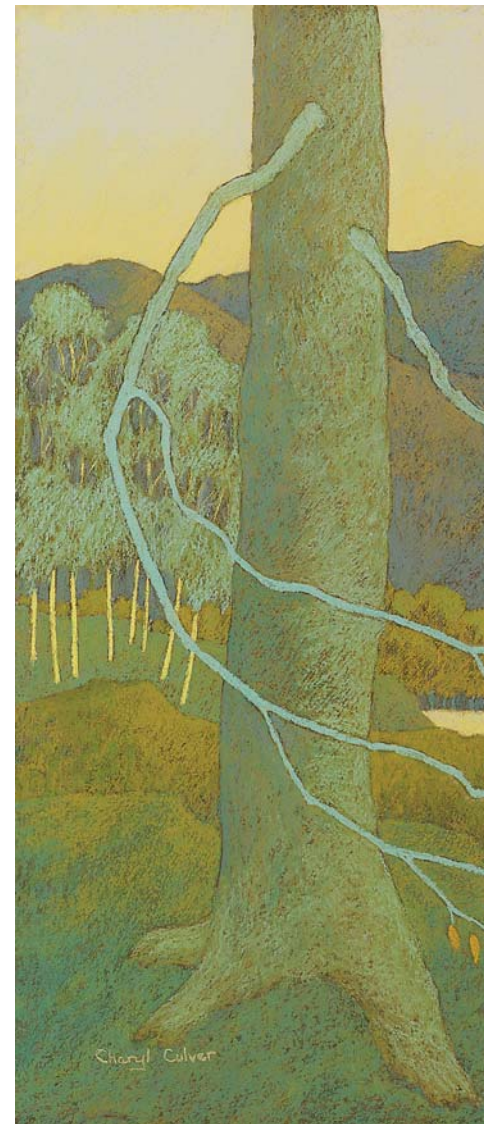
▲ **DUCK LANDING**

Dug Waggoner

Soft pastel over a mix of gesso, fine
pumice gel and acrylic on board
17" × 22" (43cm × 56cm)

DUG WAGGONER

Many times while driving, my peripheral view will pick up an image that gives me "visual whiplash." In this case, across the farmland, a corn harvester had made its final run, leaving tracks among the short stalks and rendering a dramatic design element. A recent rain filled the tracks, reflecting the sky colors and complementing the warm earth tones. The group of trees on the right side gave me an ample playground for colors. In the background, I moved Mount Diablo into position along with a horizontal line of soft tree shapes. Adding the shaft of light through the trees, which highlighted the edges and tips, created another design element. The final touch was to add the bent-over tips of the weeds in the foreground.



▲ **THE SHAPE OF COLOR**

Arlene Richman

Soft pastel over acrylic ground for pastels and an underpainting of harder pastel and alcohol on paper
20" × 20" (51cm × 51cm)

ARLENE RICHMAN

The Shape of Color posed questions of color choice and harmony, balance of color and line, and space considerations. In this painting, I knew that unconventional color juxtapositions were necessary to carry an otherwise staid composition and that neutrals would be necessary to make the colors pop. In this case, even the neutrals are unusual. The lines and marks accent the composition and give it a more literary presence.

I choose to work in pastel because the speed of picking up the right stick and applying the pigment helps to make each painting a truer snapshot of my mood and emotion in the moment.



▲ **BEYOND THE TREES THE LAKE WAS STILL**

Cheryl Culver

Soft pastel over acrylic ground for pastels and diluted acrylic underpainting on mount board
20" × 40" (51cm × 102cm)

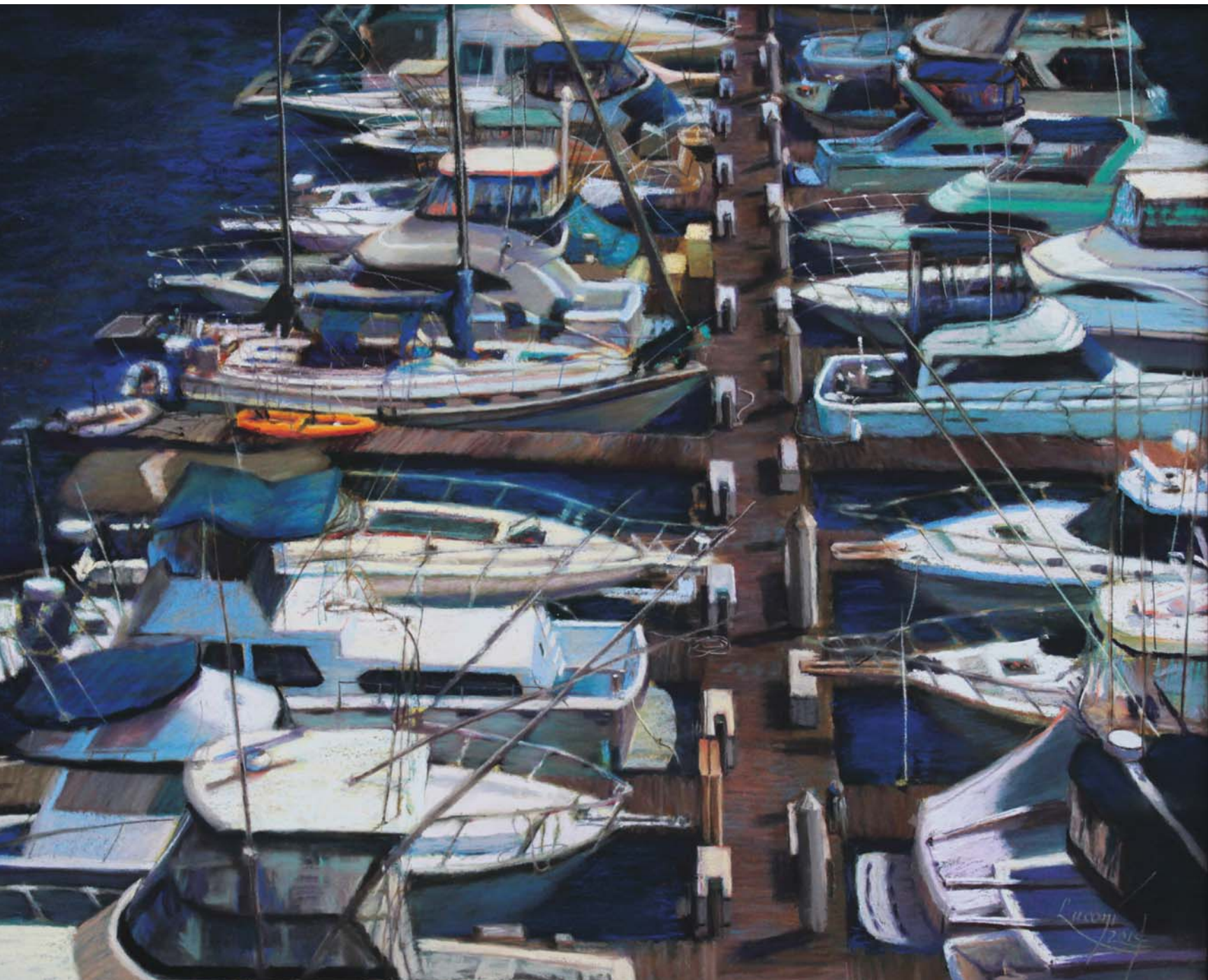
CHERYL CULVER

Early mornings are the best time. I have the world to myself in my favorite part of the United Kingdom—the Lake District, Cumbria. What could be better?

I begin each work with a sketchbook and a marker pen in the company of my English setter, Lottie. Using a pen encourages a "first strike" method of sketching; it also acts as an initial editing of the image by a selective process of simplification. I look for the natural rhythms and patterns in the landscape.

“ Boost your lights with a technique taken from traditional classical oil painting: Use an underpainting of very light or white pastel with liquid fixative on your medium-toned ground at the very place you demand the lightest light to shine out in the painting. Build over the immediately dry area with soft and hard pastels in various tints to sculpt the shape further. ”

— LUANA LUCONI WINNER



▲ **DOCK SERIES: ORANGE DINGHY**

Luana Luconi Winner
Soft and hard pastel on pastel board
16" × 20" (41cm × 51cm)

LUANA LUCONI WINNER

An abstracted approach to painting a daily object or view adds enormously to the appeal. In San Diego's Mission Bay Marina, miles of yachts were moored. From a sixth floor balcony, I sketched at different times of day to determine the best lighting. Midday was stunning, with clear contrasts of the brilliant white yachts against the rich, dark water. The overlap of each deck to the next bow melded the complicated white-on-white forms. By intersecting the warm wooded docks through the puzzle of extreme light on dark, I delivered the design movement I sought.

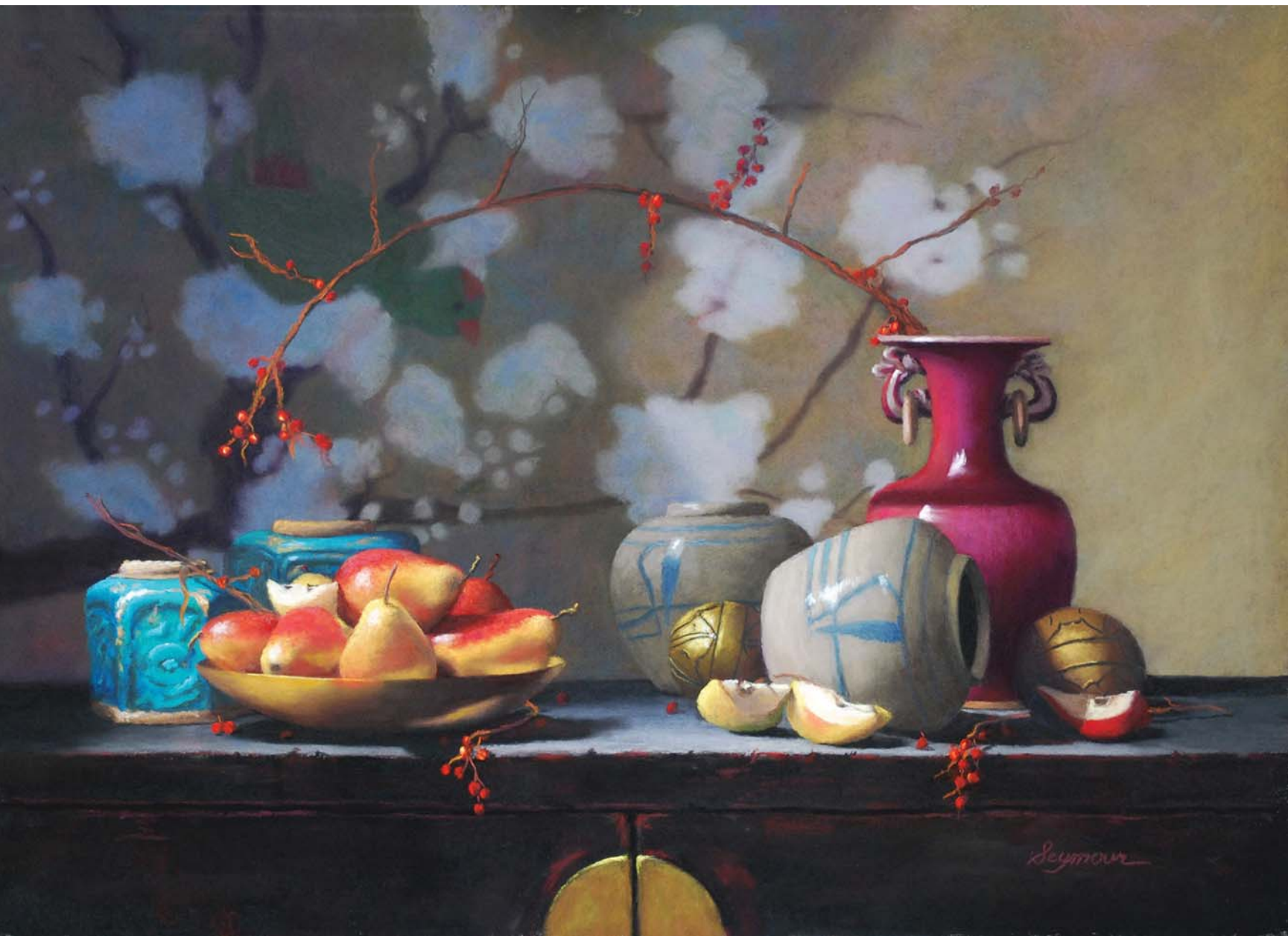
▼ **THE CHEF**

Margaret Dyer
Soft pastel on pastel board
15" x 12" (38cm x 30cm)

MARGARET DYER

After a long day in the studio in my Florence, Italy, workshop, we took an evening cooking class. As my artist buddies and I worked frenetically, I stole away to shoot the scene whenever possible. I strove to capture the busyness and brightness of the room. I painted the scene with a minimal palette because there was so much going on. The warmest thing? The chef. In the midst of the cacophony and visual noise, I tried to find an intimate, warm, candid moment.





▲ **BITTERSWEET WITH PAIRS**

Claudia Seymour
Soft pastel on sanded paper
15½" × 21½" (39cm × 55cm)

CLAUDIA SEYMOUR

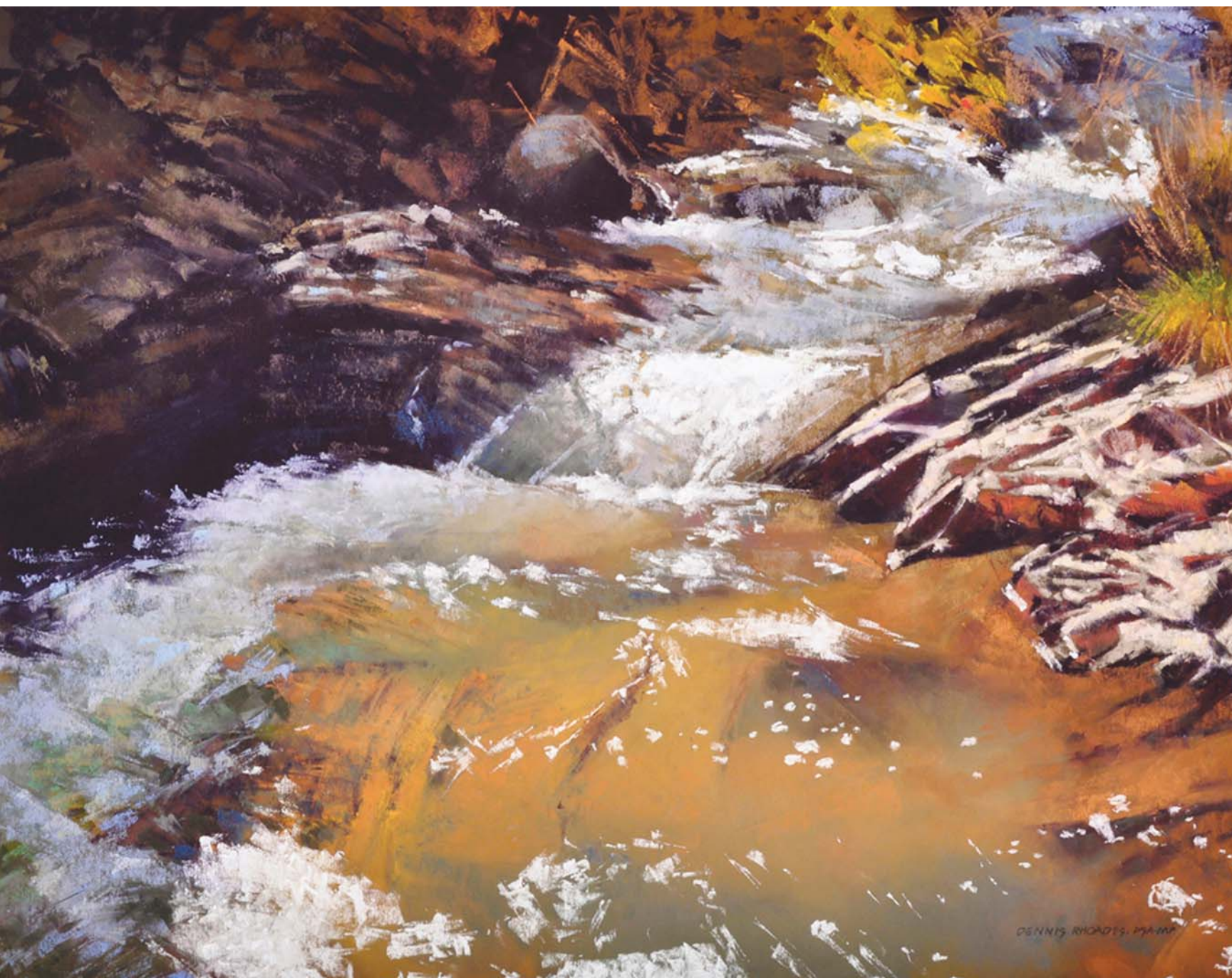
For *Bittersweet*, I wanted to create an elegant scene with an Asian theme and feel. I chose the tall oxblood vase, as it beautifully echoed the rich reds of the pears and provided necessary height. To use the play on words of *pairs* and *pears*, I chose three pairs: two old Asian aqua pots, two gilded Indian wood balls and another pair of larger neutral but rustic vessels to provide heft. The unifying elements were the screen with the green bird, to complement the reds of the vase and pears, and the bittersweet branch arching overall. The soft edges of the blossoms in the background offset the sharper contours of the articles in front, and the scattered berries provide "eye candy" to lead the viewer's eye through the scene.

