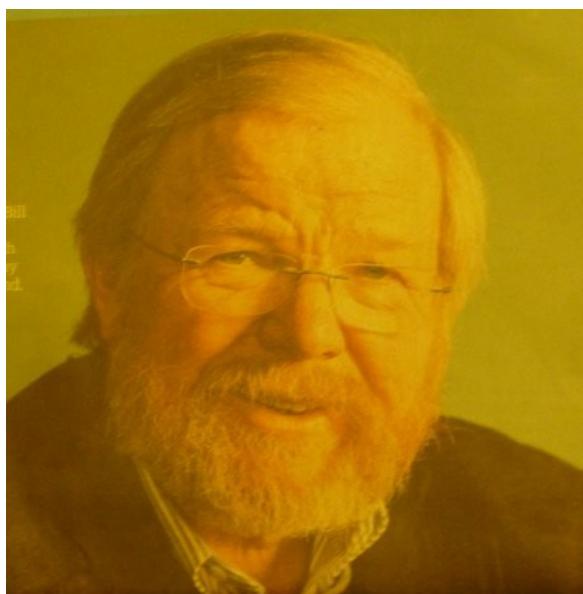


Heather Jolliffe - Inktense pencils and sticks

Here was something quite new to most of us. These are pencils, like crayons, but the inside is an ink which when water is added gives an intense permanent colour. The sticks are blocks looking like pastels and can be used on their side to cover large areas - add water, and you get a large amount of colour which can be moved around – for a time. ‘Good for painting on silk’, said Heather.

Heather began by introducing us to the Open College of the Arts - website: www.oca-uk.com – a specialist in creative arts education whereby it’s possible to take one of a range of courses, working towards a degree if you wish, in painting, writing, photography, or fine art, with your own personal tutor. There are no entry qualifications, you simply proceed at your own pace, having your work assessed as you go.

Heather then wanted to show us portrait painting using these new Derwent products, starting with a large photograph of Bill Bryson.



Using 190gm Bockingford cream tinted paper she began with a light brown pencil, drawing the outline of the head.

“I’ll start with his glasses and the strong facial lines - if I want to change anything, the lines will rub out while they are still dry but once wetted, they will stay. The shadows and beard will give the face structure - at this stage, it’s all in the drawing. I find it much better to have the paper vertically upright - drawing flat will get the proportions distorted. Keep it very light at this early stage. See how the eye level to the chin is generally the same as the distance from the eye to the top of the head. Now at this point because the ink is dry, you could rub anything out.”

“Now I’m filling in some of the areas using the flat side of the sticks – ‘bark’ colour on his jacket just to see how it goes in. Now with some water it gives a strong colour, but with a brush look how I can move it around and water it down if need be. The two brushes I’m using have synthetic bristles – one is flat with a square end, the other is round with a point. Painting over the jacket here makes it much darker – very solid”

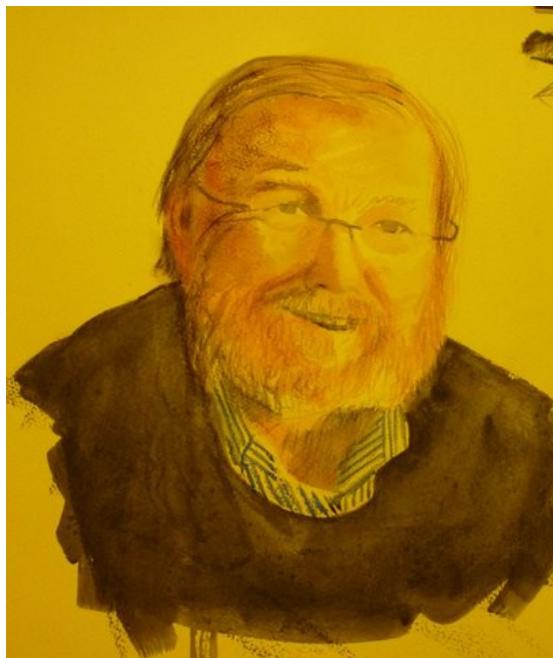
“The face colour is much lighter. I’m using a stick to apply a small amount of pink colour on the shadow to the left of the face. Now add water - more water to make it lighter still - you can lift out damp colour with a bit of tissue.”



“See the shadows in the eye socket under the brows. The eyes don’t need the whole circle of the iris - the top is covered by the upper lid - that’s in shadow.. The frame of the glasses goes across the bridge of the nose – giving a slight symmetry. I’ll use a little paynes grey for the shadow on the left ear, and the ‘bark’ colour on the hair. The eyebrows are light and the mouth is open giving you a shadow inside - notice the slight gap between the lips. There’s a shadow below the lower lip, and also around the teeth.”



“Now I’ll wet the colour to make it all more definite. Shadow goes under the nose using a damp brush – this make it a real 3D feature. ‘Baked earth’ is a nice terracotta colour for part of the beard texture, leaving the rest white. Shadow under the chin and on the shirt, strengthened by the stripes on the shirt, done with a wet brush point - there.”



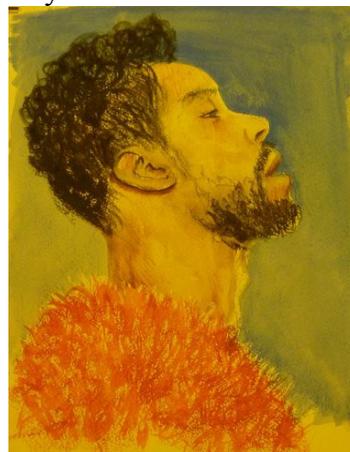
Heather's second portrait had a lot more colour. She first used the tip of a blue stick to draw the profile of the head - but changed to its side to block in the background and then the orange shirt and paynes grey for the hair. She wetted the orange with a pointed brush, dabbing it to give it a rougher texture.



She turned the paper upside down to wet the blue background so the water would run down to the top of the picture where it was darker.



“I'm doing the basic skin colour in yellow ochre, drawing the facial features with a paynes grey pencil. The mouth is open so the lower lip has a warm red violet shadow - and then again under the nose and behind the ear. The beard is paynes grey, leaving bits of white, dabbing with a wet brush, not moving the colour around. The neck needs to be left some white, just a damp brush - if it's too dry it won't dissolve the colour. Finally, black for his hair, dabbing again to give it texture. I can block in the colour with broad sticks, building it up in layers.”



Heather had only taken some 30 minutes for this head. The speed of the combination of ink sticks and the skilful application of the right amount of water demonstrated very well what could be achieved in a relatively short time.

Robert McLeish