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WELCOME

Welcome to the very first issue of the Pastel Scribbler, the monthly newsletter of the Pastel Guild of Europe!

The biggest news we have is that the Pastel Guild was founded on May 3, 2009! The purpose of the guild is to educate artists and the general public, promote, and enjoy the versatile and permanent pastel medium, and taking an active part in bringing the renaissance of pastel painting to Europe. Our motto is *Cor et Manum* - Heart and Hand.

Artists of all levels are very welcome to join as members of the PGE. We will have something for everyone: Pastels as a medium, tips and tricks, tutorials, reviews of materials and books. And competitions, for all levels.

The Pastel Scribbler's editor-in-chief is Mario from Croatia. He is aiming to make the Scribbler an interactive newsletter. That means that you, dear reader, are a very important person. Send articles, tutorials, and news to Mario. Are you holding an exhibition? Tell the Scribbler, and send pictures too! Do you know if there is an event for pastellists in your city/country? Tell the Scribbler! Together we will make the Scribbler a fantastic resource.

Mario has put together a very fine and interesting first issue, so read and enjoy,

Charlotte Herczfeld, Sweden

Chair



EDITORIAL SCRIBBLE

Dear reader,

We are more than happy to welcome you to the first issue of the Pastel Scribbler, the newsletter for all of us who are enjoying the beauty of pastels. We hope you will find this type of interaction enjoyable and also useful for your development as an artist regardless the level of your skills. Please feel invited to join us in sharing your ideas, views, knowledge and of course in sharing your work with us.

The Scribbler is open to everyone around the world, and most of the articles will be acceptable globally, but it will also focus on the Pan-European pastel news, events, history and future.

We have started this society as a group of inspired pastelist that have met on the greatest pastel online community - the WetCanvas.com. Most of us never met in person but we are not strangers. You shouldn't feel stranger either. Help us make this newsletter as versatile as our pastel medium is and make it your own. Tell us what is going on in your corner of the Europe, write something about old or contemporary pastel artists from your country, inform us about interesting events, exhibitions, shows and we might join the party. Write anything you feel the other artists reading our newsletter can find interesting.

In this month's Scribbler we are presenting Merethe from Norway and you can follow her beautiful still life demonstration. You can read how the great Monet was forced to use pastels and made a breakthrough in his approach to painting. Read about the *Get Dusty* and get involved with our first event! Happy reading!

Mario Vukelic, Croatia

MEET THE MASTER: The Unknown Monet

source: Debra Mancoff, in *RA Magazine*, Spring 2007

(published with the permission from *RA Magazine*, <http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/ra-magazine>)

Monet famously cast himself as a conjurer of colour and light, never mentioning his graphic work. But as 'The Unknown Monet' shows, drawing played a crucial role in the way he composed his paintings. Here, Debra Mancoff describes how working in pastel helped him paint the London fog.

On 27 January, 1901, Claude Monet wrote to his wife, Alice, saying that he had arrived safely in London and was eager to resume his work on a series of paintings that he had begun the previous winter. But his crate of materials, including the unfinished canvases, was delayed at customs. Monet was visiting London to paint the fog over the Thames, a challenge that had intrigued him for decades. This was his third visit to the city in less than fifteen months and, in his passion to capture the fleeting effects of the low light filtered through the damp mists that built over the chilly waters, he began to sketch in pastel, the only medium he had to hand.



Claude Monet, Twilight, c.1865–70.

At first, he dismissed the sketches, complaining to Alice, 'I would rather be gainfully employed'. Observation was key to Monet's method, and he felt compelled to keep his hand and eye engaged with his chosen motif. Despite his reservations, and his admission to Alice that he was 'unaccustomed' to working in pastel, he took up sketching with his characteristic intensity: 'It keeps me busy and may even help me.'

There was, in fact, little truth in Monet's protest that he was 'unaccustomed' to using pastel. Throughout his long career, Monet turned to drawing to record ideas, plan projects, and study the atmospheric effects

that were central to his artistic expression. While he was just a teenager in Le Havre, he earned his earliest recognition for caricatures in pen and ink of politicians and local celebrities. He always claimed that he did not work in colour until the marine painter, Eugène Boudin, convinced him to buy a box of oil paints and work in the open air, but even as a plein-air painter, Monet made drawings. He used black chalk and pastel to study motifs, such as the wind-filled sails of little boats on the water. He filled sketchbooks with summary impressions in pencil, especially when he was exploring a new locale.