▼ **SPRING RUNOFF**
Dennis Rhoades
Soft pastel on paper
22" x 28" (56cm x 71cm)

DENNIS RHOADES

Sometimes I enjoy zooming in on a scene, like this one, instead of doing a vista. Vistas open up a grand scale. But by moving closer, the painting is like a novel condensed onto a single page. Nothing is lost to the larger scale.

This scene gave me everything I look for in my work—composition, shapes, lights and darks, rhythm and harmony. This is a studio painting I did from a plein air sketch and on-site photos. I applied the pastels over an underpainting of acrylic watercolor.





▲ **EMMA**

David Wells
Pastel and pastel pencil on blue paper
20½" × 28½" (52cm × 72cm)

DAVID WELLS

My focus has always been on portraits. I've developed the concept of time moving across the page from left to right, meaning Emma's gaze is focused on the future. She's a strong and determined person and has achieved many of her goals since this painting was made.

My process begins with photography. I then resolve my composition and color scheme through preliminary sketches. I aim for strong minimalist design, limited color, a good likeness in a traditional sense and a relatively objective style. To me, art is first and foremost a means of communication, and I try to make the story easy to follow.

▼ **REFLECTIONS IN THE LILY POND**

Peter Thomas

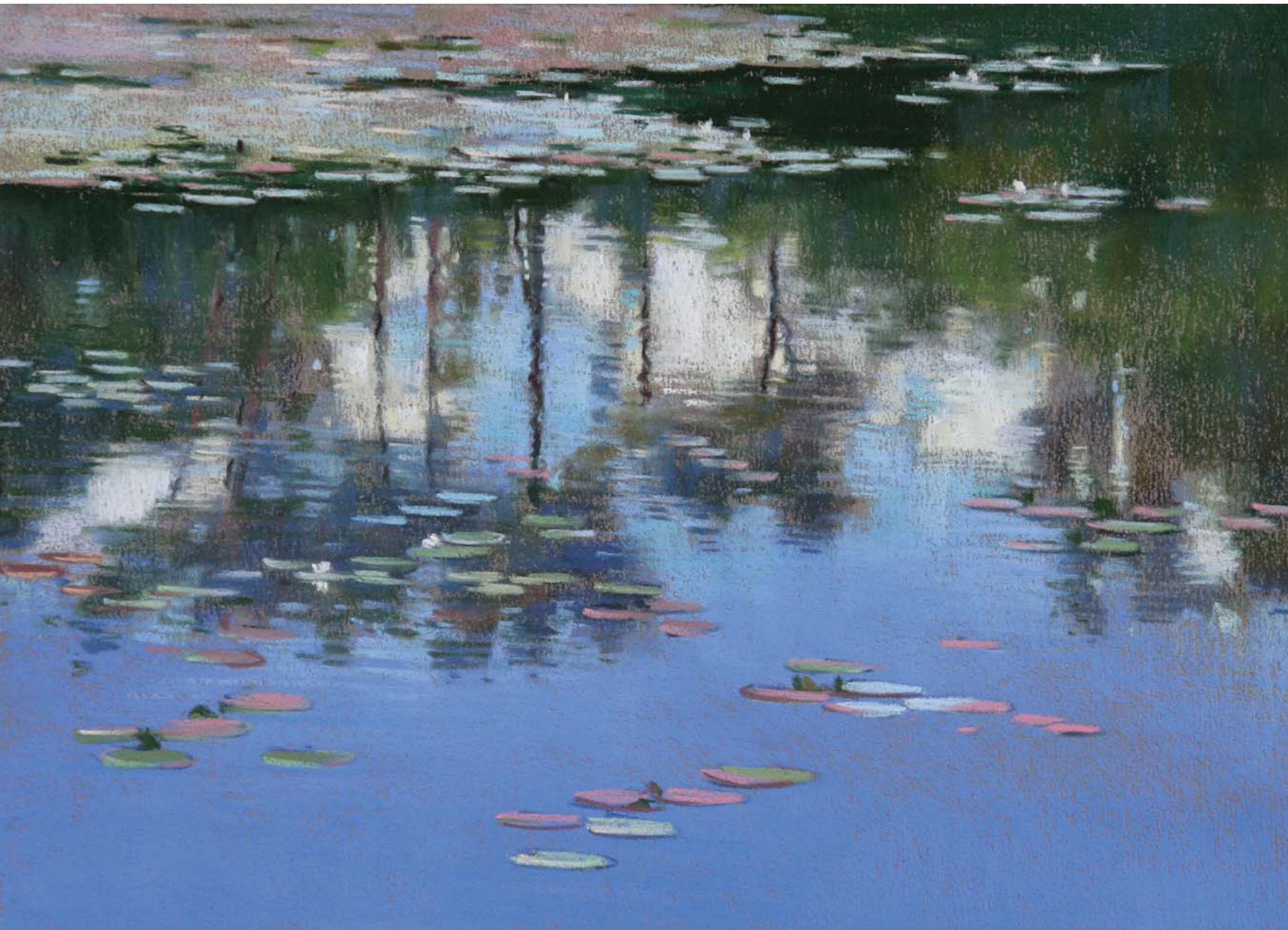
Soft pastel on paper

10½" × 14½" (27cm × 37cm)

PETER THOMAS

I've painted this pond at least forty times, and all the pastels are different. There are different views of the surface of the water, from high to right down at the same level. This piece was painted by the surface, and I intentionally chose to make it only the water—no far bank or sky except in reflection.

A successful landscape relies on careful and original composition to avoid what I call the "picture postcard" effect. Landscape needs to be looked at in a new way to make it interesting. One of the first exercises I do with my students is to show how they can compose the same subject in at least ten different ways.



3

Mood + Atmosphere

“Without atmosphere, a painting is nothing,” said Rembrandt. Atmosphere breathes life into a painting. When speaking about atmosphere in a landscape, a person may be referring to the depiction of the quality of the air—the actual weather conditions. But the reason that a rainy street scene, misty mountain valley or approaching storm cloud is interesting atmospherically is that it also evokes a strong feeling or mood. In this chapter, you’ll encounter landscapes that suggest a sense of energy, mystery, anxiety and even hopefulness. To do so, the artists have taken note of the angle of the sun and the moisture of the air, and then endeavored to capture these qualities with careful attention to color and value.

Similarly, a still life painter considers elements such as lighting, background treatment and the distance between objects to conjure a certain mood. In the following pages, you’ll come across still life work that conveys an array of feeling. In some, you’ll find an impression of emptiness, in others; a sense of exuberant chaos. Similarly, the pervading mood of the portraiture in the chapter ranges from solemn to wistful, from introspect to jovial. And while an expression and pose may be key to the portrayal, these figural artists—like the others—have also considered factors such as variation in tone and color temperature, and the handling of edges, to create the desired ambience.

► SWIMMING FREE

Rae Smith
Pastel on paper
18" × 24" (46cm × 61cm)

RAE SMITH

I’m always looking for the out-of-the-ordinary feeling in a composition, and that’s what I wished to portray here. Over the years, I’ve painted many fishponds, captivated by the ever-changing movement of fish and the reflections of the pond’s surroundings in the water. The pond in *Swimming Free* had beautiful fronds and other vegetation, which hung over the water and reflected in wavering patterns. The markings on the fish are caused by these reflections. I altered the coloring of the fish according to how the light fell on each one, and I exaggerated some of the colors to add to the drama.

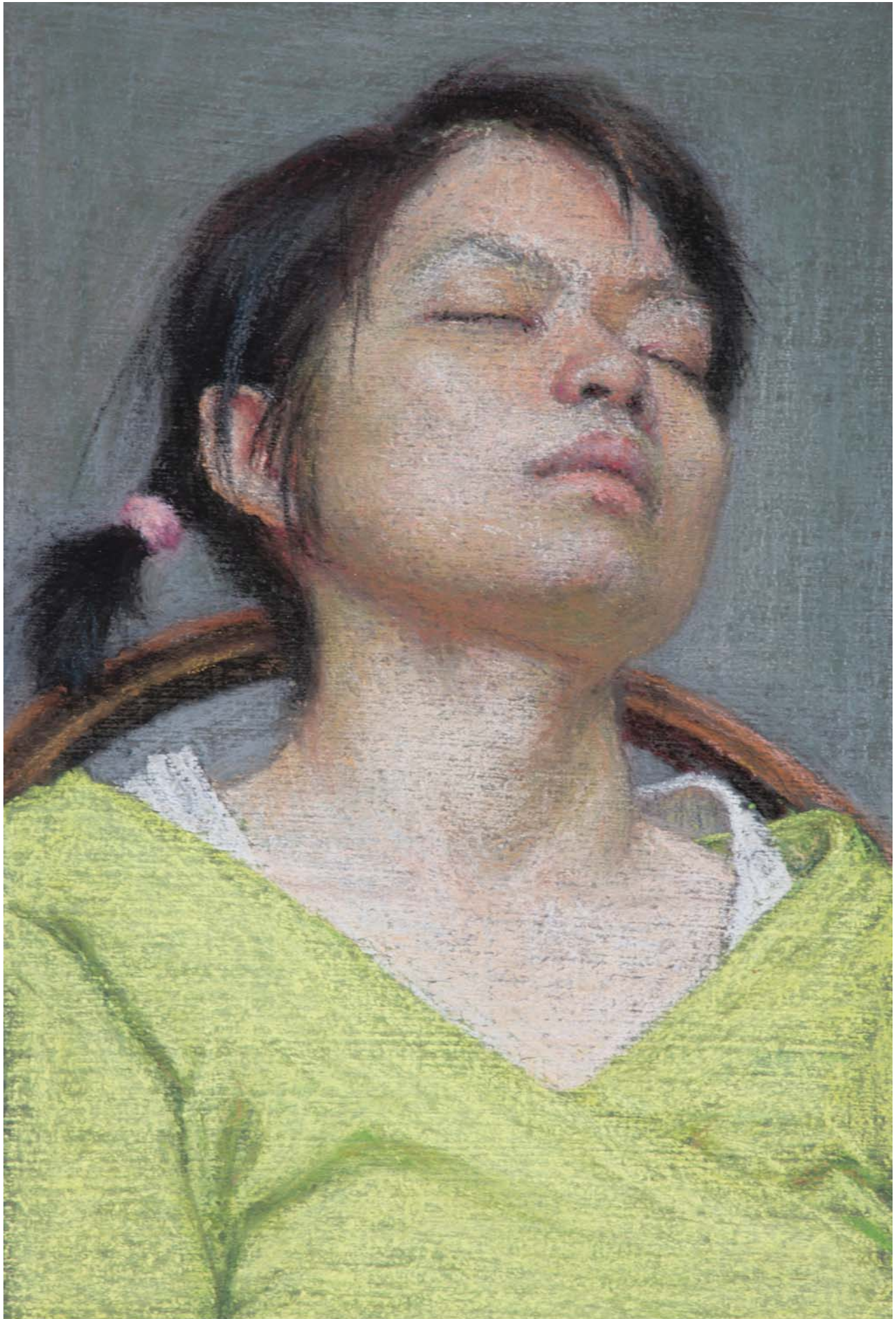




▼ **MEI-CHIAO AT REST**
Ellen Eagle
Pastel on pumice board
5¾" × 3⅞" (15cm × 10cm)

ELLEN EAGLE

In my work, it's often the silent thought of an individual, alone, that intrigues me. In this composition, the blouse's neckline reaches out and up to cradle Mei-Chiao's head. With closed eyes, she surrenders to private thought, or sleep, her head pressing back and down toward her shoulders. The motions of the blouse and head syncopate into a circular composition, enveloping Mei-Chiao in that silence that so captivates.





▲ **EARLY MORNING STROLL**
Christine Bodnar
Soft pastel on mounted pastel mat
16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm)

CHRISTINE BODNAR

Light and temperature are key components of my work because they spark an emotional response. In this painting, to accomplish the intense, pure color of the sun shining through the trees, I applied an underpainting with water and the brightest yellow possible. The overall palette is complementary, using violets for the shadows and yellow and spring greens in the trees. Contrast plays an important role, as does the space given to all the elements within the composition.



▶ **LEXINGTON EVENING**

Brian Cobble
Pastel on illustration board
15½" x 28¼" (39cm x 72cm)
Private collection

BRIAN COBBLE

Lexington Evening, based on a small city in Nebraska, was pieced together from photos and sketches. I wanted to convey the time-standing-still feeling of a midsummer afternoon awash with light but tinged with a slight mystery or uneasiness due to the emptiness and the looming water tower. The burro, to me, adds a touch of sweetness. With much sharpening and layering of the pastels, I try to create an image that's not only complex, but also visually believable and atmospherically breathable.





◀ FROZEN

Anna Wainright

Soft pastel on sanded paper mounted on board

12" × 24" (30cm × 61cm)

ANNA WAINRIGHT

My paintings are usually inspired by an experience I've had while visiting some beautiful natural place that leaves me with a sense of peace.

It's my goal to duplicate the experience—which includes the weather, temperature and emotion—rather than duplicate what I saw. In this painting, I tried to re-create the warmth at the top of the trees and the cold of the ice and snow as the sun fell behind the trees. Painting in the studio from a photograph and memory of the time and place, and using minimal indicators of shapes with colors, conveyed my story of this day.





▲ **OCCUPY WALL STREET . . . RESIDENT**

Diana DeSantis

Medium-hard, medium and soft pastels over a mixture of pumice stone and gesso on board
22" × 28" (56cm × 71cm)

DIANA DESANTIS

Much to his father's objection, Timothy, the son of an affluent dentist, was an avid proponent of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Anti-establishment, rushed and often shoeless, but with great sensitivity and enthusiasm for the cause, he agreed to pose. He arrived daily and sat for three-hour sessions for all of two weeks. At 3 P.M. he promptly left to assume his post with the people-powered movement in Zuccotti Park. My thought was to paint this young rebel when he was in a more pensive and reflective moment. There was a magnetism to him that I somehow needed to record.

▼ **FIELD SYMPHONIC**

Richard McKinley
Pastel and watercolor on sandpaper
12" x 18" (30cm x 46cm)

RICHARD MCKINLEY

Field Symphonic was painted en plein air at a location I had previously visited during a workshop. The textural rhythms within the field's varied flora reminded me of a symphonic performance, and I was eager to return another day to explore its potential. After spending time walking around contemplating the scene, I made the choice to commit to a slightly elongated horizontal compositional format, which provided more room to emphasize lateral movement. The mood of the scene was established by the soft, overcast light of the day, which enriched the juxtaposition of color. In the role of the painter as conductor, I chose to orchestrate the effect of atmospheric depth by altering the value (lighter) and color temperature (cooler) of the distant forest. A gestural watercolor underpainting, applied to white pastel sandpaper, acted as the orchestra, thus allowing pastel, as the lead performer, to amplify the musicality of the field.



