

Pastel Artists.Ca

PASTEL ARTISTS.CA

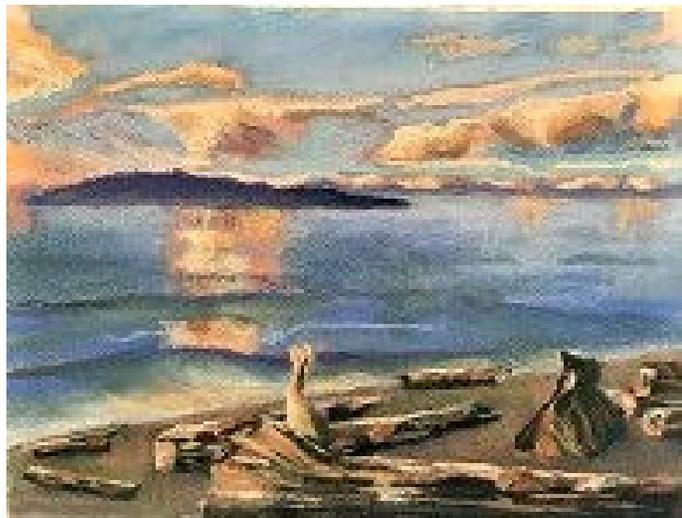
A COMMUNITY OF PASTEL ARTISTS

“Purely Pastel”

www.pastelartists.ca

August, September, October, 2017

THE WORKSHOP EXPERIENCE



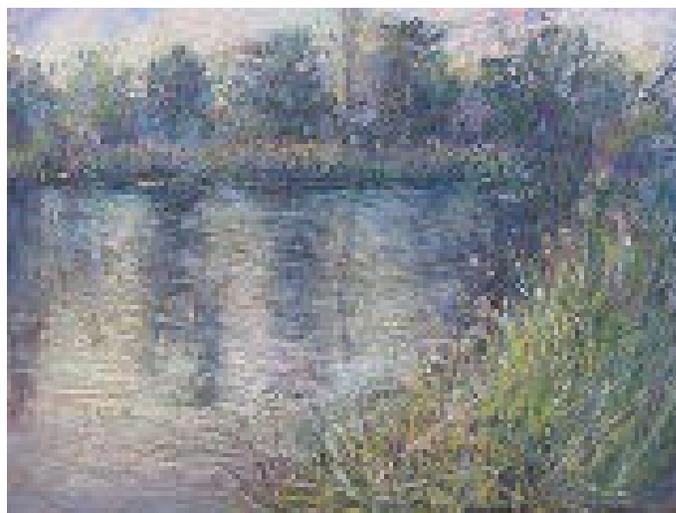
“Morning Light over the Trail Islands” by Margot Hallman
Richard McKinley’s Workshop



“Morning Cast” by Denise Nonomura
Jessica Masters’ Workshop



“Feel the Glow” by Grace Croughan
Marla Baggetta’s Workshop



Piece by Cindy Trevitt
Richard McKinley’s Workshop



Pastel Artists.Ca

was founded in 1989. First known as Pastel Artists of Ontario, Canada, the name was changed in May of 2003 to Pastel Artists Canada. In August, 2007 it was incorporated under its present name, Pastel Artists.Ca., still expressed as Pastel Artists Canada.

Pastel Artists.Ca (PAC) is a mentoring organization and as such we encourage artists at any level to participate in our activities.

Learning and Fellowship Opportunities

If you are looking to improve your skills or knowledge of the pastel medium, PAC offers:

- Workshops with well-known instructors
- Local one or two-day member paint-ins/outs

Public Appreciation

PAC sponsors three shows a year:

- Members' Show - open to members at any level
- Annual Juried Show - entries are selected by a judge
- Online Members' Juried Exhibition

Recognition

PAC offers two levels of accomplishment:

- Signature status (PAC)
- Master status (MPAC)

Newsletter and Website

Our quarterly newsletter and our website offer:

Marketing Opportunities

- Posting of your teaching workshops
- Advertising solo shows
- Noting acceptance into various exhibitions

Information Resources

- Upcoming national and local events
- Tips on painting and framing
- New products or marketing information

Affiliations

- Pastel Society of Eastern Canada (PSEC)
- International Association of Pastel Societies (IAPS)

Membership is based on the calendar year and renewal is due on January 1st. New members joining after September 1st will have the following calendar year included with the initial membership fee.