The convenience of working in pastel no doubt appealed to Monet; more than oils, pastel gave Monet the speed he desired when he worked in the open air. Throughout the 1860s, Monet made pastel sketches of the sky – at twilight, in the low light of evening, of clouds looming over the Seine in Rouen – that developed his sensitivity to the most subtle change in effects.

In the autumn of 1870, Monet and his young family left Paris to seek refuge from the Franco-Prussian War. Together with Camille Pissarro, who was also in residence for the duration of the conflict, Monet visited the city's museums and galleries.



Waterloo Bridge, c. 1901 by Claude Monet (1840–1926). Pastel, 305 x 480 mm. Triton Foundation, The Netherlands

They favoured the modern masters of English landscape and, while Constable's plein-air painting of nature was familiar to French audiences, Turner's work was a revelation. It seemed to the two artists as though Turner had painted the essence of light itself. It was also the first time Monet had encountered London's fog. During his nine-month stay, Monet completed only

six works – three were views of the Thames. He developed a subtle, opalescent palette and, in the ensuing years, he applied the lessons he had learned painting the Thames to the more familiar subject of the Seine.

Over the years, Monet made several visits to London, and although he repeatedly confessed his desire to ‘try to paint fog effects on the Thames’, he did not take up the motif until September 1899, when he and Alice visited their son Michel, who had come to London to study English. Monet had not planned to work, but their room on the sixth floor in the Savoy Hotel overlooked the river, so he sent his family off to see the sights while he studied the view from the window. At the end of October, he and Alice left London with a few of what he called *pochades* (rough sketches), before he returned alone in February the following year to begin his project in earnest.

Monet had hoped to secure the same room as before, but Princess Louise had requisitioned it to house wounded veterans from the Boer War. So he took up residence in two rooms on the fourth floor, designating one as his studio. Looking to the left from the window, downstream over the Thames, Monet saw Waterloo Bridge. To the right, he could see Charing Cross Bridge with the Houses of Parliament in the distance. His letters to Alice detail his busy schedule, working on several canvases over the course of the day as the sun travelled from east to west. At first, he felt daunted by the thick winter fog that muted the light, but as his observations deepened, he noticed the subtle colours in the illuminated mists and learned to work in rapid response to the fleeting conditions. One sunny morning, he wrote to Alice, complaining that the lack of fog drove him to despair. But as the morning fires were lit along the banks and the smoke mingled with the rising mist, he ended the letter abruptly: ‘Now, my darling, I must leave you, for the effect will not wait.’

As a *plein-air* painter, Monet’s practice was to tackle his subject on the spot. He left London in April 1900 with 35 views of Charing Cross Bridge and 41 of Waterloo Bridge respectively and, after making minor corrections in the studio, he made a return trip to London the following January, in 1901, to finish them. However, with his canvases held at customs he felt stranded, and working in pastel forced him to forge a different relationship with his motif. Made of powdered pigment bound with gum, pastel delivered colour in its full and immediate brilliance and it did not have to dry to reveal its full effect. Monet took full advantage of this quality, exploring the range of possibility within a single hue, as seen in the tonal gradations that he used in *Charing Cross Bridge*, 1901.



Bank of the Seine, c. 1869, by Claude Monet (1840–1926). Pastel on tan paper, 245 x 425 mm.

Unlike oil, pastel could not be corrected, and practice steered Monet’s confidence as he made bold, sure marks, which are seen in his rendering of the structure of the bridge in the deepest shades of turquoise engulfed in clouds of aqua mist. Above all, pastel allowed Monet to draw in colour. His response to his subject was as intimate as it was immediate. In *Waterloo Bridge*, 1901, he quickly delineated the contours of the broad supporting arches, but worked the shadows and reflections shimmering beneath them in gentle, modulated strokes. In another sketch of *Waterloo Bridge*, he used light, feathery lines to indicate the boats on the water and the span of the bridge with its speeding train; these details are softened by the pale blue-

violet mists that rise from the water and intermingle with the yellow-tinged smoke dissolving into the atmosphere.

By the time Monet’s canvases finally arrived at the end of his first week in London, he had finished 25 sketches in pastel, and he confessed to Alice: ‘**It is thanks to my pastels, made swiftly, that I realise how to proceed.**’ Through the directness of drawing in colour, Monet had captured his impressions with unprecedented immediacy and heightened his sensitivity to the evanescent variation of tone within a single hue. As he completed his ‘Londons’, his sharpened skills rose to the challenge that defined his series, an homage to the elusive beauty of the London fog. ¶

MEET THE ARTIST: Merethe Torbergsen, Norway



I always loved art, as a child I'd create my own magic world of people, animals, images of exotic and beautiful places through my drawings and imaginations. I would spend hours with my pencils and colour sticks, making my own reality with paper and colours.