▼ **VILLAGE TWILIGHT**

Terri Ford

Pastels on sanded paper mounted on board
18" x 24" (46cm x 61cm)

TERRI FORD

This painting holds such a story for me. It's from the road looking down upon Saint-Cirq-Lapopie, France. I took my husband there on a rainy day. We sat in a café for two or three hours, hoping for the weather to break. When it did, the skies turned from rainy grays to brilliant magentas, reds, oranges and more. We ran out to take as many pictures as possible. After returning to our car, it had turned into this beautiful blue evening. I found it stunning and very interesting to work with, because the subject was lit both by the remaining light in the sky and the artificial light on the church and ruins.





▲ **CHINA SHOP LIGHTS**
Andrew McDermott
Pastel on black board
24" x 36" (61cm x 91cm)

ANDREW MCDERMOTT

I love painting rainy city scenes with the bustling movement in a street and all the reflections of lights. Rainy scenes or night scenes are great for creating mood and atmosphere. Playing with cools against warms helps create the temperature of the painting; you can also use blurred lights and soft edges to help create this mood.

Editing is a great way to limit over-rendering and to simplify your vision. The viewer's eye will fill in the missing details. I don't believe in making mistakes. If I don't like something, I make an edit and change it.

“ There is a saying, ‘*Ecce, Enim, Veritatem.*’ It translates to:
Look for your truth. Your truth through art. ”

— STAN SPERLAK

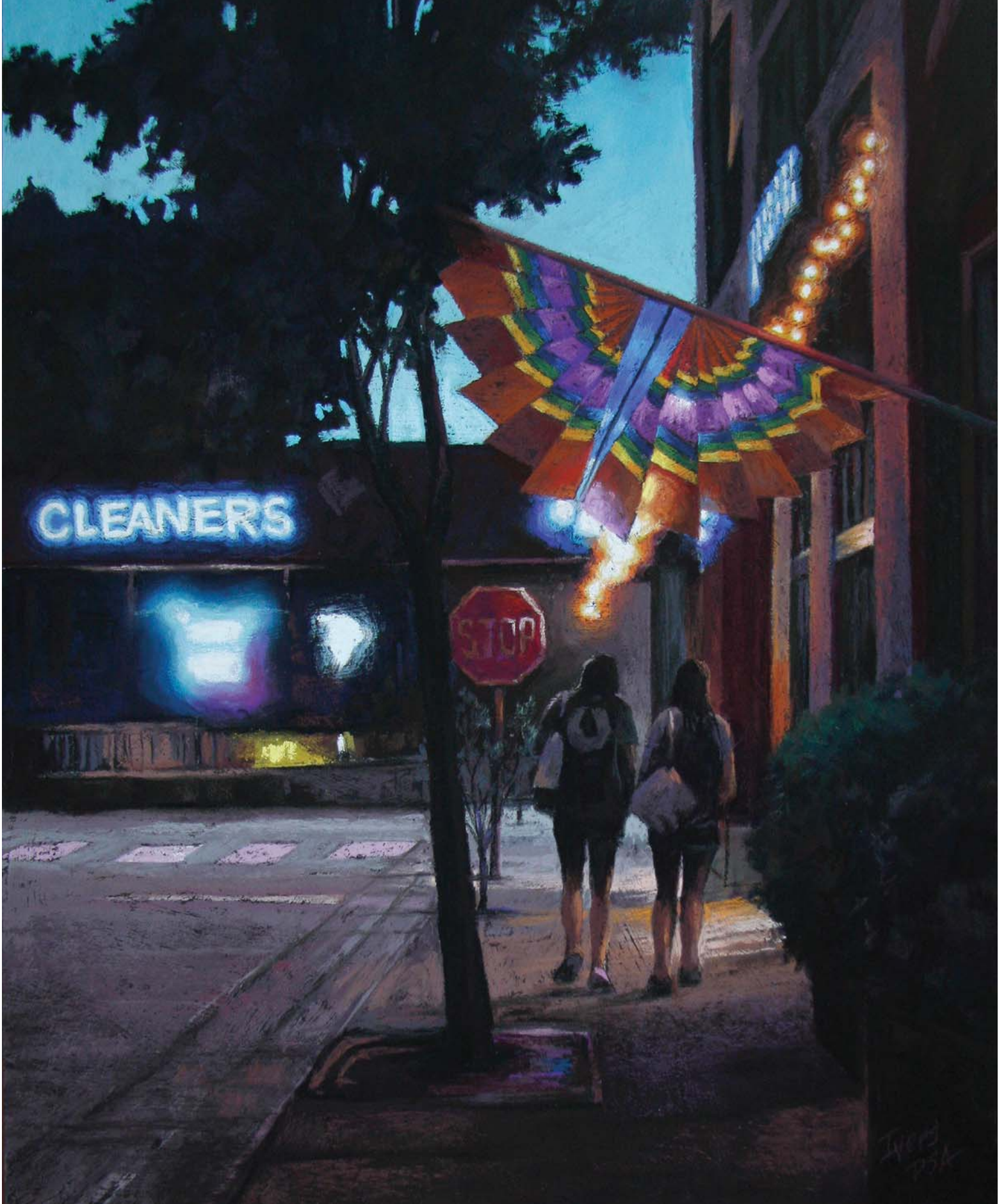


▲ **SUNSET**

Stan Sperlak
Soft pastel over marble dust
and gesso on museum board
40" × 60" (102cm × 152cm)

STAN SPERLAK

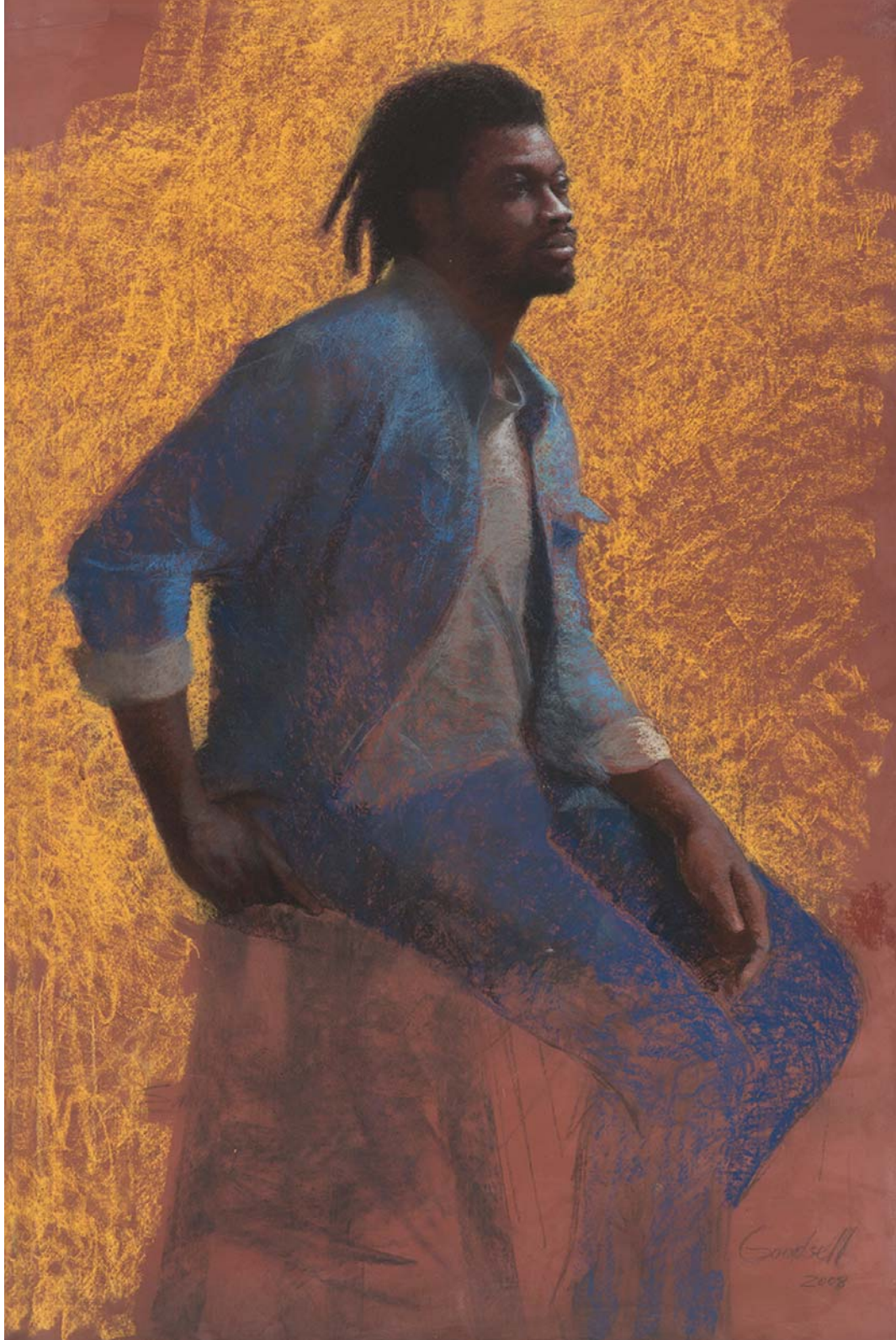
Working large has always been very rewarding for me. I love the larger marks, the body movement required to take it all in, and the sheer impact the art creates for the viewer when approaching it in a room. For this piece, I was challenged by a fellow artist to contribute one of my “big sky” works to a show that featured a wide variety of mediums and styles. I wanted the medium of pastel to be noticed, so I pushed the colors and the rhythms to create a glowing and energizing painting.



▲ **FAN FARE STROLL**
Christine Ivers
Soft and hard pastel on
handmade textured board
20" × 16" (51cm × 41cm)

CHRISTINE IVERS

I was immediately struck by the colored fan-like flag hanging in front of one of the stores and the girls walking below it. The mood was set without me interfering. With the immediate gratification of soft pastels, I was able to capture what I felt that night: a quiet, calm stroll under the night lights of a small-town strip mall. Finding what lies between the shadows of darkness and reflective lights is what drives my excitement to paint the night.



▲ **ICE ON FIRE**

Sam Goodsell
Pastel on 4-ply museum board
60" × 40" (152cm × 102cm)
Permanent collection of the University of
Southern California Fisher Museum of Art

SAM GOODSSELL

This is a painting of my good friend Tyrone Brown-Osborne, a professional artist. Of the number of paintings I've done of Tyrone over the years, to my mind, this one has become more than just a portrait; I feel it captures a moment in time.

I did a small color study in pastel to help me determine the composition and the color shapes. Then I used a proportion wheel to scale the image. I started by blocking in the forms with vine charcoal, and then I blocked in the color, the light and shadow shapes, and the background. Finally, I redefined the forms little by little.

▼ **SUNSET ON THE SEINE**

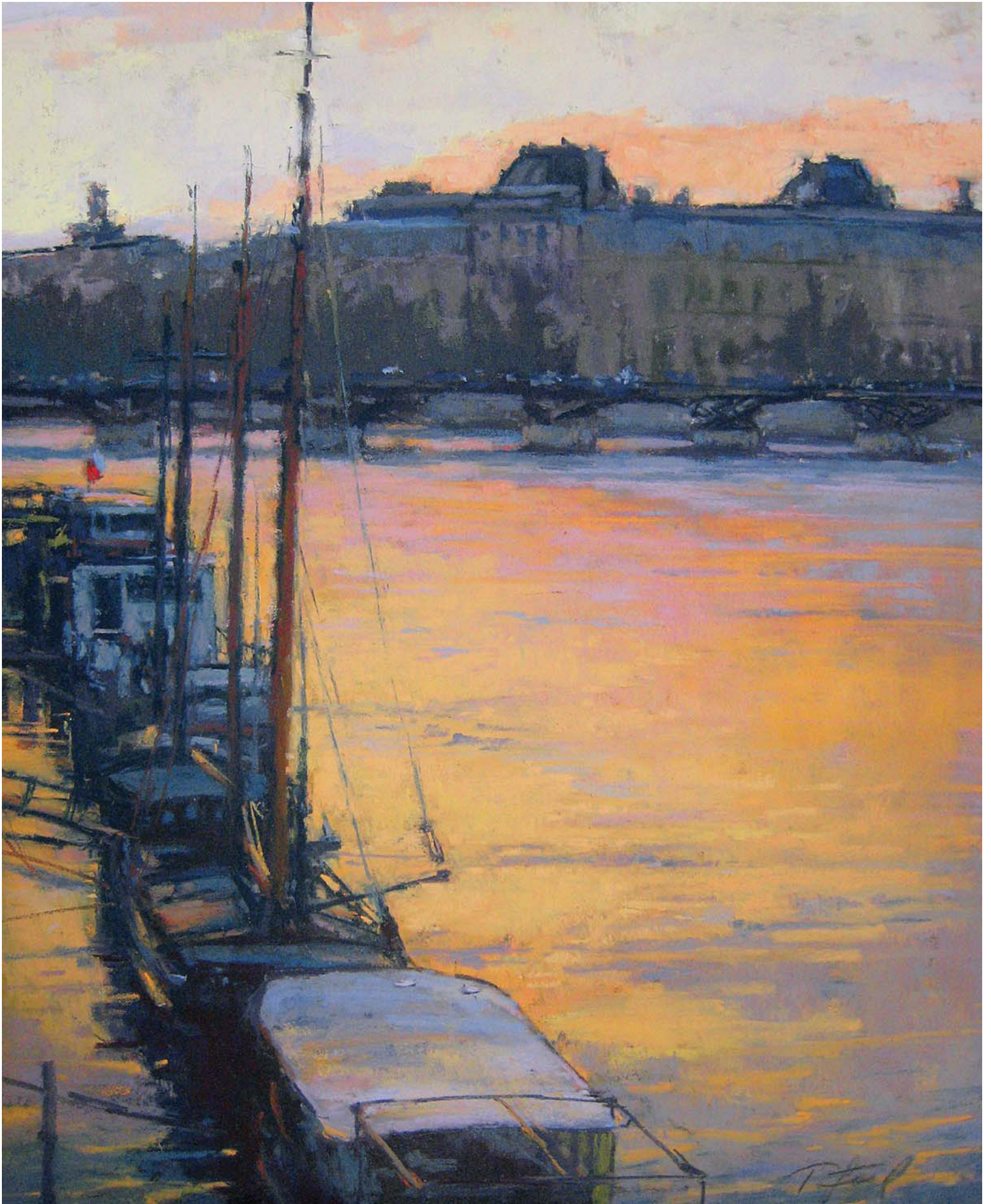
Terri Ford

Pastel on sanded paper
mounted on board

16" x 12" (41cm x 30cm)

TERRI FORD

It was hard not to be taken in by the mood of this scene. The Pont des Arts acts as an anchor against the sunset-lit waters and the Louvre across the river. It also provides a design contrast to the masts of the boats. The palette is simple and complementary, and contributes greatly to the overall mood.