Annual Membership: Basic \$50 CAD/Premium \$80 CAD
Outside Canada: Basic \$60 US/Premium \$90 US

Annual membership fees can now be paid using PayPal.

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We need your help! To make your organization run as smoothly as it is, several of the above members are having to wear two hats. We would appreciate your participation. Come join **The PAC Team**.

Contact Ruth Rodgers at: rodgers.ruth@gmail.com



From the President's Easel

By Ruth Rodgers, PAC, MPAC

This issue is focused on the workshop experience. Whether you stay local (like those who took Richard McKinley's workshop in BC in May) or travel afar (like those of us who flew to Albuquerque for the International Association of Pastel Societies [IAPS] convention in early June), there's nothing quite like being exposed to new ideas, new techniques, new subjects - as well as new challenges!

An instructor like Richard McKinley can be a stretch for many—his presentation is densely packed with painting theory, and his demos are complex, showcasing some experimental techniques. Some participants may have felt a little intimidated while at the same time being motivated. Richard's warm and welcoming demeanour encouraged all to 'just try it out' and I am confident that his pearls of wisdom and various approaches will percolate through their work for many months to come. A review of his excellent books and DVDs might help that wisdom to be consolidated!

PAC members who attended the IAPS convention expressed some of the same inner conflict. They were inspired and excited by the demos and workshops, but the incredible excellence of the works on display at the juried exhibition also seemed a little daunting—will *we ever* be able to paint that well?

I think this inner conflict is pretty common when we are learning new things. Even though we know that we can't expect to be good at something we are trying for the first time, we do have a certain amount of 'performance anxiety' and want our work to turn out well. A natural feeling—but one that can hinder our willingness to try new things, to let go of our expectations and 'go with the flow.' As much as possible, try to view the experience as simply an opportunity to 'play'—and don't expect to create masterpieces (or even 'keepers') at a workshop!

I hope you'll be inspired by the tales of workshop experiences included in this issue, and encouraged to sign up for a few workshops in the coming months. Good luck!

Speaking of IAPS (see my report elsewhere in this newsletter)—special congratulations to MPAC Kathy Hildebrandt, who achieved her Master Circle status with this exhibition. Kathy's clever painting *The Making of Mona* won an honourable mention in this prestigious show, as well! Roberta Combs was also represented in the Masters Circle show, and PAC members Trish Acres and Christine Camilleri had works in the IAPS show. Congrats to all!



Kathy received her Master Circle medallion and certificate at the Saturday banquet. Kathy is one of four Canadian artists to have achieved this honour.

Congratulations to the following members who achieved signature status with the acceptance of their work into the PAC 2017 Open Juried Exhibition "*Purely Pastel*" held Vancouver's Granville Island Federation Gallery.

PAC signature status:

Valerie Wilson, PAC
Grace Frate, PAC
Donna McDonnell, PAC

MPAC status:

Sheila Mather, PAC, MPAC
Catherine Sheppard, PAC, MPAC

Reflections on Richard McKinley's Workshop



Richard McKinley sharing his Pearls of Wisdom

by Paige Axelrod

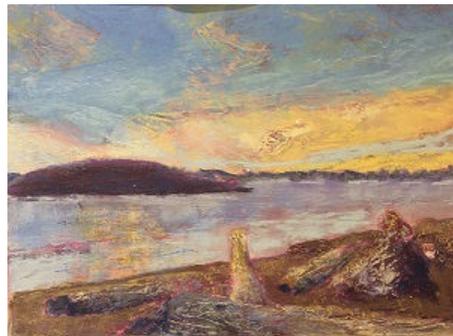
Attending Richard's workshop was an inspiring experience for me and I learned a lot. He created a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere during the first few minutes of the workshop, and he generously shared his artistic knowledge, insights, strategies, techniques and much more throughout the 3 days. By listening to and watching Richard demonstrate how he does a thumbnail drawing, the steps involved with creating watercolour and impasto under paintings, developing his compositions, and incorporating design principles, I felt excited to explore these methods during the workshop. I also enjoyed meeting and talking with other pastel painters during the workshop.

by Margot Hallman

I registered for Richard McKinley's workshop with some trepidation given his stellar reputation in the world of pastel. However, I was quickly put at ease by Richard's open non-judging approach to teaching. He took time with every single participant at least two or three times a day and his comments were so helpful. The group that participated were supportive and engaged with the detailed preparatory process taught by Richard.

I was excited to learn about introducing texture to my pieces. I have never worked with acrylic materials before and I was very taken Richard's use of an acrylic medium to create an impasto effect in pastel paintings.

At the top of the next column is an example of my preparatory work using a hard pastel and liquefix to outline my big shapes and chosen places of texture, with a watercolour under painting so I would have something to play from when applying my pastel.



Preliminary Piece by Margot Hallman
Final Version on the front page.

The fun part was experimenting with pastel over the under painting and the texture created by the acrylic medium.

The final version of this painting is on the front cover. Although it is hard to re-create in a photo, I am thrilled with the effect of bark on my logs on the beach. I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from one of the Masters!

by Bill Hulme

As for reflections on the workshop, the word "incremental" comes to mind, but the one point which came through to me, especially after the slide show, was that Richard took the ordinary and made it into something extraordinary. In other words, we don't have to go chasing after wide vistas, but just look for something simple closer to home.



Workshop Piece by Bill Hulme

by Joan Hulme

What struck me was the various ways you can do the under painting process and the effects they can have on the painting. I was also impressed by the way Richard was able to spend time with each student, advising and encouraging.



Workshop Piece by Joan Hulme

by Joan Larson

Richard's workshop was a life-changer for me. I describe myself as "a realist by nature but an impressionist at heart" and breaking through the tyrannical bonds of realism is a challenge for me.

Richard's workshop really helped me to move away from the literal and dogmatic copying of photos. I now know why he is a world-class teacher . . . he is generous to a fault, supportive and positive, and he gives enough technical data who even those of us that have worked in pastel for decades learn something new and wonderful.

For me, watching the joie de vivre that he brings to his art was a breath of fresh air . . . he has put the "play" back into pastels for me.



Preliminary Piece by Joan Larson
"Some softer edges were encouraged."

Overall, watching how very thoughtful and sparing he is when he applies the pastels was insightful. My take-away phraseology, that I have repeated several times so far is: "Dots and dashes, bits and pieces . . ."

Thank you to Ruth and anyone else who made this workshop happen. I have attached some photos of the piece that I did at the workshop. It is not finished and it is certainly not great art but it is a departure for me and exactly where I want to go.

So if I keep in mind "dots and dashes, bits and pieces" then this piece is not far off and I remind myself of that often when painting, less is more.



Workshop Piece by Joan Larson
"Detail added to the fore
ground grasses on the left."

by Cindy Trevitt

I am fairly new to pastels and this was my first pastel workshop. I didn't really know Richard McKinley nor what to expect. I felt a fair bit apprehensive to say the least. The supply list alone was daunting for me although it ended up being a valuable lesson in pastel materials and where to get them.

Now to gush a wee bit...I found Richard to be clear, eloquent, and inexhaustibly comprehensive. For me, his demonstrations were inspirational. Clearly that was decades of experience at play and I would love to look over his shoulder on an ongoing basis. Learning about the under painting techniques using watercolours or monochromatic value sketches painted over with gesso and then the gesso impasto was exquisitely delicious! It was a sublime experience for me and I was tremendously jazzed to try these new methods.