In school, I'd draw, full drawings and little doodles in class, listening to the teacher with one ear... I still have all the paperdolls me and my friends made, we'd create families for each and every one, all with their own personality and history. We were the designers of a world of its own, what happy memories to own...

As a typical teenager I moved on to draw graphite portraits of celebrities, horses, lions, tigers, love stories, cats and dogs - and the occasional comic book. I'd draw for myself, for my friends, and to me this has been an important part of developing imagination, emotions and a quiet place for my thoughts - many problems and difficult issues were handled while drawing.

To me - being creative and imaginative is a big part of growing as a human being - every child should be as lucky as I was...

Growing into adulthood I left the pencils and drawing books, and music became my main occupation in terms of creativeness. Being in a band, performing live, singing, playing the guitar - being creative still was a big part of my life.

After ten years on the road I picked up a pencil and started graphite drawing again. Funny how you don't know how much you miss important parts of yourself, and don't even know it... I found that missing part, and as an adult I'd have a different take to it, this time gaining more knowledge about art. Colours, composition, values, light/shadows, anatomy... all the exciting and uncovered subjects to art. I tried watercolours, oils, acrylics - but didn't really find my passion until I discovered soft pastels. My addiction and true love art-wise - this wonderful, exciting medium with all its options and possibilities. The brilliant colours, the fragile or brightness - the soft pastels can be so many things. I'm studying and learning, exploring and experimenting - and soft pastels has become my medium of choice. Self taught, but with help and advice from other, talented artists, I'm loving every minute I spend at my easel. <http://sitekreator.com/Craviapastels> ¶



Cherries in a bag - still life demo

by Merethe Torbergsen

I work mainly from my own photos, I do photo shoots in bright sunlight as I want strong light/shadows. I use a Cannon 350 D camera, it suits my needs nicely. I shoot the photos in high resolution to see the details clearly, and make notes in my sketchbook when I have the set up in front of me. My computer is a tool for my painting process. I keep the reference photo on the monitor, and I can easily zoom in and out to get a good view of details. I find it easier to make good color choices by the monitor, rather than printing it out.



I start my painting process with a drawing. I do a rough drawing of main lines, and identify shadows and highlights. The drawing is transferred to the pastel paper with tracing paper, using a cheap pastel stick on the back of the tracing paper. I'll seal the drawing on my pastel painting with a light fixative coat. This is the only time I'll use fixative during the process. I'm not too worried about getting an absolute accurate transfer, some lines might be moved around a bit - I don't always correct when I'm painting things like fruit, fabric etc.

While painting I keep referring to the ref photo to identify values and colors, and I keep an eye on the other parts of the painting to make sure it'll all come together in the end. Using photos as reference has taught me is that it can't reproduce true colors and values, and what works in a photo might not work in the painting. This is the reference for this painting. I used Faber Castell Polychromo, Girault, Unison and Great American soft pastels. In addition I also used Carbothello and Faber Castell Pitt pastel pencils for details. I sometimes use colors shapers to clean up edges, but for the most part I use my pencils for edges and small details. For Cherries in a bag I picked out a sand-colored sheet from Sennelier La Carte 30x40 cm.

This is the start of the painting. I usually start in the upper left corner and work my way down in sections. I've started work on the plastic bag, basically just blocking in darks, lights and midtones. At this point I've used different grays, and a little bit of blue - using hard pastels and a few pencils. As I'm getting closer to the cherries I'll use some dark reds too. At this point the background is still undecided, I'll start working with it when I see how dark it needs to be to make the bag "pop". I'm looking for the largest shapes at this point, details to get the realism I'm looking for comes later. Some parts might be too dark now, but that's an easy fix when I start to work in the details. I'm not trying to reproduce the photo, I'm not trying to do every line and shape correctly according to the ref. What's important is to identify values and find a palette that works for me.



I blend through all stages in my work when I'm painting reflecting surfaces like glass, plastic and metal. The bag is too dark to give the impression of plastic, and I'll keep brightening the colors bit by bit until I get the

right look. I always work in thin layers, building up the colors. I find it easier to avoid making mud this way. La Carte has enough tooth for this kind of approach.