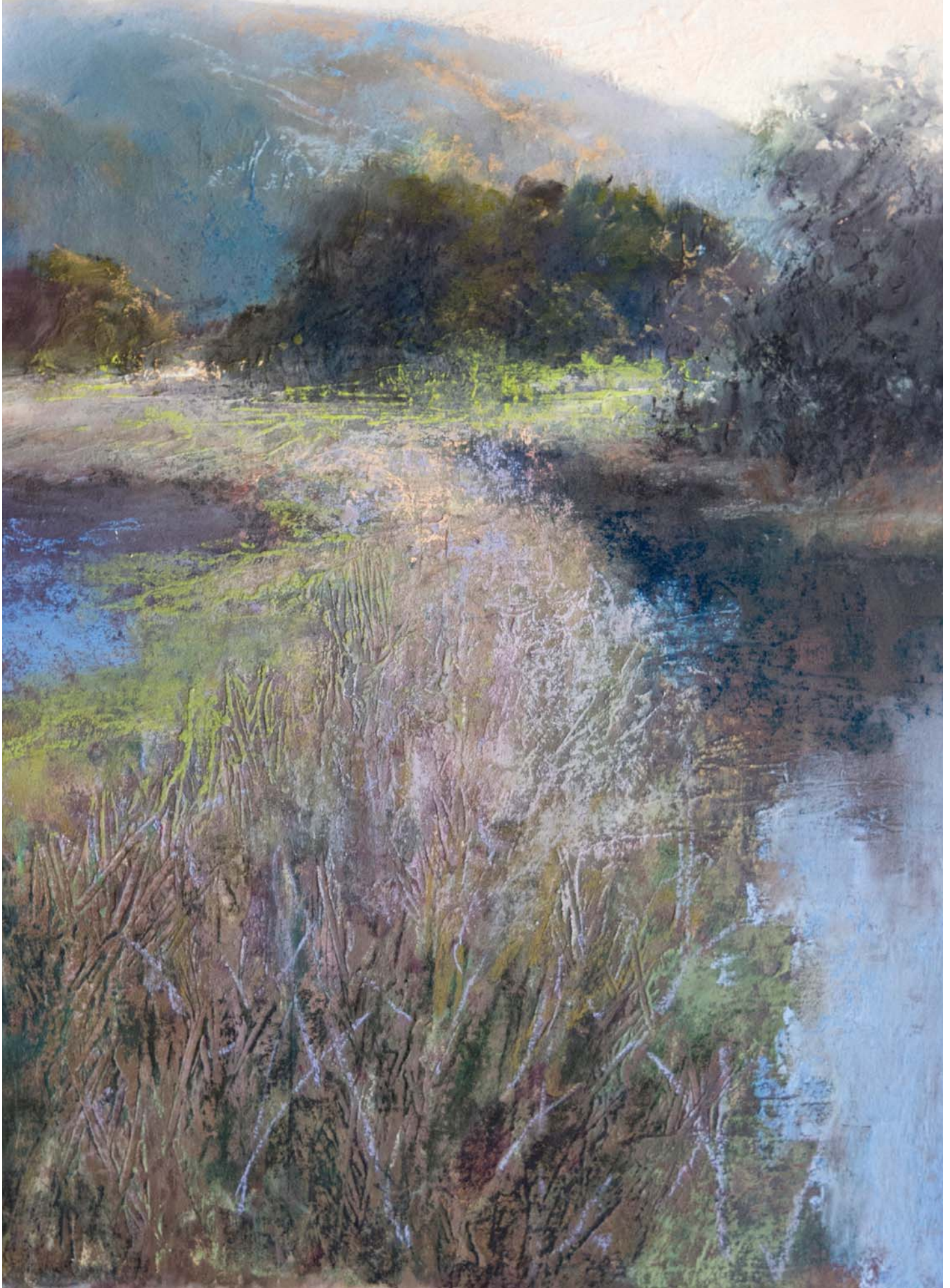




▲ **AZURE WONDERLAND**
Kim Lordier
Soft pastel on sanded
paper
22" x 24" (56cm x 61cm)

KIM LORDIER

After painting all day in the low-slung winter light that beat against the red rock of Zion National Park, I headed east outside the park and came across these painted horses hidden in the brush and shadows. Struck by the blueness of everything around me after a day of warm reds and ochres, I had to set up and paint. I loved the heat of color on the back of that sorrel tobiano's back as the sun was going down. I still feel the chill in the air and remember the azure and turquoise blues of that late afternoon.



▲ **TULE CANAL MORNING**

Willo Balfrey

Soft pastel over watercolor
underpainting on multimedia artboard
16" x 12" (41cm x 30cm)

WILLO BALFREY

I remember the quiet awakening of this day as the sun began to arrive over each ridge in the distance. With pastel, I captured the feeling of atmosphere by creating soft edges and harmonizing the colors of the background hills and the reeds along the levee. As a final touch, I applied light in the far distance, suggesting the arrival of the sun.

“ Poetry has been described as the expression of universal truth. Nature, too, is universal because it can be experienced by everyone. ‘Poetic landscape’ embraces the most common natural elements familiar to all people. ”

— ELIZABETH MOWRY



▲ **SAWKILL REVISITED**

Elizabeth Mowry
Soft pastel on sanded paper
21" × 29" (53cm × 74cm)

ELIZABETH MOWRY

In this piece, I wanted to evoke the cocooning nature of winter, yet also suggest a warmth that's associated with a personal love of place. To do this, I applied pastel from the sky downward, knowing that everything under the sky would be affected by its warm color. Hints of that warmth are evident in the far birches, the large evergreens, the snow and its shadows, and even the water. It was as if I looked at the subject through a rose-tinted piece of glass.

The lack of movement in the water is purposeful, again delineating the overall quietude I was seeking to express.

▼ **DAPPLED HILL**

Susan M. Story

Soft pastel on cold-pressed paper
22½" × 29" (57cm × 74cm)

SUSAN M. STORY

Capturing mood, atmosphere and fleeting light is what landscape painting is all about. When I painted this landscape, I was drawn to the tension between the warm sun, the cool dampness in the strong shadows and the rotting leaves, which are all part of the change in seasons in this area.

The immediacy and versatility of pastel make it the perfect medium to capture mood and atmosphere. You can build texture or glide and blend to create depth. Drawing with pastel, painting with pastel—it all works!





▲ **WINTER**

Rhoda Needlman
Soft pastel on silicon carbide paper
12" × 14" (30cm × 36cm)

RHODA NEEDLMAN

The inspiration for *Winter* came to me when I saw an ice-covered body of water and was intrigued by the bone-chilling, frigid atmosphere. I tried to capture the intense, somber feelings of loneliness, extreme isolation and emptiness, accompanied by a sense of being alive and a sense of beauty that exists in all emotions—for these emotions are intrinsic to the essence of life. *Winter* was painted with soft pastels on silicon carbide paper, the combination of which emits a high radiance and luminescence.

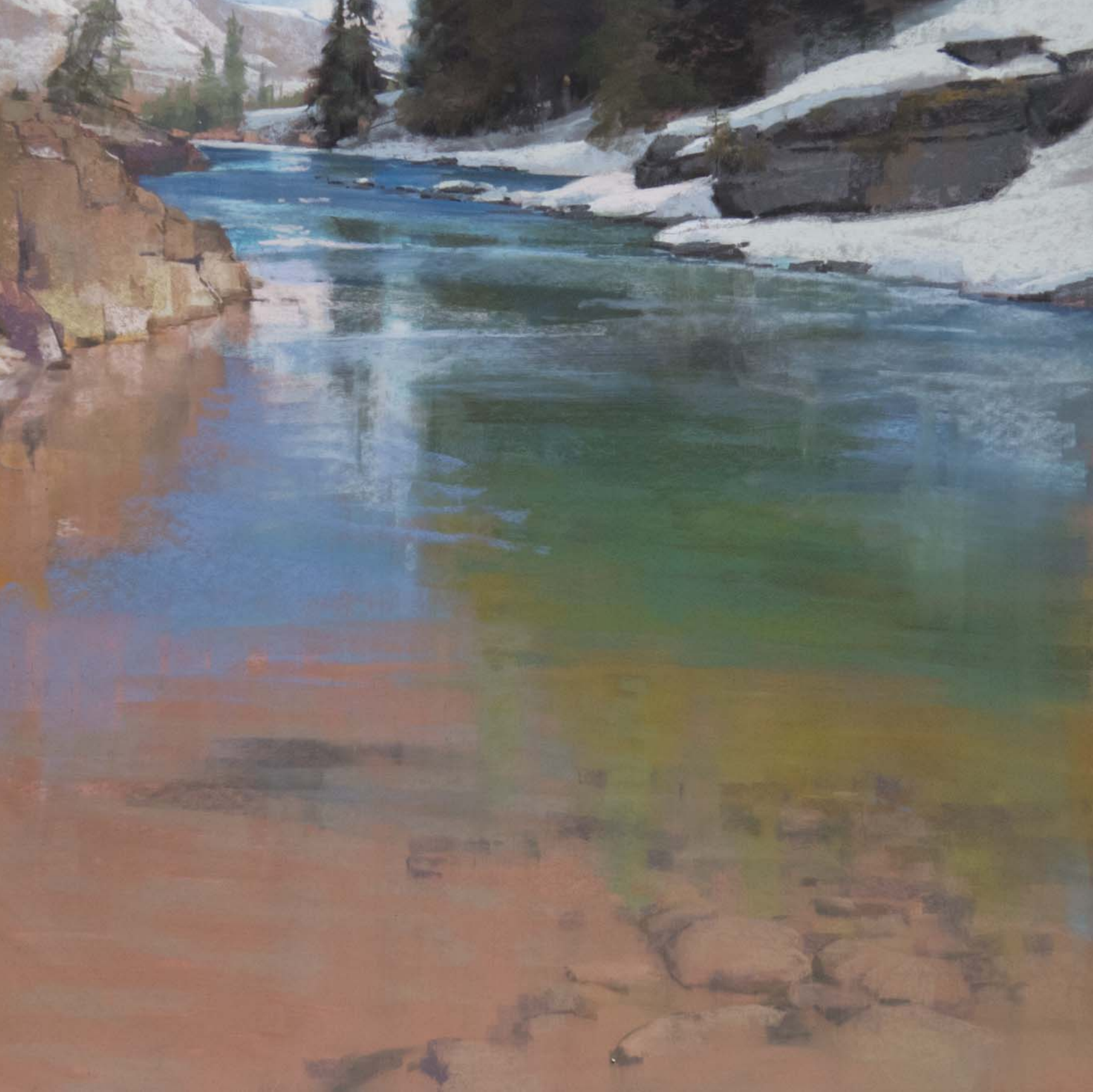
▼ **TWILIGHT MOON**

Richard McKinley
Pastel on multimedia pastel board
with additional clear pastel ground
14" x 14" (36cm x 36cm)

RICHARD MCKINLEY

The studio is my time for creative exploration. Reference material for *Twilight Moon* came from field sketch paintings done at a familiar location. Among the creative choices were: choosing a square format that creates a somewhat awkward composition space; modifying the shapes and placement of trees to enhance depth; adding distant foothills where there were none to balance compositional movement; and graying the chroma of distant colors to amplify atmospheric perspective. My technique relied on the application of additional clear pastel ground for underlying impasto texture. This textual embellishment added a painterly quality and was strategically placed to lead the viewer's eye throughout the painting. Learning to be present with a painting as it evolves is paramount to creating something more than just a competent picture. At a certain point, this painting told me it needed a moon. Its addition, and the subsequent glints on the water, finalized the painting.



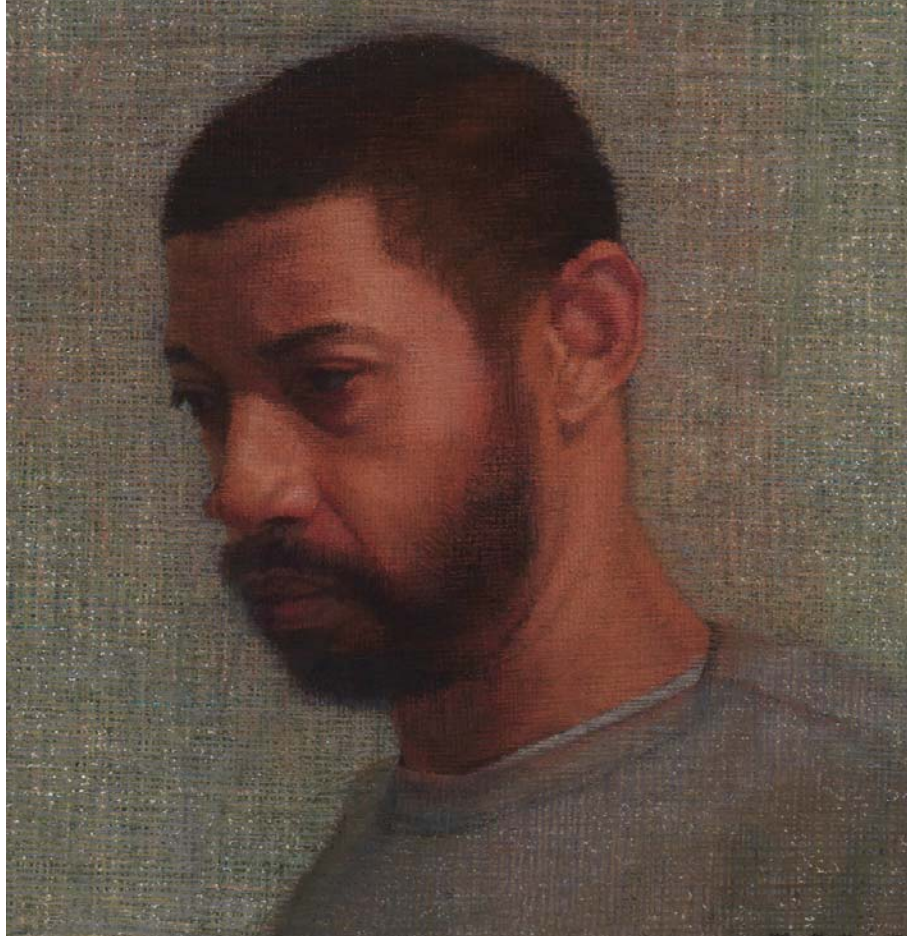


▲ **HOBACK REFRACTION**

Jennifer L. Hoffman
Soft pastel on sanded paper
mounted to Gator board
30" × 30" (76cm × 76cm)
Private collection

JENNIFER L. HOFFMAN

This location is one of my favorite painting sites, just a few miles up the canyon from my home. In March, the snow is receding, but the water isn't yet muddied with runoff. With the reddish silt and the reflections of riverside pines, the almost iridescent blue-green water takes on a rainbow-like transition of color. Though the temperatures are still chilly, the mood feels hopeful and enticing. Spring is just around the corner!



SELF-PORTRAIT

Mario A. Robinson
Soft pastel on watercolor paper
15" × 15" (38cm × 38cm)

MARIO A. ROBINSON

Painting a self-portrait is an opportunity for me to present myself to the viewer in an open and honest manner. Artists throughout history have captured their own likenesses, and many of the images have been recognized as their most captivating works. I chose pastel for this particular portrait, as it allows me to exert control over the drawing elements, while offering the potential of painterly applications. My crosshatching technique is comprised of vertical and horizontal lines that add a layer of complexity. Working on watercolor paper, which possesses a substantial tooth, lends itself to excessive layering.

CITY LIGHT

Barbara Szkutnik
Pastel, graphite and sumi ink on paper
19" × 19" (48cm × 48cm)

BARBARA SZKUTNIK

Images we remember are powerful. *City Light* is a memory of Hong Kong, a place I visited repeatedly over a period of years and loved. In this painting, I exaggerated late-day color and shadowed vertical graphite lines representing Hong Kong's constant and ongoing construction. The high humidity produces misty skies and swirling fog, obscuring the tallest buildings. Millions of lights come on at dusk. The foreground is organic, suggesting the still-natural areas nearby.





▲ **AUTUMN FLOOD**

Sergei Oussik

Soft pastel on colored pastel paper
22" × 22" (56cm × 56cm)

SERGEI OUSSIK

To me, the main objective of the landscape painter is to create the essence of a portrayed place, depicting its soul. All technical matters are a means to achieve the main task. Nevertheless, the artist shall be aware of—and be able to paint—every detail of bushes, trees and grass. That's why I do plein air studies no matter what the weather.



▲ **GOSSAMER COAT**

Kim Lordier
Soft pastel on sanded paper
24" x 30" (61cm x 76cm)

KIM LORDIER

There can be a haunting beauty to a day of dark cloud cover. Even though the day was cold, the river was lightly iced over and snow was on the ground, there was a warmth to the earth. These are the memories I brought back to my easel in the studio while painting *Gossamer Coat*. The peeks of blue sky came toward the end of the painting process. I wanted the viewer to feel the promise of a clear day coming soon.



▲ **BIRCHES**
Sergei Oussik
Soft pastel on toned pastel paper
25" × 16" (64cm × 41cm)

SERGEI OUSSIK

In this painting, the trunks of the birches feature the last splashes of light in the day. Pastel is unique in that it allows techniques of both painting and graphics. It enables the artist to use line or a deliberate stroke, creating the distinctive atmosphere of soft colors and free lines.



▲ **THREE ORANGES**

Ron Monsma
Pastel on illustration board
23" × 22" (58cm × 56cm)

RON MONSMA

The oranges in this work were sent to me by my brother and sister-in-law in California from an orange tree in their backyard. I loved the stems and leaves and set about finding a compositional arrangement to showcase their shape and movement. I used a single light source placed to the left of the setup, which, along with the black background, creates a dramatic atmospheric effect.