Throughout the workshop, I felt both excited and intimidated and for the life of me could not calm myself enough to be truly mindful and present so I definitely did not like the initial results of my efforts. I did, however, love playing with the gesso impasto techniques and the last under painting I did, although it had dubious beginnings, resulted in a piece with which I was pleasantly surprised. I don't know if the picture will do it justice **but I greatly look forward to trying more.**

The lessons in value and notan studies were extremely valuable to me. It was a missing puzzle piece that suddenly made sense of the whole puzzle: "Values do the work and colour gets the glory." I've written some key Richard McKinley quotes down and taped them above my easel.



Preliminary Piece by *Cindy Trevitt*
(final version on the front page)

Since the workshop, I've been trying to paint or create impasto surfaces with gesso (I did not know it contained grit until now). What I'm struggling with is somehow merging what I already do into what I have learned.

I do, however, feel optimistic that with a fair bit of practice, mindful presence, application and the willingness to be frustrated I can see how I could, in time, get to the outcome I desire. I am so excited about the possibilities and have been actively working at daily studies and far more plein air since the workshop!

It was a "serendipitous" experience that freed me to whole-heartedly embrace my desire to be a pastel landscape painter.

by Val Wilson

I found that Richard McKinley was not only an amazing artist, which I knew from being familiar with his work, but also a wonderful teacher. These things often don't come in combination.

I struggle with composition and Richard showed us some very straightforward techniques that have broadened my outlook and will allow me to progress in this area.

Beyond that, he was remarkably generous with advice, based on solid knowledge that he had gathered over the years of his career.

One important thing that Richard stressed, was to think about the viewer and to organize your composition in a way that allowed him or her to enter the painting.

I also learned that if the title of a painting is non-specific, it encourages people to engage with the work and to create their own story.

Thank you Richard, and thank you Ruth for arranging for us to have this wonderful experience.

Reflections on Marla Baggetta's Workshop

by Andrea Pyman

It was a great workshop....apart from being an inspiring artist, Marla is a very organized and thoughtful teacher. I feel like I've had my natural approach deconstructed (rather like rebuilding your golf swing) and now I'm trying to put the pieces back together... and it feels like good things are coming out of that.



Workshop Piece by
Andrea Pyman

by Grace Croughan

Here's one of the paintings I did on day 2 of the workshop. (see front page). I really enjoyed and gained from Marla's workshop. She's an amazing artist, teacher and person. My goal was to "loosen up" and I feel I gained more than just that.

by Carol Walthers

Marla's workshop was truly inspiring. She gave me a comfortable place to try to stretch myself artistically. She shared with us her sources of inspiration taking time to reflect on what is important to us as artists. I know that what I picked up from her workshop will stay with me for some time to come.

Our last assignment of the workshop was to paint an object found in the room. Whatever object we found we had to paint it large and we only had about 40 minutes to get it done. I was happy with my painting, thanks to Renata for loaning the banana to me. Thanks to PAC for making this workshop possible.



Workshop Piece by
Carol Walthers

Reflections on Jessica Masters' Workshop



Jessica Masters demonstrates creating focus with contrast of tone and colour.

by *June Gauthier*

I lost interest in painting sometime last autumn. I have found reasons not to join my friends for our usual Thursday painting session; sometimes the reason was valid, sometimes not.

So when I received Jessica Masters' notice of a three day workshop close to my home I thought "maybe this is the answer, why not give it a try".

Jessica's first exercise was using a Notan, a two value study to start a painting. I knew the theory of the Notan but it did nothing for me, it seemed a waste of time when all I wanted to do was paint. Then Jessica introduced us to breaking the Notan into a value study of white, granulated greys and black, breaking the scene to 5 to 7 big shapes then applying Spectra Fix with a brush to cover your paper.

