

# Simplifying The Complex 9–10 November 2012

## Workshop Notes

### Day 1:

There were two major topics that we wanted to cover:

The first was developing technical skills; such as your ability to manipulate your paint, and the second was developing your perception and conceptual skills.

We focussed on three fundamental skills to help with the technical side of things. These skills were:

- Gradation of colour
- Dry brushing technique
- Rolling your brush and using the edge of it

The gradation exercises are useful to be thought of as a “foundation” technique - great for large areas. The other two techniques are often used over the top of the gradation technique to create detail, texture and nuances.

Most painting problems can be solved by a mastery of these three techniques.

We did four exercises to develop these techniques further. Apart from developing technical skills, these exercises were designed to illustrate how simple it is to make a painting, and as they were quite simple images, they were designed to limit you from some of the conceptual constraints we may have. Sometimes less is more. The exercises were (in no particular order):

### Highlights in Shadows Exercise:

This was fundamentally a gradation from warm through to cool, using the edges and tips of the brush in varying ways, to create the illusion of branches reflected, flecks of light, shrubs, grass, weeds etc etc. It's important to note perspective and that lines of shadow will run away from the light source.



### Blocking a Canvas with Olive Green:

We investigated how flicking colour randomly onto the surface, and again dragging the edges of the brush through the painting vertically and horizontally, can quite convincingly create the illusion of depth and dimension, and can create quite a compelling suggestion of forest.

### **Snowscape:**

This exercise highlighted how using soft gradations of colour and tone create a wonderful backdrop for detail that is made from purely using the edge of your paintbrush to create the illusion of trees and branches, and some flicks of paint to create leaves and blossoms. Additionally, a little bit of extra colour was added to the sky, to create the illusion of light breaking through. We also reinforced the concept of the shadows receding away from the light.



### **Boat Harbour:**

The final exercise was, surprise, surprise, using a gradation of colour to build a foundation for a painting, that being the sky and the outline of the trees. The gradation of colour illustrated the use of warm through to cool as you move further from the light source. The final pieces of the painting, were again created using the edges of the brush, and strategic touches to suggest boats, masts and reflections.

Most of these exercises were gradations of colour for the foundation, and then more subtle and sophisticated brush technique to create the detail. In the others, the gradation of colour or tone was in the detail.

The plan was that developing these skills through the day would influence the images you would choose for next day. Did that happen?

### **Day 2.**

We started the day by making a plan for your painting before throwing any paint at it, to give some structure to it. Ready, set, go!

*Jill*



Sam



Penny



Hedy



*Frances*



*Carol M.*



*Sharyn*



*Bev*



*Carol*



*Leigh*



I had a ball. It was great catching up with old faces. (Not old, no, no!! Young faces, revisited is what I meant!), and it was also great meeting people I hadn't painted with before. I loved the energy of this class - lots of laughs. You're a good bunch of people! We are looking forward to catching up with you all again.

We would love to see any of your work - keep us in the loop. We'd love to hear how and if the workshop has made any difference to any other paintings that you're doing.

#### Overheard:

“You can’t overrefract”

Hedy “come to Lennox and watch me blow dry” Bryant.....hmmm

“Uh-oh! The perspective police have been called!!”

“is this joke inappropriate??”