4

Style + Expression

“Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist,” said Pablo Picasso. The avant-garde artist was certainly one of the boldest and most innovative painters of the twentieth century—an unmitigated rule-breaker. And yet, he famously advocated for learning the fundamentals of art before pioneering a new path. Once artists understand the basic principles, how they choose to employ them is the essence of style. Whether it be daring color choices, punchy staccato strokes, an unconventional perspective or all of the above, the artistic qualities that artists choose to flaunt—or which they opt to minimize or ignore altogether—impact visual expression.

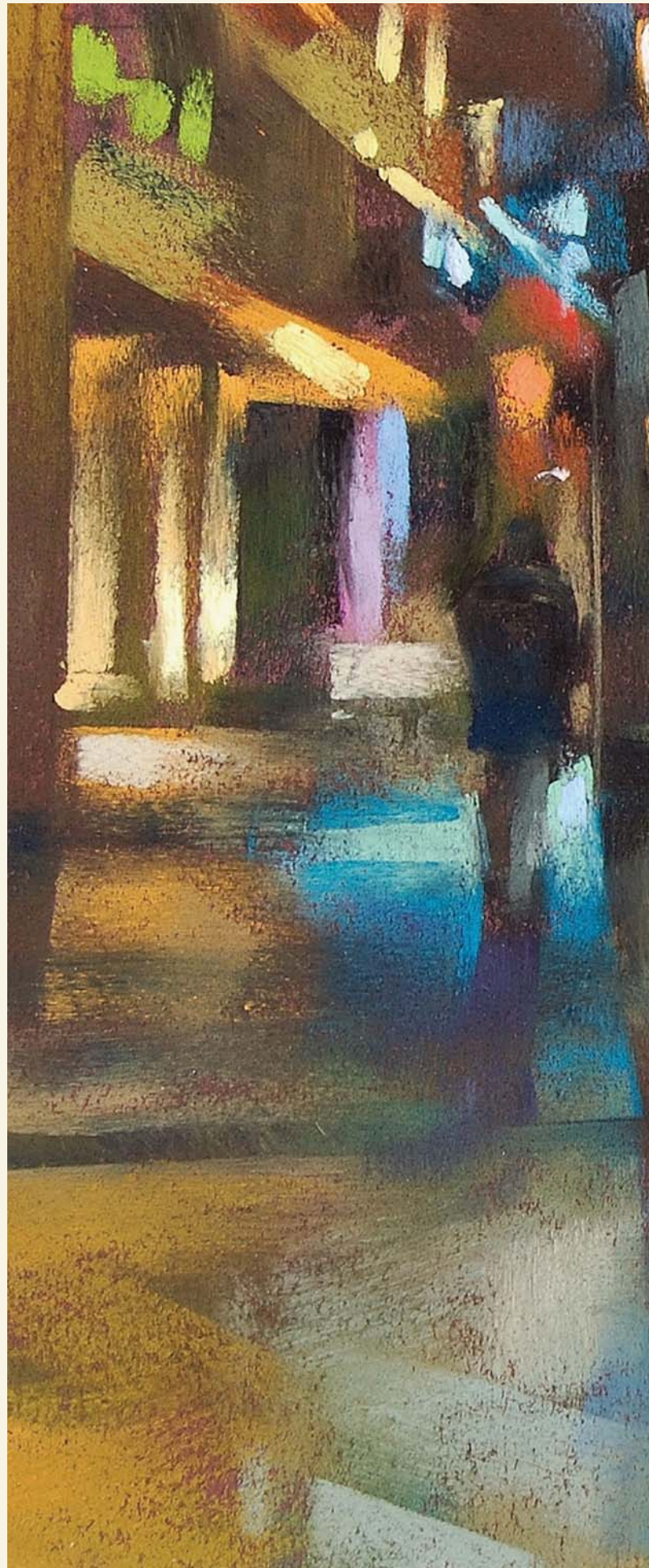
An artist cultivates this unique voice over time, the result of experience, exploration and a life of observation. Thus, while artistic style is grounded in the rules of art, it is—at the same time—a part of the artistic process that emerges, not from careful preparation, but from instinct, an outcome of informed but unconscious planning.

► NIGHTSCAPE, DENVER

Desmond O'Hagan
Soft pastels on paper
9" × 12" (23cm × 30cm)

DESMOND O'HAGAN

I enjoy capturing the energy, light and movement of the city, especially at night. The multitude of light sources, including headlights, streetlights and reflections, makes painting night scenes challenging. My technique enlists the viewer's eye to interpret the detail that's only loosely applied. With the use of the edges of the pastel and flicks of color, I depict a more spontaneous image of the night. To create a credible painting, the artist must edit what's less important. Pastels like this one will continue to intrigue and challenge me.





“ Paint what you see, not what you know is there. ”

— TONY ALLAIN



▲ **MARINA REFLECTIONS**
Tony Allain
Soft pastel on sanded paper
10" × 14" (25cm × 36cm)

TONY ALLAIN

This painting was made from an on-site sketch, as is most of my work. It was the mesmerizing effect of the gentle movement and distortion of the reflections of the yachts in the calm, sheltered water of the marina that intrigued me. I took care to make sure the shape and dimensions of the yachts were accurately observed. Masts, rigging and other paraphernalia created the interesting fluid movements shown in the reflections.

▼ **TRANSLUCENT TRIPLETS**

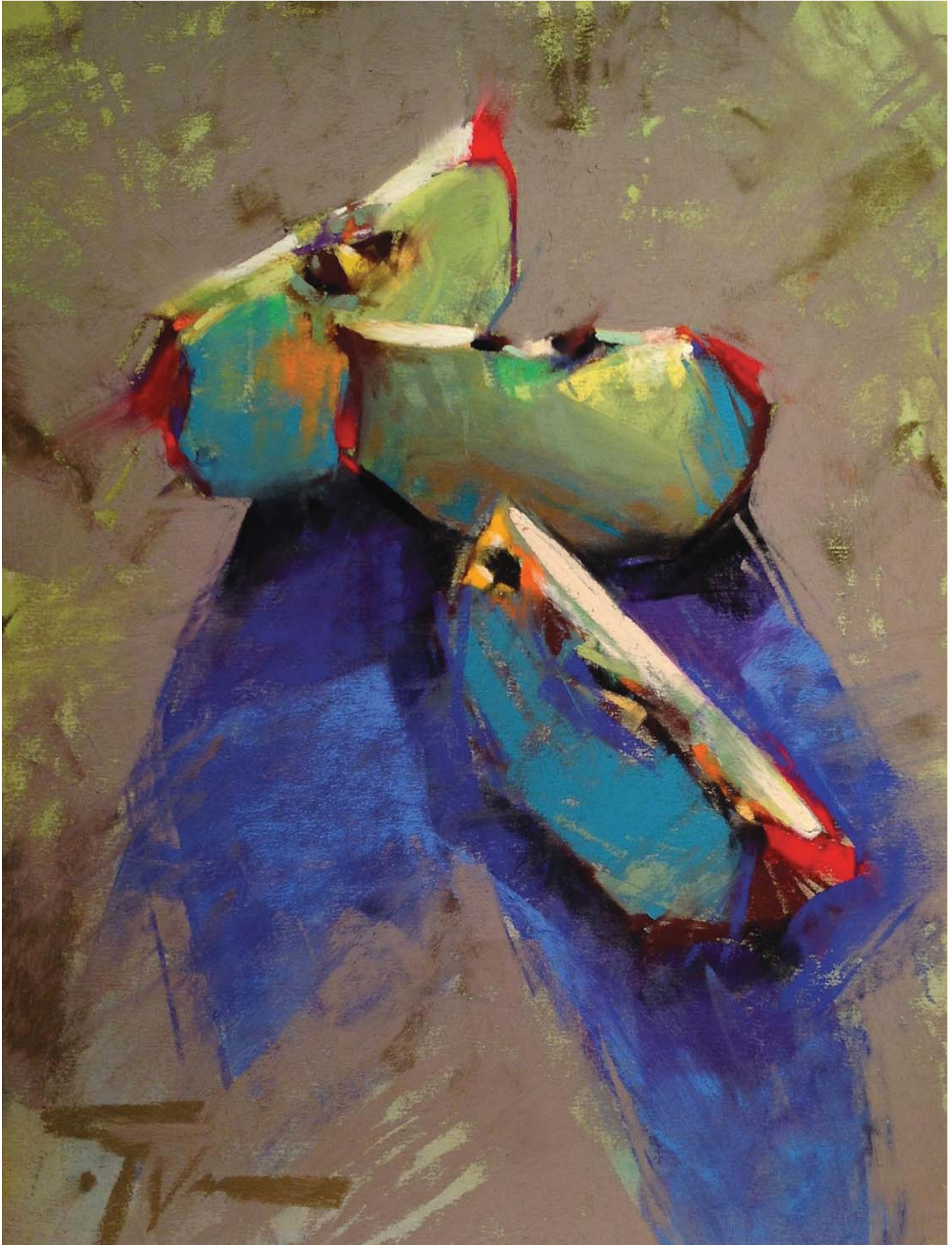
Jen Evenhus

Pastel over underpainting of pastel
set by mineral spirits on paper
12" × 9" (30cm × 23cm)

Private collection

JEN EVENHUS

Visualization is the key to success. After that, I choose a limited palette and rely on happy little accidents as I quickly place bold, confident strokes on the surface, exaggerating color and having fun with mark-making and negative painting, defining shapes as I go. I strive for imperfection in rendering so the soul of the object might escape and settle in the mind of the viewer, unlocking a forgotten memory or revealing the magic long overlooked.





▲ **SUNLIT BUILDINGS, ARLES**

Desmond O'Hagan
Soft pastel on paper
12" x 9" (30cm x 23cm)

DESMOND O'HAGAN

I've always enjoyed painting urban scenes from different perspectives, and the angle for this pastel was intriguing. With bold expressive strokes, I depicted the strong summer light illuminating the buildings and street. Because of the ever-changing light and the normal activity of urban scenes, it's difficult to paint on-site, so I travel with a camera to record these fleeting scenes and work from photographs. My experience in painting plein air helps me understand that the photograph is a very loose guide, and experimentation and my experience create the painting.



▲ **BEACHED**
Tony Allain
Soft pastel over India ink
marker on beige sanded paper
10" × 24" (25cm × 61cm)

TONY ALLAIN
I used various elements of my favorite subject, including boats, sea and fishermen, all taken from my many sketch journals that I have in my studio. I live within a mile of a small fishing village, so I took several elements of an everyday scene. Through a subtle approach and by focusing on color, light and tone, I tried to give the motif an elevated atmosphere. Color and light are my motivation for choosing a subject. There's no finer feeling than to be presented with a wealth of subject matter literally on one's doorstep.

“ It’s critical to actively learn, to practice, to ponder. Sometimes, though, you have to just jump right in, right now. Do the best you can—with what you have—exactly where you are. Paint. ”

— TOM BAILEY



▲ **THE LOOKOUT**

Tom Bailey
Hard and soft pastel on pastel board
16" × 20" (41cm × 51cm)

TOM BAILEY

Technique, when it’s contrived or forced, is like a famous actor who can play only one role, one way. When I’m at my easel, I rarely notice the scribbled staccato strokes I often use to convey the shimmering energy I find everywhere within nature. I don’t focus on the dabs of contrasting colors that add depth and orchestrate interest. Twitching lines and layered textures seem to appear without my conscious planning. On my best days, all the artistic ingredients I’ve carefully gathered over the years flow together seamlessly and without effort. No recipe required.

▼ **UNFOLDING MYSTERIES**

Frederick D. Somers
Pastel and gold on paper
14" × 21" (36cm × 53cm)

FREDERICK D. SOMERS

"Paint what you love—walk in the light" summarizes my art. I work from a lifetime of observing weather and seasons molding the details of the landscape. My goal is to express the joy I experience in this creation, with color, mark and motif. This process will continually evolve with my every discovery in both art and nature. *Unfolding Mysteries* merges the wonder of distant galaxies with recognizable nature at our feet with microscopic hexagon shapes found in molecular building blocks. Pure gold and the most amazing pastel pigments available today make this praise possible.





▲ **DESERT CADILLAC**

Bill Creevy
Soft pastel on multimedia board
11" x 14" (28cm x 36cm)

BILL CREEVY

I prefer working from memory and imagination. This requires quick decisions; confident, rapid execution; and exact color choices. I worked this piece with medium and super-soft pastels. I work in layers of loosely applied marks, and I fix each layer with SpectraFix, a casein alcohol fixative, similar to one favored by Degas. I work layer after layer until I get the results I want, adjusting color, texture and imagery as I go.



▲ **SUNFLOWER VIOLET AND RED**

Jimmy Wright

Soft pastel on 300-lb. (640gsm) hot-pressed paper
41" × 29" (104cm × 74cm)

Private collection, courtesy of DC Moore Gallery

JIMMY WRIGHT

The medium-hard formula of Rembrandt soft pastels allowed for a vigorous, expressive application of color in rapid, successive strokes. Contour lines and broken masses of rich red-brown sienna contrast with the white lines of the petals that emanate like a source of internal light. Red leaf shapes pulsate forward in contrast to the spatial depth created by the use of intense blue.



▲ **SUMMER GREENS**
Tom Christopher
Pastel on textured panel
18" × 24" (46cm × 61cm)

TOM CHRISTOPHER

On this day, the open field was still moist from a hard rain the day before. As a result, the grassy area was especially rich in color. My pastel technique involves extensive underpainting using textures that create areas in the work I refer to as "implied details." As a result, the finished painting appears to be very similar to paintings done in oil.



▲ **SIDDIG EL NIGOUMI—POTTER**
Victor Ambrus
Carbon and pastel pencils on paper
31½" × 15¾" (80cm × 40cm)

VICTOR AMBRUS

Siddig el Nigoumi was a brilliant ceramic artist and tutor in our local art college, and we were very privileged to draw him from life. His kaftan was almost white, and his turbaned head was made even more dramatic by his tribal scars.

I quickly drew in the whole figure, lightly sketching in the sunburnt classical head. Then I increased the rich, warm colors of the head and hands, and also in a more limited way, in the kaftan. I later finalized the head and the hands.