It worked, I was hooked. Jessica had opened up a new way for me to start painting. I did not know where I was going but I now had a map. It was like flying by the seat of my pants but knowing I would arrive at my destination. I have found what had been missing in my painting; it is the excitement of putting down my response to the scene and not just copying it.



Workshop Piece by
June Gauthier

This is the painting I brought home; it is only in its second stage and has been sprayed with Spectra Final Fix so I can finish with more pastel.

by *Rosemary Kay*

Jessica Masters' summer 2017 workshop turned out to be exactly what I wished for. From the first moments when I saw her work at the Globe Art Studios and Open House, her paintings mesmerized me with their vibrating colours, light and energy. I knew I could learn from her, and her upcoming workshop presented the perfect opportunity. My goal was simply to get started painting now that time has opened up in my schedule.

During the three-day workshop in July, Jessica demonstrated painting techniques and strategies, encouraged collaborative discussion, led us through practical hands-on exercises, and organized valuable group critiques.

She also deftly mentored each of us with personalized feedback based on our individual goals. During the workshop when I felt stuck, Jessica helped me focus by comparing the painting process with walking across water, step on just one stone at a time.

The visual she gave me reminded me of my backcountry trip last summer across a stony section of beach on the way to Stormhaven campground in Bruce Peninsula National Park. Just like hiking, if you know where you want to go, and take your painting one-step at-a-time, you'll find your way. In the process, you might even find some great surprises that you didn't anticipate seeing! I feel like the workshop gave me steps to start a new journey, connected me with more experienced pastel artists, introduced me to PAC, and turned out to be a wonderfully grounding inspiration.

by Denise Nonomura

I attended a wonderful workshop hosted by artist Jessica Masters, July 8-10 in beautiful Thornbury. The two and a half day experience was the right length and Thornbury studio was the perfect venue. Jessica covered colour theory and application, values, under painting techniques, making our own pastel surface, demonstrations, challenges, and lots of one on one instruction and discussion.



Preliminary Piece by Denise Nonomura
final version on front page

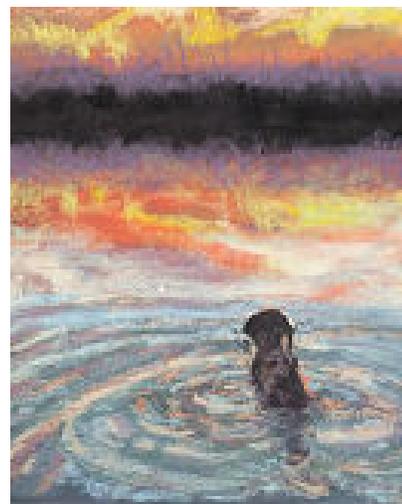
Group feedback and critique was a valuable part of the workshop as we had the opportunity on the last day of the workshop to discuss the work the participants created and learn from our peers.

I also had the opportunity to discuss techniques for creating larger pieces which will be my focus for my next few projects and I came away from the workshop with renewed focus and ideas that I am already putting into practice. Below is one of the pieces I started in the workshop with an under painting. I finished off this piece at home after the workshop. (see front page)

by Donnalee Stewart

I've taken several of Jessica Masters' workshops over the last 4-5 years. I say several because she never gets old.

Sometimes the focus will be colour, and another time it might be composition, plein air in the garden, or a limited palette.



Workshop Piece by Donnalee Stewart

I've attended workshops in her friend's studio in Fergus, the Wellington County Museum and many at the Pastel Studio in Cambridge. I've not yet attended the Thornbury venue, but eventually I will. No matter the location you always leave with a nugget or two of golden information!

It's great to have 2-5 days of focused instruction. There's often a demo, and usually a warm-up exercise to kick-start the day. Even if you may have previously done it, there'll be a new twist to it, and/or a different photo reference.



Workshop Piece by *Donnalee Stewart*

It is so inspiring to be around the energy that comes from a group. The ideas, networking, feedback and encouragement are incredible. I'm always amazed at how much you learn from others. Often it's by eavesdropping on their questions when you're not quite "in the zone" and tuned out.