I've lightened the plastic bag with some light gray, light blue and a white pencil - later on I'll bring out the highlights even more with my white Great American. I've started work on the background - from black to dark gray, with a touch of the darkest red I'll be using for the cherries. I can't get a good impression of how the bag looks until I have some cherries too, so I've started painting cherries. I've used two colors for them - a dark Cyprus, GA, and a dark alizarin FC. I've used black to darken the red even more - and blended it all. For the stems I use dark green, light green, cream and a couple of red browns. I don't blend the stems, I use my pencils and they'll do the blending for me.



Cherries before blending.



Cherries after blending.

I'm moving on to the cherries in the front, to get the lighter colors in the mix. When I work I use a blow-brush constantly, I blow off excess dust before blending - it keeps the colors clean. The blow-brush is part of my camera equipment, but I found better use for it than cleaning my camera.

I've painted a few more cherries, moving forward to the closer ones, slightly shifting the values. I'm not looking for photorealism when I paint, I try not to get caught up in details. I want deep, rich reds, and I try to keep the palette down to 6-7 different reds. I'll use some of the cherry colors in shadows and background, to tie the painting together.



For the cherry highlights I used light blue and pure white for the brightest parts. At this point I'll leave out parts of the photo, keeping focus on what is important for the painting to work.



Bag before blending.



Bag after blending.

The next step is working the wood surface beneath the cherries. I won't be doing a detailed wood texture, as I want to keep focus on the bag and cherries. Painting the wood I indicate some lines, enough to make it read wood for the viewer. I use different browns, and a little turquoise some places. I like the effect of the turquoise, it seem to add more realism to the wood. At the end I'll let the painting sit in my studio a few days, usually I'll find some areas that need tweaking when I've let the painting rest. Finally, here's the finished painting. ¶



GET READY...GET DUSTY

Join our monthly painting challenge where all members participate and have lots of fun. In addition to the fun of painting, there is the excitement in the fact that all members get to Vote!! There shall be one winner, who shall have the honour of having their painting displayed on the starter page of our PGE site, and an interview with the winning artist published in the Get Dusty Gallery.

Up to 5 Honorary Mentions will get their paintings displayed in the Get Dusty Gallery.

The theme for this month is **the Birth**.

For more details visit Get Dusty web site at pastelguild.eu/dusty.asp

NEWS, SHOWS, EXHIBITIONS, WORKSHOPS

On Sunday night 3 May 2009, the Pastel Guild of Europe was formally founded, and the Bylaws accepted by the members. A Board was chosen: Chair Charlotte Herczfeld (Sweden), Vice Chair George S Martins (Portugal), Treasurer Dorte Krogh Nielsen (Denmark), Secretary Mary Brigid Mackey (Ireland), and Mario Vukelic (Croatia).

A Board Developing Committee, and lay Auditors were also chosen. Serving as Auditors are Merethe (Norway) and José (Portugal). Serving as Board Developing Committee are Cecilia (Spain), Merethe (Norway), and Marion (France).

Thank you for being who you are and for making the PGE awesome! And thank you to all who have supported this endeavour and made it possible.

Charlotte (aka Charlie) Chair

Société des Pastellistes de France:

International Salon, from April 18 to June 7, 2009, in Yerres

International Pastel Festival, July 4 to Sept 6, 2009, in Feytiat

International Pastel Festival, July 18 to Sept 13, 2009, in Saint-Florent-le-Vieil

http://www.pastellistesdefrance.com/fr/festival_expo/festival_expo.htm

Art du Pastel en France:

International Salon, June 6 to 13, 2009, in Giverny

<http://www.artdupastelenfrance.com/index.html>

Pastel Society, England:

Annual show Pastels Today 2009, June 10-21, The Mall Galleries, London

<http://www.thepastelsociety.org.uk/show.html>

Spanish Pastel society

Just recently the spanish association of pastel painters, ASPAS-PASTEL had their 1st International Exhibition of Pastel Painters which took place between the 3rd and 18th of March in Oviedo, Spain, at the Prince Phillip Auditorium. The 45 pastelists have participated from all over Europe and North America.

The Spanish Pastel society was created in 2007 by a small group of pastel painters from the region of Asturias and has slowly become larger with pastelists from all over Spain.

You can visit the web at www.aspas-pastel.es

Tell us what's going on

Tell us what is going on in your corner of the Europe, write something about old or contemporary pastel artists from your country, inform us about interesting events, exhibitions, shows and we might join the party. Write anything you feel the other artists reading our newsletter can find interesting.

Write to scribbler@pastelguild.eu

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The Pastel Guild of Europe website: pastelguild.eu

Send your feedback to scribbler@pastelguild.eu