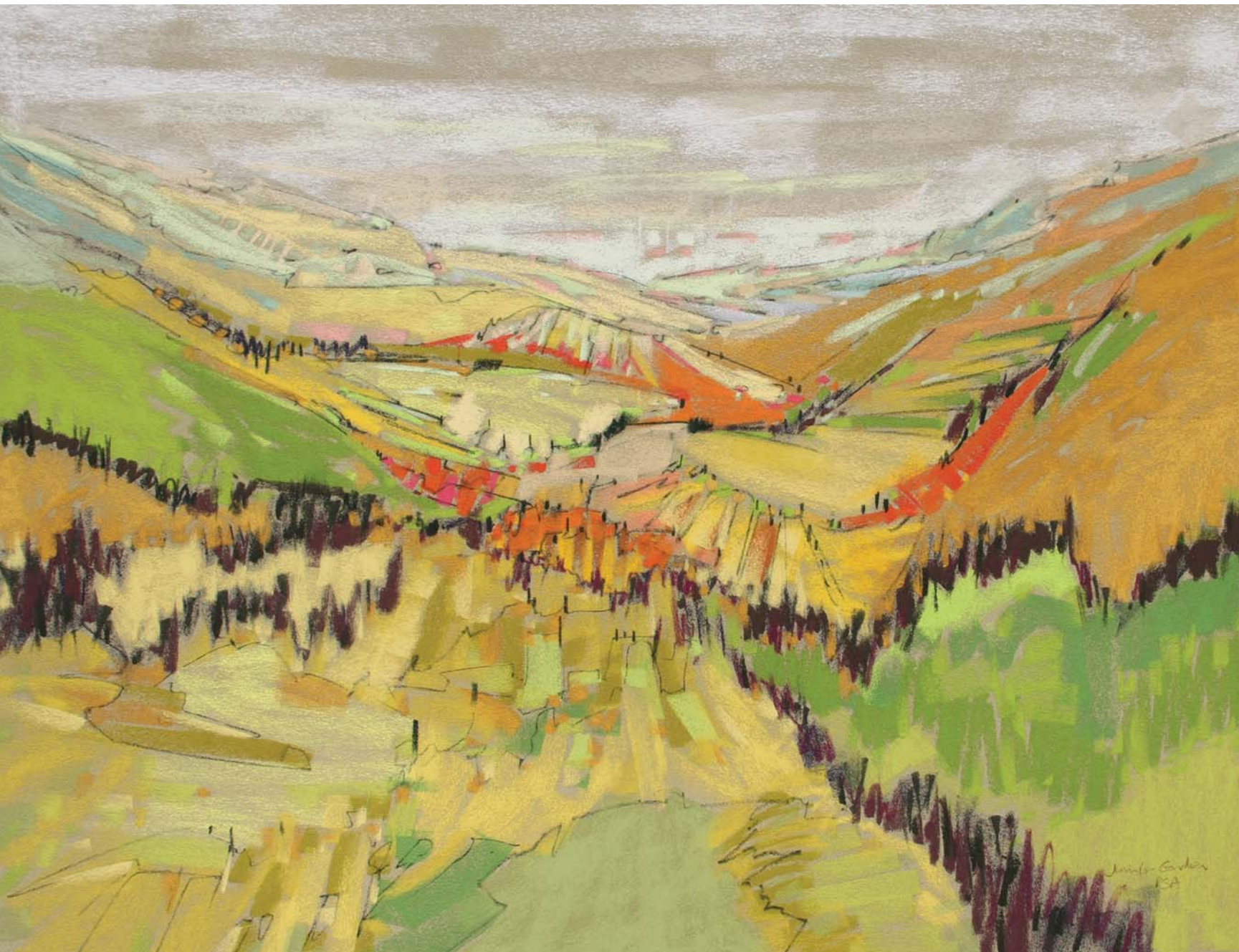


▲ **RAVEN GOLD**

Dawn Emerson
Soft pastel on monotype solid-
color surface printed on paper
16" x 16" (41cm x 41cm)

DAWN EMERSON

This image evolved as part of an exploration of color in which I rendered the same image on radically different color grounds to see what effects it had on my use of color. The golden background color was inspiring, and my response was to try to capture how I imagined the sunlight, earth, wind and clouds might feel to the raven. The smooth ink surface allowed me to razor blade pastel into broken strokes and shapes to suggest the raven's world without the use of detail.



▲ **PATCHWORK HILLS VII**
Jennifer Gardner
Soft pastel on pastel card
18" × 24" (46cm × 61cm)

JENNIFER GARDNER

This piece is a joyous expression of color, light, shape, movement and line created entirely spontaneously without the creative shackles of preplanning.

I paint in series of subjects. This is one of my series of abstracted Tuscan landscapes. The reality of the scene, which initially inspired me, has long since been lost in the sands of time over the course of creating the various iterations of the series. It's at this stage, once reality is irrelevant, that my pieces are their most creative and intuitive.



▲ **FLOATING AT DUSK**

Marcia Holmes

Soft pastel over oil underpainting on sanded paper
26" x 26" (66cm x 66cm)

The Degas Gallery, New Orleans

MARCIA HOLMES

The slipper of a water lily is exposed as it floats in a pool of water against the reflection of the sun setting at dusk. In this abstract expression, I sought to capture the splendor of this time of day. The sky's brightness, paling the lily fronds to a soft cool almost disappearing green, is in contrast to the reflection of the sun's warm orange; and yet the sky fades to blue and lavender. Purposefully, I allowed the thin drips of the oil underpainting to peek through my loose but energetic field of pastels.





▲ **SUNLIT HOUSE, LE CROISIC**

Felicity House
Soft pastel over watercolor
underpainting on pastel paper
18" × 19" (46cm × 48cm)

FELICITY HOUSE

Le Croisic, a small harbor town in the Loire-Atlantique region of France, is an ideal place for plein air painting. The block of warm, creamy light on the shaped façade of the house, together with the pattern of dappled light beneath the tree, caught my eye. While working the piece, I enjoyed the diverse shades of blue in the sky, shutters, eaves and shadows. Throughout, I returned to sort the drawing with a sharp pastel edge or pastel pencils. Later, I punched in more contrast with some juicy darks and the hydrangea pinks.

▼ **MAGIC IN THE AIR**

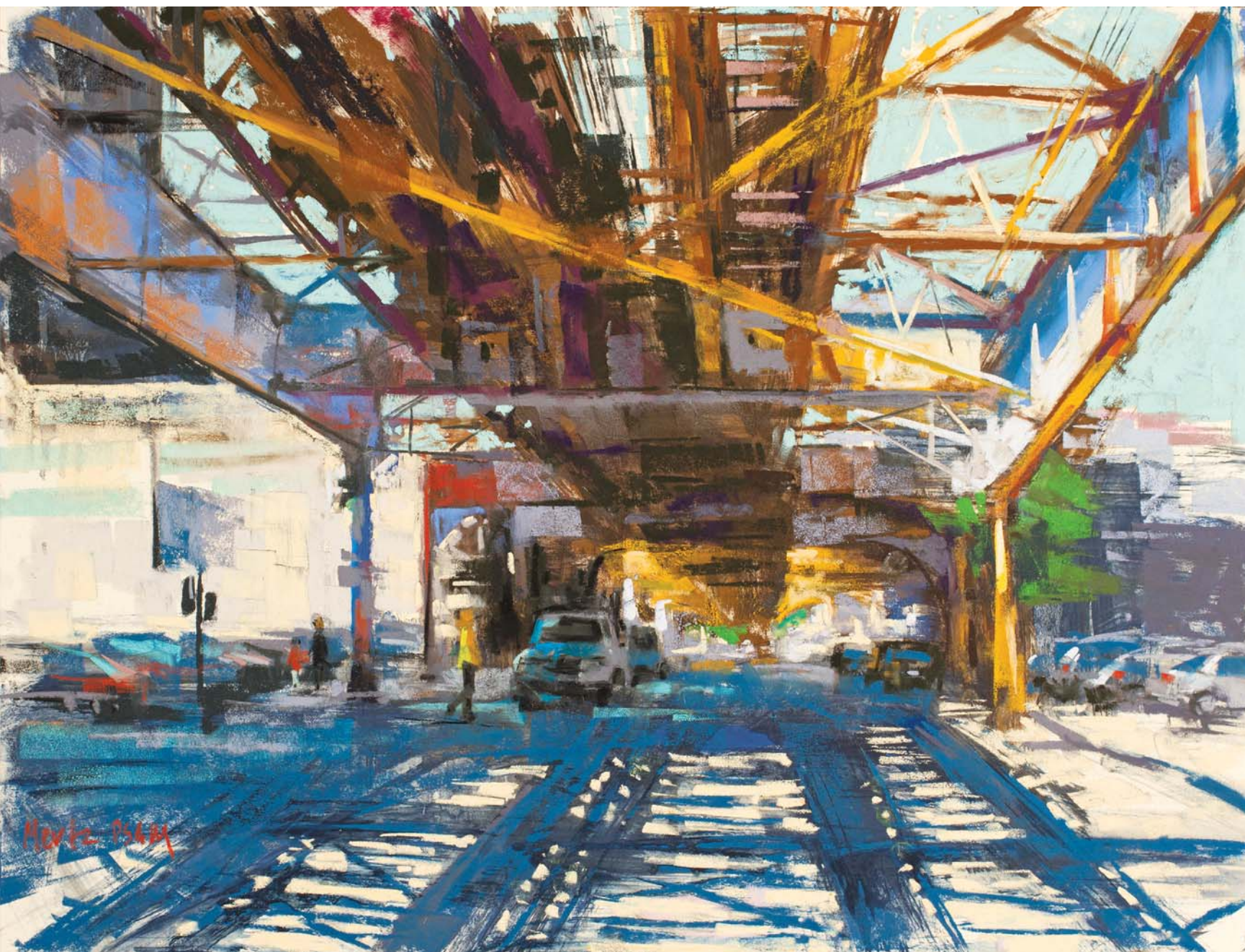
Karen Margulis

Soft pastel over black pastel
underpainting on white paper
9" x 12" (23cm x 30cm)

KAREN MARGULIS

This wild tangle of grass and bushes is actually a naturalized area in the heart of Chicago. I love the juxtaposition of the wild and free against the backdrop of concrete and brick. Even though I eliminated the city in the painting, I knew it needed a strong foundation to allow the wild and organic to unfold. I chose a notan underpainting to provide this strong foundation of light and dark. With this foundation, my marks could dance as I weaved the pastel marks into the tangled oasis in the city.





▲ **SUN TRACKS**

Nancie King Mertz
Soft and hard pastel on sanded
paper mounted on board
16" × 21½" (41cm × 55cm)

NANCIE KING MERTZ

Painting under the "L" in Chicago is a bone-rattling, ear-splitting experience in plein air painting. Although I've done this and many other crazy plein air exercises, *Sun Tracks* was created in the comfort of my studio. All those many plein air paintings over the years help with rapid decision-making in my studio and when doing demos. The heightened awareness of surroundings and the knot-in-the-stomach feeling as the fleeting light is captured give the work more energy and excitement, teaching valuable lessons for the studio.



▲ **VARIATION #6**
Marla Baggetta
Soft pastel on sanded paper
10" × 10" (25cm × 25cm)

MARLA BAGGETTA

This piece, from a series of more than a hundred versions of the same composition, is an expression of the elusive nature of the landscape and just how challenging, yet very satisfying, it is to attempt to capture in pastel. What a beautiful and rich medium. This piece is more about this challenge than it is about a time of day or a season, but paradoxically, it is about that as well.

▼ **THE BREATH OF SPRING**

Maria Marino

Soft pastel on sienna-toned pastel card
24" x 31" (61cm x 79cm)

MARIA MARINO

The Breath of Spring captures an artist's atelier bathed in light found in Giverny, France. The painting was completed in the studio, working from a photo as well as using a plein air painting done on location as a color reference. The work is characterized by bold strokes of color that carry a sense of rhythm and composition with a great sense of spontaneity. It's a painting of a very special place that has beckoned artists to paint its beautiful light throughout the century.





▲ **MORNING LIGHT, JEMEZ SPRINGS**
Albert Handell
Pastel on sanded pastel paper
mounted on museum rag board
9" × 12" (23cm × 30cm)

ALBERT HANDELL

It was a brilliant sunny June morning, and the rich, fresh colors of this subject are what inspired me to paint it. Except for the dark rich brown shadows under the central rocks, the dark upright green notes of the standing piñons, and that little area of white left of center, three-quarters of the entire piece are the same or extremely similar in value. By not changing the values of these colors, I was able to harmonize and balance the warmth of the foreground's rich reddish browns with very strong and subtle complementary mauves, notes of warm and cool grays, and other droplets of color. The blue sky contrasts strongly in color (not in value) and caps everything under it.



▲ **TREE PEONIES & BRASS**

Anne McGrory
Soft pastel on pastel paper
mounted on board
18" x 24" (46cm x 61cm)
Private collection

ANNE MCGRORY

By working simultaneously from life and photographs, I found I was better able to capture the light and continue working on this painting even after the flowers had wilted. I chose a sanded pastel paper because it allowed me to add and subtract multiple layers of pastel. The sides of my pastel sticks were used to glaze over the surface in specific areas, such as the tablecloth and background, to create atmosphere and softness. I used the sharp edges of sticks and pastel pencils to create focus and detail. Pastel allows for great control and freedom at the same time, something I've yet to find in any other medium.



▲ **GATHERING ON BLACK**

Jimmy Wright

Soft pastel and acrylic ground for pastels
on 300-lb. (640gsm) hot-pressed paper
26" × 30½" (66cm × 77cm)

Private collection, courtesy of DC Moore Gallery

JIMMY WRIGHT

By loosely basing the painting's composition on a detail from a large oil painting, I was able to improvise the color of the forms through trial and error. As color is the most relative medium in art, experience and practice are the best teachers. The palette of this pastel revealed itself during the working process. The black background—the only predetermined criterion for the painting—is a mixture of warm and cool blacks. The various blacks weren't applied as a single block of color, but in small portions as the composition emerged.

▼ **SAVING GRACE**

Barbara Benedetti Newton
Soft pastel on Wallis sanded paper
11" × 15" (28cm × 38cm)

BARBARA BENEDETTI NEWTON

Working in my studio from reference photos, this painting evolved over a three-year period. It began as a high-key marsh scene and was typical of my work of five years ago. A couple of years later, thanks to the durability of Wallis paper, I garden-hosed that scene away and began again. Using the ghost image, I painted this orchard scene, but overall it was more contrived and labored. After another couple of years of painting mileage, I took it back to the ghost and painted the orchard again. This time, I feel my marks are both loose and nuanced, as well as bold and dramatic. The color relationships are subtle but still a bit surprising. *Saving Grace*, now in its final incarnation, won't be washed off again.



“ *Keep images of older paintings as a visual history of your painting style.* ”

— BARBARA BENEDETTI NEWTON



▲ **TIME TO GO**
Barbara Noonan
Soft pastel over
watercolor wash on paper
24" x 24" (61cm x 61cm)

BARBARA NOONAN

My approach for this bicycle was to express movement in a static object. To this end, I analyzed light and shadow, placement, composition and gesture. The bold strokes may appear effortless, but they are based on resolved sketches, notans and color studies. When a painting is 60 percent complete, I ask myself, "Have you declared too much? What will your viewer contribute to or discover in the painting?" With these questions answered, I continue further.

▼ **SONG FOR BLUE I**
Angela A'Court
Soft pastel on paper
23" × 28" (58cm × 71cm)

ANGELA A'COURT

Song for Blue I came after a time spent living in Japan. It was a time for careful observation, curiosity and exploring the contrasts between old and new, familiar and unfamiliar. I consider myself to be a chronicler, and this painting describes making sense of living in an "otherness" and trying to find my place in it. Using objects from home alongside newly found pieces, the painting represents my emotional response to the objects and the experience of living in another culture.





▲ **SANTA FE COTTONWOODS**

Teresa Saia
Soft pastel over acrylic underpainting
on sanded paper
18" × 18" (46cm × 46cm)
Private collection

TERESA SAIA

Pastels are such a joy to use! The immediacy, spontaneity and power of mark-making in pastel allows unrivaled artistic expression. They're flexible to my mood, whether dark and mysterious or soft-edged and subtle. The color—so rich, saturated and vibrant—can't help but draw in the most casual of viewers.

The painting *Santa Fe Cottonwoods* came about after one of my many trips to Santa Fe to paint and photograph. These creek-side cottonwoods were aglow with backlight in the late afternoon.

I began the painting with a wash of pink-red acrylic. This wash was an integral part of interpreting the values and colors, and it helped me to develop the contrast in warm lights and cool shadows. I allowed parts of this underpainting to show throughout the finished painting. The medium of pastel allowed me to create a direct and spontaneous expression of the mood I felt for this scene.



▲ **PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA**
Nancie King Mertz
Soft and hard pastel on sanded
paper mounted on board
16" × 15½" (41cm × 39cm)

NANCIE KING MERTZ

Each of my paintings begins with a few tickmarks of vine charcoal used sparingly to indicate where things should be placed and to get the perspective correct. Then I apply darks with strokes from the side of the stick and wash them into the surface with denatured alcohol. The alcohol quickly evaporates, allowing me to start work on the midtones and lights almost immediately.

I find hard pastels are a great tool when painting architecture. Their thin shape and square edges make them perfect "window-makers" for the limited details of my work. I save the fun bright colors for last, as my reward (like dessert!), and often leave globs of very soft, rich pigment as the final notes.

▼ **RIDING FORTH**

Aline E. Ordman
Soft pastel on Raw
Sienna pastel paper
9" x 12" (23cm x 30cm)

ALINE E. ORDMAN

I'm attracted to horse-racing scenes because they're about color, movement and design instead of the specific rendering of horses. I approach all my paintings as abstract shapes that, when completed, create a representational image. I always work on toned paper and like the tooth and color Colourfix provides. I start with vine charcoal to sketch in the design because I can easily erase and redraw. I then go in with soft pastels and begin to create in an abstract way, putting in color shapes and then carving them using opposite values. It's often only in the last strokes that the image really comes alive.