Some of my workshops have produced these paintings.

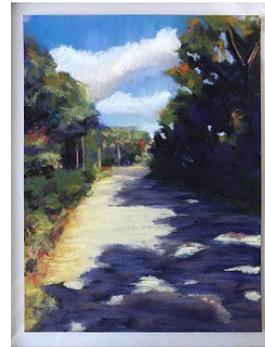
Reflections on Clarence Porter's Workshop



Clarence Porter demonstrating

by *Andrea Pyman*

I very much enjoyed Clarence's workshop. Having everyone work from his reference photo allowed the group to focus clearly on the individual aspects of the lesson rather than concerning ourselves as much with composition and image selection.



Workshop Piece by *Andrea Pyman*

My main takeaway was becoming more comfortable with more bold colour choices and stronger contrasts. It was also interesting to see so many versions of the same image ...so much variety. Clarence is very approachable and has a fun engaging teaching style.

IAPS Report by Ruth Rodgers

The 2017 IAPS convention in Albuquerque, NM was bigger and more inspiring than ever! About 600 participants eagerly attended demonstrations, hands-on workshops, the always-popular paint-around plus new 'painting duels,' and enjoyed the delicious banquet and awards ceremony—not to mention spending waaay too much at the trade show!

PAC members Renata Bradshaw, Roberta Combs, Kathy Hildebrandt, Fran Hutton, Karin Richter, Ruth Rodgers, Susan Typert, Paige Axelrood and Gail Sibley—along with international PAC member Joanne Powers-Cotton from Australia—attended this 12th convention and brought our Canadian spirit to the festivities. A few folks from our partner society PSEC were also in attendance.

As noted in the President's Easel in this issue, PAC members were also represented in the juried show and Masters Circle show. Congratulations to all of them for this huge achievement—the competition



Gwenneth Barth-White
demonstrating a Portrait of Nick

Kathy and I attended the all-day President's Forum and gained some ideas from the panel and participants—and offered a few of our own! The PAC compares favourably with other societies in its development—we have a lot to be proud of!

I opted to attend only demos this time rather than hands-on sessions, and enjoyed watching several artists who were new to me: Cuong Nguyen, Diane Rappisi, Tony Allain, Gwenneth Barth-White, and Kathleen Newman. As well, I thoroughly enjoyed a demo session with Dawn Emerson, whose energy and fearless application of various media amazes me!



Duelling painters, Chris Ivers
and Christine Swann tackle
flamenco dancer

I came home with lots of ideas for new exercises for my students, a bunch of new pastels (like I NEEDED them!) AND indulged myself by buying not my usual ONE original painting, but FOUR this time.

I can't wait to have the Tony Allain landscape, the Diane Rappisi draped figure, the Gwenneth Barth-White portrait (ok, that one's a print) and the charming small 'satyr' painting by Rita Kirkman (scooped up in the silent auction) back from the framer and on my walls!



Diane Rappisi paints the draped figure

Buying demos is the most economical way to add to your collection of pastel originals (as Joan Larson knows; she was the happy buyer of Richard McKinley's day one demo in BC recently!) and there's something extra special about owning a work you've seen painted.

What's In a Name?

by Victoria Trapper

How many times have you finished up a painting only to be stumped with giving it a title? Happens to all of us, I'm sure. Being creative doesn't only apply to the work itself, but also coming up with a title for your work that is not only suitable, but shows some imagination. If I had a dollar for every time I saw "First Light" as title, I would be very rich indeed by now. Not only has this title been beaten to death, it occurs to me that the artist perhaps lacks that extra creative step to come up with a title that might make the viewer take a second look. Isn't that the point?

Some paintings, such as landscapes, are titled after the unique place that is the subject of the work and may be all that is required for a name to draw the viewer further into the work. They can then relate to the piece, especially if they are familiar with the location, bringing back memories for them. And it may be all they need to want to purchase your work!

I have a rather off beat sense of humor which at times may be disconcerting to some people but I try to use that when I am coming up with a title for a piece. Sometimes I have the title *before* I even start the work.

When a friend, who had just painted a bear catching a fish, asked me what I would call it, I said “Poached Salmon”.

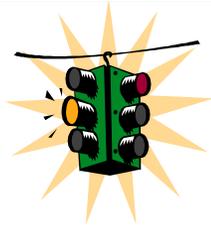
An inquisitive squirrel running down a tree towards a mushroom at the bottom, became “Morrel Dilemma”. A small painting of a pine tree leaning over the point of land towards the water became, “The Hangover”.

Not all of my work has a quirky name. Sometimes “The Road to the Bay” is just that.

When you are naming your work, remind yourself that you are also sharing your personality. The viewer learns a little more about you and what you are trying to express. Isn't that why you paint?

The next time you are at a loss for a title, dare to think out of the box!

Next Newsletter
Deadline
November 15, 2017



Portrait of an Artist

From Landscapes to Portraits

by Susan Typert

In my teens, art was escapism, but also turned out to be a good foundation to launch a career as a graphic designer. After years of raising children and running a successful agency, I felt like something was missing. I impulsively signed up for a workshop at a local gallery. Ruth Rodgers was teaching Beginner Pastels. It was like watching magic. From the first time I dragged a pastel across the sanded paper, I knew this would become my therapy.

I spent the next year doing really terrible paintings and ended up in Ruth's workshop once again. An invitation to weekly sessions unraveled many of pastel's secrets, but finding control over the medium was difficult, frustrating, and at times, demoralizing. After receiving a critique in a rejection letter from a juried show, I referred to myself as “the landscape artist who cannot paint trees”. Then I started trail running.

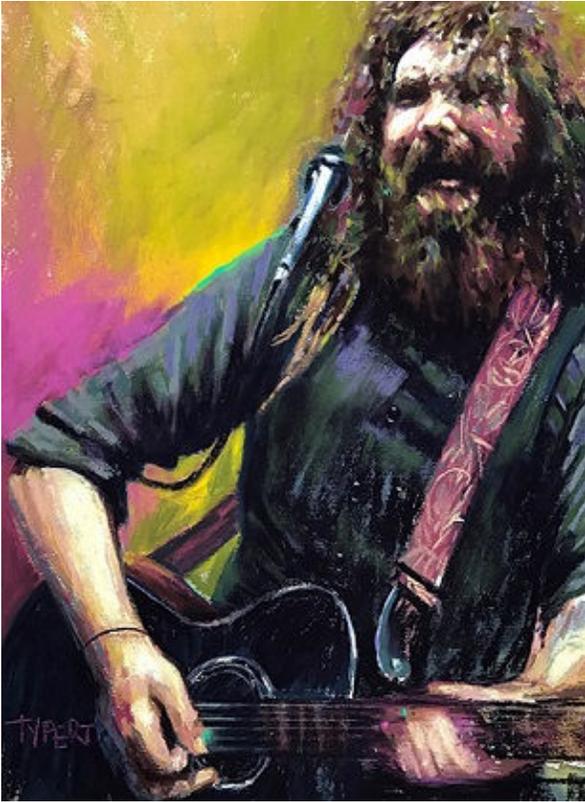
I began to look at trees from every angle. My run partner patiently waited whenever I stopped to take photos. I submitted a piece to the PAC Juried Show in 2016, “Two Birches” was not only my first accepted work, it was awarded second place! I remember thinking, now I can paint!

But, pastel is elusive and I struggled to rekindle the connection I had with the birches.