▲ **WAITING FOR GODOT**

Diana Sanford
Soft pastel, gel medium and
gesso on white pastel paper
14" × 12½" (36cm × 32cm)

DIANA SANFORD

I engage in a nonobjective process of painting, where the outcome is determined by the act of painting itself and not by any preconceived notion. That makes for a lot of thrown-away material! Still, I'm fascinated by that moment-by-moment engagement, that perceptual experience of color meeting color, dark defining light, rough meeting smooth—all at play in space. Pastels' versatility makes them perfect for working in this way. They're pure pigments that can be used wet or dry, thick and opaque or glazed, with medium or not, fulfilling whatever the painting requests.



▲ **POND LIFE**

Colette Ody Smith
Soft pastel and watercolor over acrylic
ground for pastels on museum board
20" × 20" (51cm × 51cm)

COLETTE ODYA SMITH

My paintings have been described as landscapes that "drift toward ambiguity," compositions that weigh realism and abstraction in "a suffusion of energetic peace." Beginning with close observation, I base a painting on photographs that I crop, combine or deviate from as my intent for the painting requires. I layer the pastel over watercolor and apply the pastel spontaneously, with scumbled areas, sharp linear marks and blended passages, all addressing the different needs of the composition.



▲ **RIVER BEND, PILAR**
Margi Lucena
Pastel on hardboard panel
32" x 40" (81cm x 102cm)

MARGI LUCENA

I can't step outside my door without being overwhelmed by the beauty of the New Mexico landscape. One very magical place for me is Pilar, a tiny village near Taos. The merging of high desert mountains and moving water makes an irresistible subject, and the purity of color and spontaneity of the medium of soft pastel allow me to convey that freshness, contrast and vibrancy. In this painting, done in my studio from plein air studies, I concentrated on the dramatic landforms while revealing a bit of sky through reflections in the water.

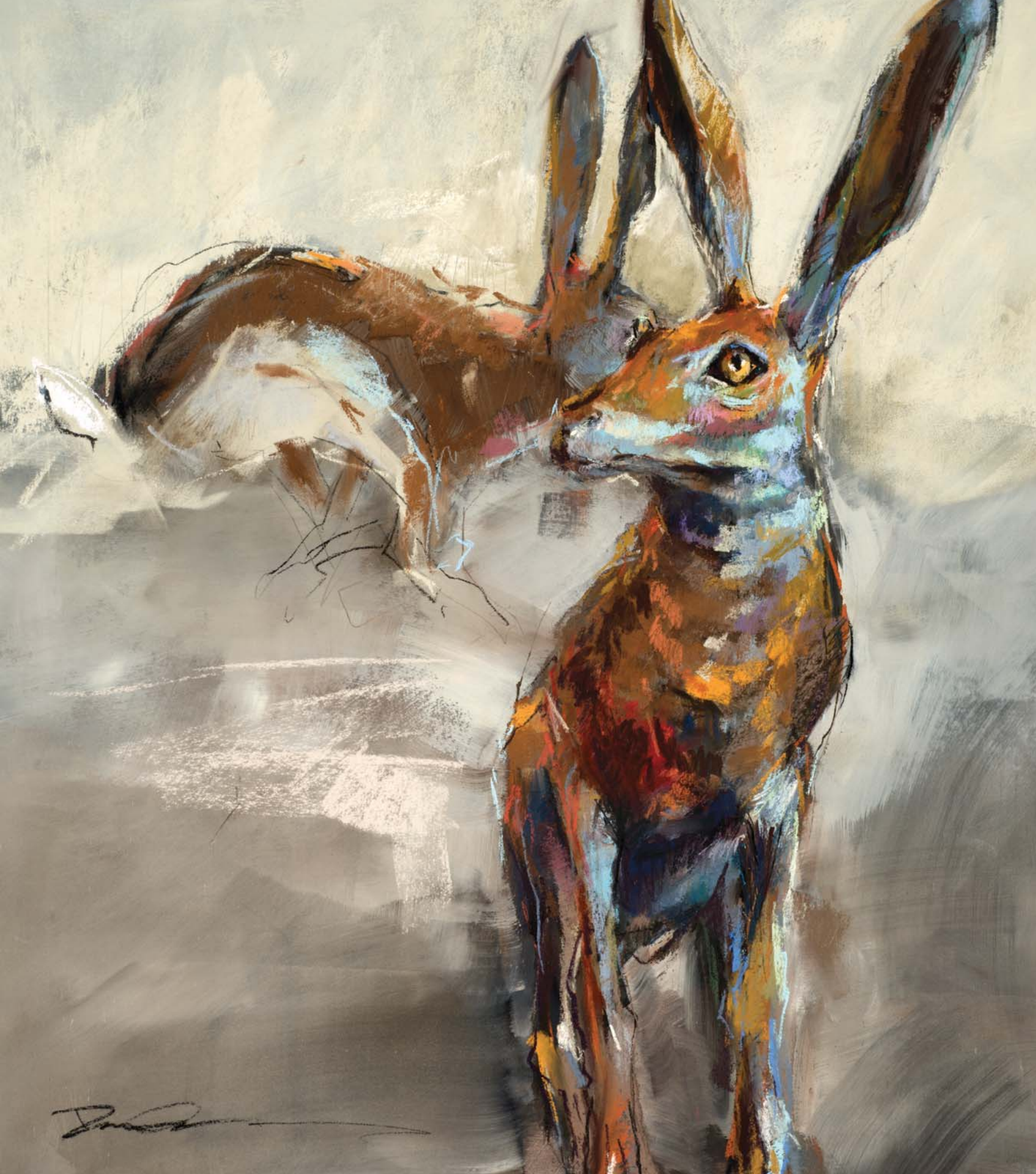


▲ **GARDEN MEDITATION**

Debora L. Stewart
Soft pastel over ground on paper
22" × 22" (56cm × 56cm)

DEBORA L. STEWART

I wanted to create an abstracted garden series, and combining abstraction with more realistic drawings helped me to achieve this. The combination of approaches has led to a more personal expression of a garden. I began this work with a loose underpainting that provided structure, value and expression. Lines came from blind contour drawings created in my garden. I applied acrylic ground with a large brush, and then I darkened areas with more charcoal and rubbing alcohol. I used soft pastels in an analogous color scheme to complete the painting.



▲ **WHAT'S UP?**

Dawn Emerson
Soft pastel over gesso/
pumice ground on paper
34" x 28" (86cm x 71cm)

DAWN EMERSON

This image was first inspired by the onslaught of rabbits that had decimated our garden, and second by the bronze sculptures of hares by artist Mick Doellinger. Mick and I were to be featured at a gallery show together, and I thought it'd be fun to have his sculpture and my pastel shown together, as a kind of double spoof on how life imitates art.

5

Concept + Story

The Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro said, “Blessed are they who see beautiful things in humble places where other people see nothing.” His quote illuminates the artistic sensibility—the power to witness the world deeply and to notice details more keenly than the average observer. And that power is further magnified when the artistically minded are able not only to “see beauty,” but also to formulate their observations into visual statements and express them as works of art.

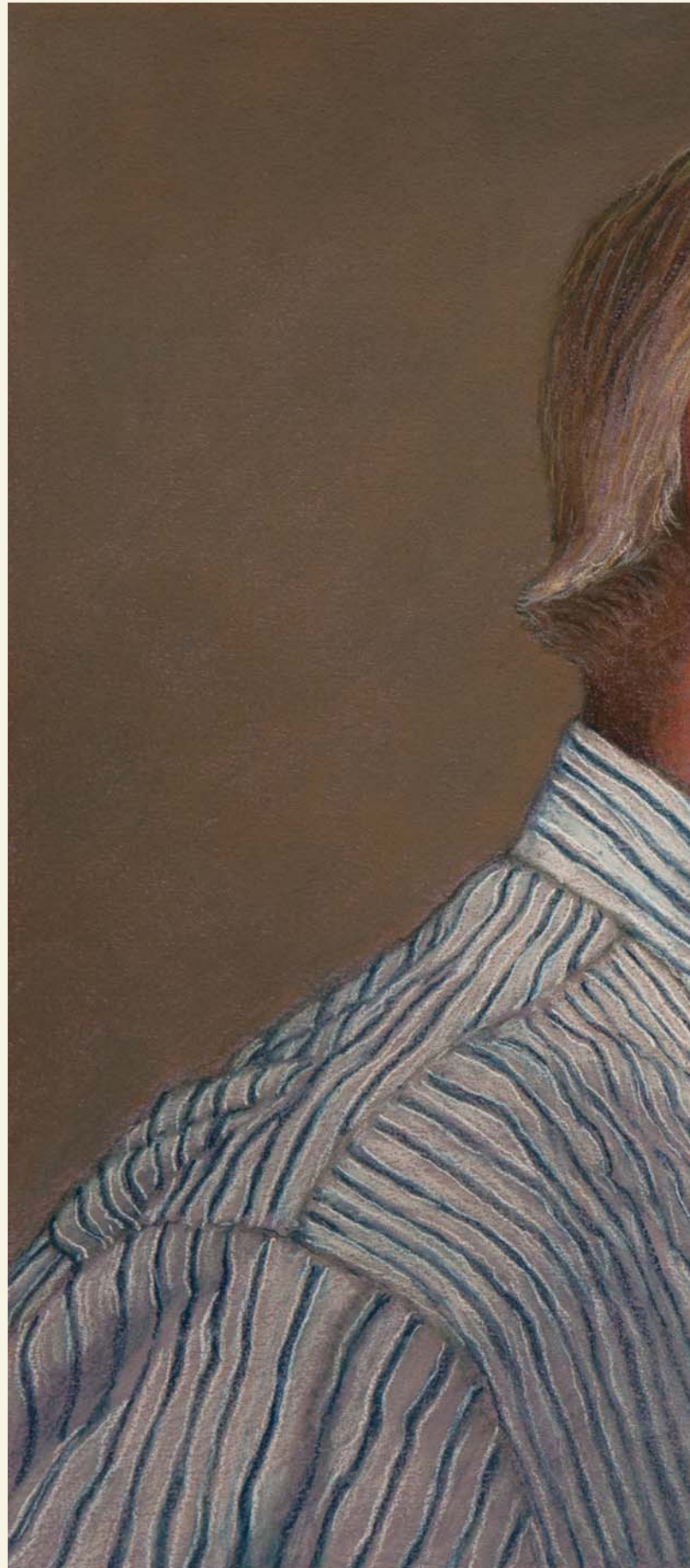
While most painters don’t set out to tell well-defined stories in their work, that doesn’t mean that a personal story isn’t there. In a compelling piece of art, even if the guiding idea isn’t explicit, viewers can feel the artist’s connection. As you engage the paintings in this chapter, you’ll find that, in some cases, the vision of the artist may have been mostly about expressing an aesthetic ideal. In other cases, the communication is more direct, and you’ll understand an intention. When a painting moves us—whether it’s uplifting, provocative or something more nuanced—it’s because the artist’s idea speaks an emotional truth.

▶ AT THE MUSEUM

Claudia Post
Semi-hard and soft pastels on steel gray paper
14" × 19½" (36cm × 50cm)

CLAUDIA POST

At The New Britain Museum of American Art in Connecticut, a visitor was intrigued by this glass head that has an opening in the forehead to look into. His serious expression and the museum lighting inspired me to create this pastel painting using pure pastel throughout, a detailed drawing, open pastel strokes, sharp and soft edges, contrast of values, and intensity of colors to draw the viewer into my painting. A moment in time and dramatic lighting captured in pastel.







▲ **REVEILLE COMPLETED**
Mike Beeman
Pastel on sand pastel card
16" × 20" (41cm × 51cm)

MIKE BEEMAN

This painting was done for the Cheyenne Frontier Days Western Art Show. Since the Francis E. Warren Air Force Base plays an integral part in the celebration, I decided to incorporate an item that would reflect this relationship. After deciding on a theme, I spent a considerable amount of time looking for supporting objects. I did several color studies to work out possible problems. By eliminating some of these obstacles, the chance for success is heightened. In this painting, I paired the vintage bugle with *Life* magazine issues from the 1940s. The flowers were added to soften the overall effect.



▲ **HOOP GAMES**
Alan Larkin
Soft pastel on heavy
illustration board
40" × 30" (102cm × 76cm)

ALAN LARKIN

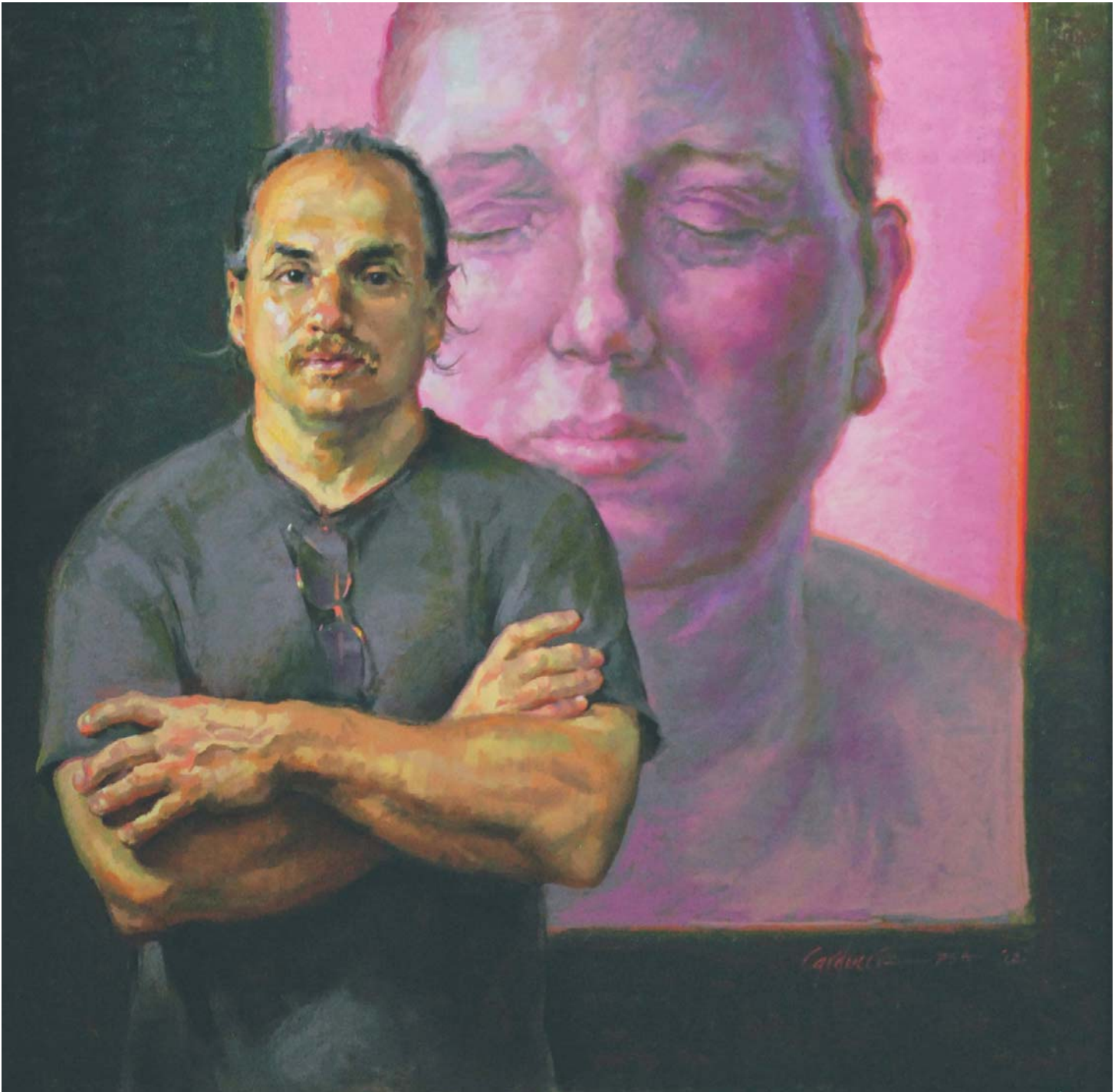
Hoop Games is part of a series of six drawings titled *Wise and Foolish Games*. Though I worked with the same model, each game required poses that created unique feelings. I deliberately saved the most careful drawing for the key elements in the piece—the face and hands—so that their relationship created the emotional triangle that ultimately suggests the story.