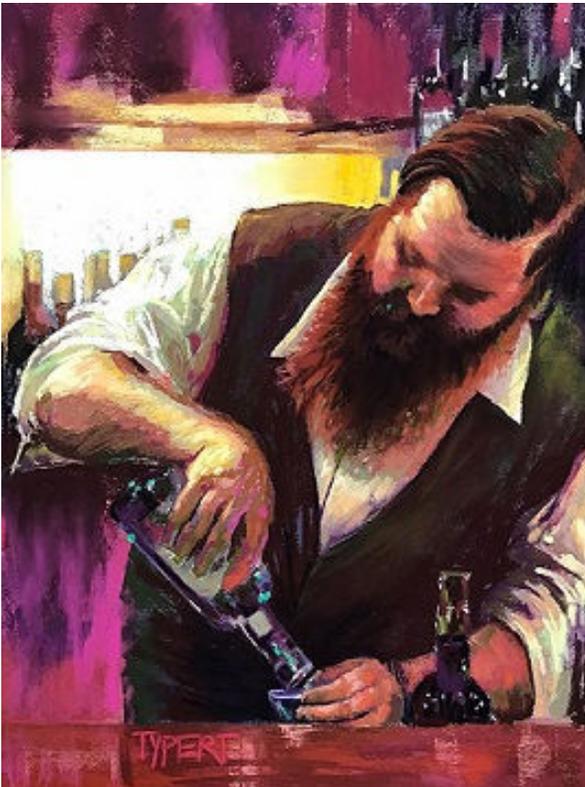


During a night out at a local pub, I found myself entranced with how the light intricately danced across peoples' faces, pulling them out of their darkened surroundings. I wanted to capture this in a painting. Using dark rich tones in the backgrounds allowed my subjects to reveal themselves in the warm light. I am drawn to the flash of the moment when a subject reveals something about him or herself.

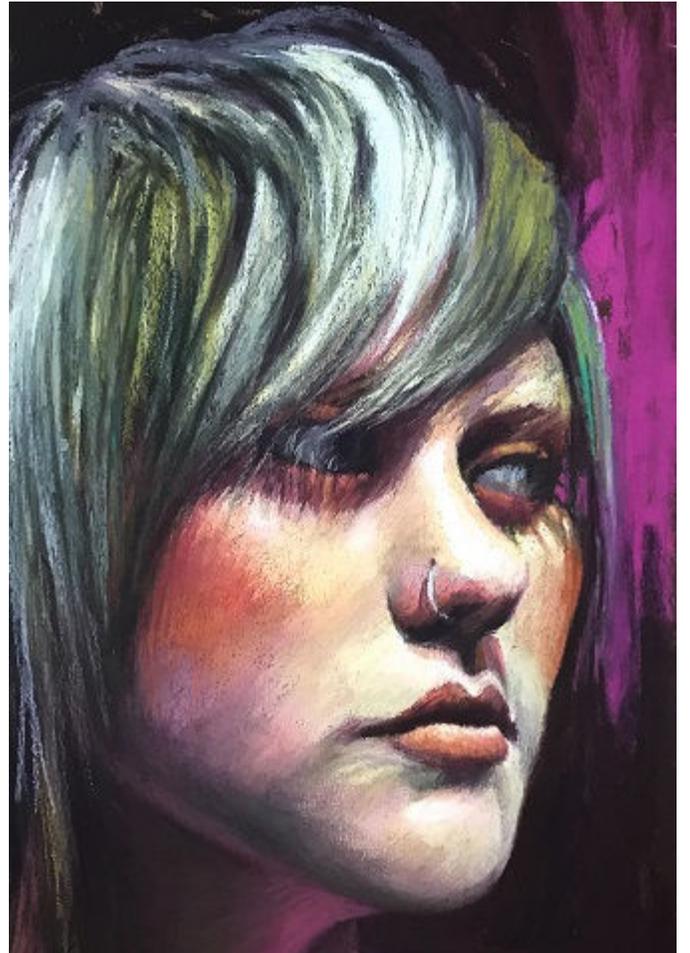
This departure in style marked the beginning of my turn to portraits and the acceptance of two pieces into the 2017 Juried Show.



“The Mighty Roar” by Susan Typert



“The Pour” by Susan Typert



“Chloe “ by Susan Typert