▶ **WHICH WAY IS UP?**

Robert K. Carsten
Pastel on dark blue-gray pastel card
24½" × 18½" (62cm × 47cm)

ROBERT K. CARSTEN

This pastel is part of an ongoing series using recycling as a subject parameter for which I chose a twofold focus: finding beauty and innovative design in mundane objects, and displaying significance in helping to preserve or repurpose our material resources. In the process, I became fascinated by the results from the arbitrary manner in which objects are discarded, creating unique color combinations and juxtapositions of form. I took liberties with positions of arrows, thus devising the idea that this painting can be hung from any side, inspiring its title.



▲ **MARK AND SHELLEY**

Judith B. Carducci
Soft pastel on sanded paper mounted on board
30" × 30" (76cm × 76cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Giangaspero

JUDITH B. CARDUCCI

My friend, the artist Mark Giangaspero, and I decided to do portraits of each other. Mark posed in his studio in front of his pastel portrait of his wife, Shelley, which he had painted shortly after she completed treatment for breast cancer. She has since fully recovered, and the contrast between Mark's relaxed, confident demeanor and the stress and sadness on Shelley's face is clear evidence of how far they've come together. I don't stage my portraits to tell stories, but I find that if I know my subjects well, and don't micromanage, their stories will unfold naturally.





▲ **QUINCEAÑERA DRESSES, EL PASO**
Brian Cobble
Pastel on illustration board
24½" × 37½" (62cm × 95cm)
Collection of William and Vaughn Gross

BRIAN COBBLE

A vibrant commercial district has sprung up between downtown El Paso and the Mexican border. The window displays, especially those of the quinceañera (fifteenth birthday celebration) stores, are wonderfully colorful. In this painting, instead of emphasizing the flair and flamboyance, I was drawn to the darker mood found in some of the side-street windows. The miniature doll-like mannequins, as well as the headless life-size ones, add a surreal feeling, and the vibrant colors become richer and more somber.



▲ **DIVING IN SHALLOW WATERS**

Aurelio Rodríguez López
Soft pastel and pastel pencils on paper
27" × 39" (69cm × 99cm)

AURELIO RODRÍGUEZ LÓPEZ

This painting was a commission and part of my solo exhibition in Ming Gallery, Suzhou, China, in May 2016. I chose this particular and unusual moment where the model is diving in a non-gravity environment, dressed up and free. I felt attracted to this scene and wanted to represent it in the most realistic style possible. My principal aim was to capture the likeness of the portrait, but also to express light, humidity and the many nuances and details of the dress and fish.



▲ **INQUIRE WITHIN**

Peter Seltzer
Soft pastel on sanded pastel paper
27" × 40" (69cm × 102cm)

PETER SELTZER

For the last forty-four years, I have had a daily meditation practice. *Inquire Within* refers to this process and its capacity to help realize the wealth of hidden riches that we all walk around with. I use symbols to both express the idea and expand it beyond my personal experience. There's a certain amount of ambiguity that arises from the use of symbols. This will naturally raise questions in the mind of the viewer, leading people to find their own narrative and understanding of the painting. Yes, I have my own story behind the image; what's yours?



▲ **YORAM**
Nancy MacDonald
Pastel on sanded paper
31" × 23" (79cm × 58cm)

NANCY MACDONALD

From the first time I saw Yoram, I wanted to paint him. For me, it's paramount to have a strong connection and feeling about what or whom I'm painting. He sat for me many times and revealed himself to be just as interesting as I had imagined. He was articulate and knowledgeable about so many things. Then one day he arrived wearing a Superman T-shirt accidentally, instead of the shirt for the painting. It was perfect.



▲ **NATURAL BALANCE**
Abel Marquez
Pastel on paper
20" × 25" (51cm × 64cm)

ABEL MARQUEZ

In my pastels, photography plays an important role since it's the visual source on which I base my work. But there comes a time in my process when the photo is set aside, and my own concepts on aesthetics, volume, space, poetry and environment take over.

The process begins when I mount the elements to be photographed. I look for objects that inspire me, that aesthetically please me, and that have poetry and charm. I look for richness of nuances and rhythm in the figure, and I observe the composition. On many occasions, the objective of the work is only to capture and express my aesthetic ideals.



▲ **ALICE ALONE**

Yael Maimon

Soft pastel on Sennelier La Carte pastel card
25" × 18½" (64cm × 47cm)

Yael Maimon

Alice Alone depicts my version of Lewis Carroll's seven and a half year old Alice. To capture the inner spirit of the young Alice, I used lots of vivid, luminous colors that express vitality and imagination. In the story, Alice goes through her journey practically alone, but she bravely rises to all challenges. No matter what age we are, in this big world with its strangeness and all the adventures it holds, we are Alice.

▶ **BALLET**

Alan Larkin
Soft pastel on heavy illustration board
40" x 30" (102cm x 76cm)

ALAN LARKIN

Ballet was part of a series of pieces titled *Dressing Up*, in which the models were people engaged in activities that required costumes. I met lots of interesting people, including this lovely woman who allowed me to shoot a million photos of her spinning and spinning in place. I generally bring out my softest pastels last, and here the Unison pastels on the vellum surface of the illustration board produced rich creamy textures of white.



▲ **A TOUCH III (SYMPHONY IN PEARL AND GOLD)**

Devdatta Padekar
Soft pastel on mount board
19" x 29" (48cm x 74cm)
Gallerie Ganesha, New Delhi

DEVDATTA PADEKAR

A butterfly is one of the most exquisite and beautiful forms in nature; its very presence brings joy to the heart. Any child's reaction to seeing a butterfly is to chase it and try to catch or touch it. It's natural and part of their innocence. The zigzag flying pattern of the butterfly is also natural. There's movement all around. To convey this movement and naturalness artistically and effectively was the challenging part of this painting for me.



ALAN
LAPIN





◀ **BRAIDS**

Devdatta Padekar
Soft pastel on paper
11" x 36" (28cm x 91cm)
Gallerie Ganesh, New Delhi

DEVDATTA PADEKAR

My friend always tied her hair in braids. The grace and ease with which she tied her hair was what I wanted to convey in my painting. I requested she tie her hair into braids in a slow manner as I observed and made memory notes of her head and hand movements. I had to draw and paint quite swiftly, thus retaining the spontaneity and freedom that I always strive to achieve in my work.



◀ **ON THE ROAD AGAIN**

Deborah Quinn-Munson
Soft pastel over watercolor
underpainting on sanded paper
14" x 24" (36cm x 61cm)

DEBORAH QUINN-MUNSON

I'm interested in capturing moments and subjects that may pass by quickly and often aren't considered for a painting. Grateful not to be driving, I could enjoy the sparkling light and color created by the downpour that inspired this painting.

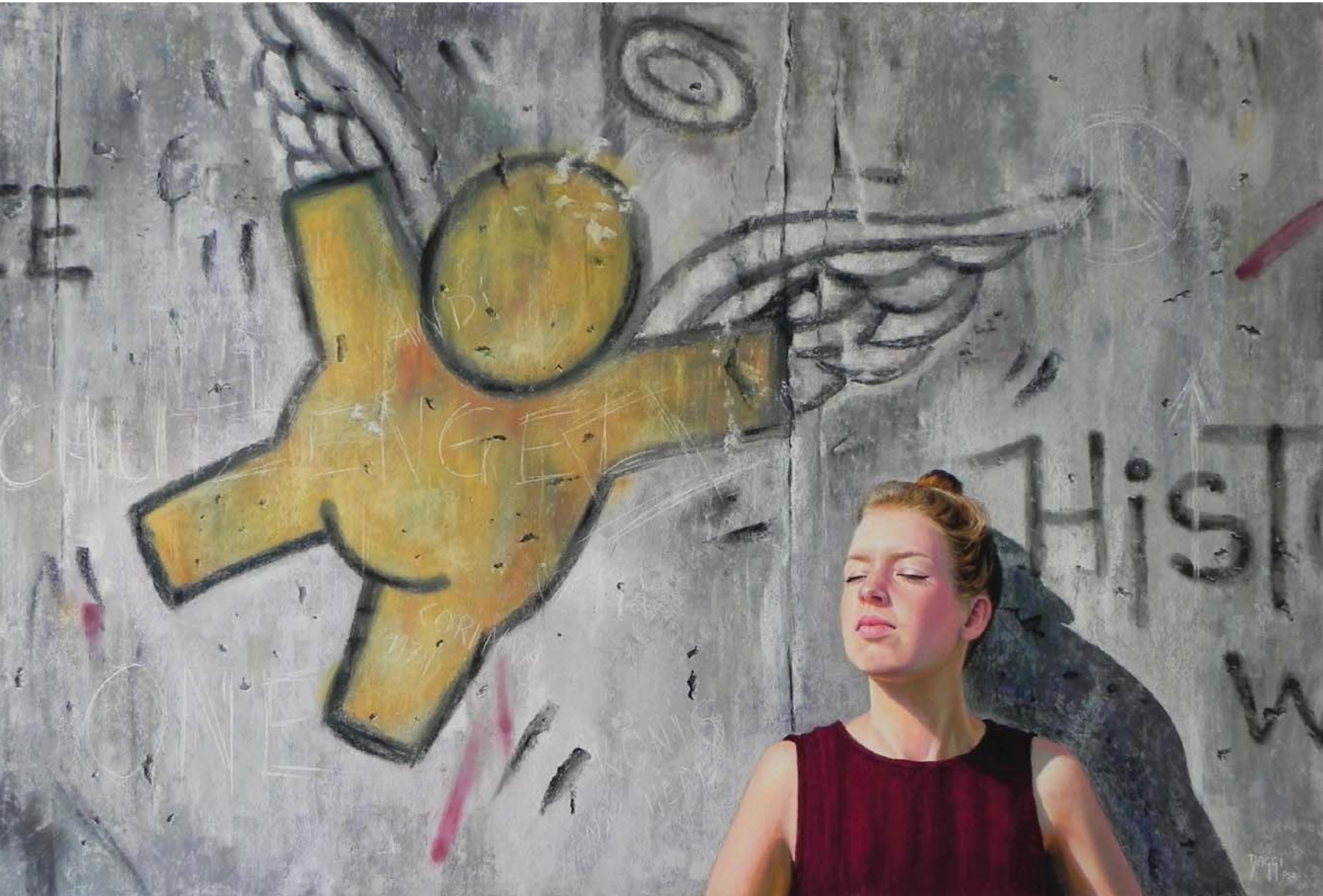
Establishing much of the value structure, the watercolor underpainting remains visible in some areas. Simplifying as much as possible, I selected only the details that convey the feeling of that challenging drive in the rain. Photographs, in this case, were helpful to capture this fleeting moment and provided enough detail to build the painting.

▶ **AM I BEAUTIFUL?**

Alain J. Picard
Soft pastel on paper mounted on board
24" × 16" (61cm × 41cm)

ALAIN J. PICARD

This child lives in poverty amid a resettlement slum located thirty minutes outside of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The title of the painting highlights the paradox that confronted me of her stunning beauty contrasted against terrible living conditions. This portrait is my painted prayer for her protection amid the many dangers she's exposed to every day. It's part of a growing collection of paintings created in response to my experiences in this beautiful, yet heartbreaking, country.



▶ **SCHUTZENDEL (GUARDIAN ANGEL)**

Daggi Wallace
Pastel over watercolor and ink wash on
sanded paper with gesso/pumice ground
40" × 60" (102cm × 152cm)

DAGGI WALLACE

Part of my series exploring my personal history of growing up in West Berlin during the times of the Berlin Wall, this painting is an example of the contradictory nature of walls. They can be a prison *and* a freedom. We can choose to erect them or tear them down.

When I spotted the graffiti of the angel on an actual leftover piece of the Berlin Wall, I knew it would perfectly illustrate my point of having felt protected rather than imprisoned as a child. "Schutzengel" literally translates to "protection angel." Since I lived on the West side, I never felt oppressed but saw the wall as protecting us from Communism. Only when we visited or traveled through East Germany did I feel the oppression.





▲ **ORIGAMI**
Carolyn Robles
Soft pastel on suede mat board
28" × 32" (71cm × 81cm)

CAROLYN ROBLES

Through my travels, I've taken numerous photos of artisans at work. This particular artist embodied the quiet meditation art-making can bring, holding on to her own serenity while hundreds of tourists and locals zipped past her on a busy sidewalk in Florence, Italy. The top border is a bit of a reflection of her thoughts—the mind focusing on the simple shapes and folds. As an art teacher to very busy adults, I often try to remind them of the beauty of slowing down and the benefits of mindfulness and the meditative qualities of art-making. This piece reflects the calm and peace I so enjoy while making art.



▲ **LAUNDRY DAY**
Deborah Bays
Soft pastel and pastel pencil
on tan sanded paper
38" × 28" (97cm × 71cm)

DEBORAH BAYS

Still life that isn't still captures my imagination and affords me an opportunity to explore a concept or story that's enigmatic. *Laundry Day* is about visual movement and abstract shapes that just happen to be painted in a traditional style. The challenge of capturing motion with what we perceive to be stationary objects is particularly well-suited to soft pastel on a sanded surface. The concept required a full range of edges, from hard to soft and almost transparent.



▲ **STICKING MY NECK OUT**

Lisa Ober
Soft pastel on sanded paper
24" × 18" (61cm × 46cm)

LISA OBER

Realistic still life painting can include a fresh approach to scale, color, composition or technique. These bottles are actually 3"–4" (8cm–10cm) tall, but scaling each bottle to approximately 14" (36cm) in height produces a painting that sticks its neck out with unexpected pizzazz.



▲ **WINDOW**

Sally Strand

Soft pastel and charcoal over acrylic underpainting on 140-lb. (300gsm) cold-pressed watercolor paper 24" x 34" (61cm x 86cm)

SALLY STRAND

I'm interested in portraying commonplace experiences, small moments that people don't notice because they're familiar. Here, I portrayed my mother washing her windows.

By including the interior kitchen wall and positioning the viewer inside the kitchen, I was able to emphasize the windowsill, using a frame-within-a-frame motif since *Window* is itself framed. I added another frame-within-a-frame by painting my own work hanging on the kitchen wall near the windowsill. By including my own painting in the composition, I'm referencing the generational tie, because my mother and I are both artists.

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Kim Lordier

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Denise LaRue Mahlke

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Yael Maimon

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Claudia Post

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Kent Art Association, PSA 41st Annual;
Finalist, The Artists Magazine 2013 Annual
Art Competition

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Bordeaux

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Luana Luconi Winner

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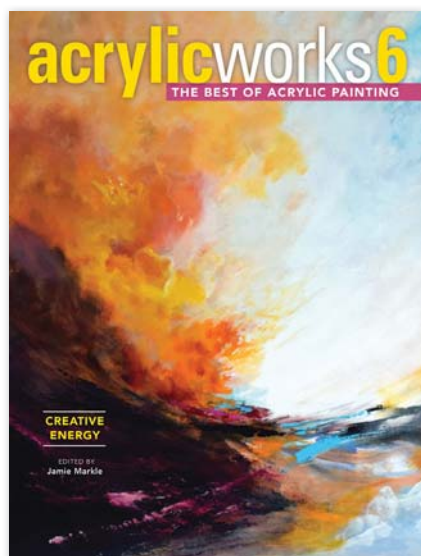


About the Editor

Anne Hevener has served as the editor-in-chief of *Pastel Journal*, a bimonthly magazine for pastel artists, since 2006. She's also the editor-in-chief of *Watercolor Artist* and *Artists Magazine*. As a publishing professional with F+W Media for more than 25 years, Anne has worked on a variety of titles for art and craft enthusiasts, interviewing and writing about many of today's top working artists. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the International Association of Pastel Societies (IAPS). In 2016, she joined six IAPS artists as special guests of the Pastel China Network at the 2nd Biennial International Pastel Art Exhibition in Suzhou, China. Her efforts to promote pastel art have also been recognized by the Pastel Society of America, which named her a "Friend of Pastel" in 2012. Anne lives in Cincinnati. Her family includes her husband, two daughters, a roly-poly corgi and an imperious cat. Besides art and writing, she also enjoys a good novel, long meals with friends, planning the next family vacation and a morning cup of coffee.

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