

## Fiona Peart – Watercolour – 11 March 2013

On a very cold (-1C) and windy (gale force) night Fiona and her husband, the also very well known and accomplished artist, Terry Harrison, travelled all the way from Bourton-on-the-Water to demonstrate her watercolour technique to us.

She started by showing us lots of photos of a street scene including buildings and people singly, in pairs and groups. We were encouraged to take lots of photos; there is no such thing as the perfect photo, people always get in them in a particular place that you don't want, and thereby giving you lots of options for composition.

As the head is at eye-level you only need to get one person in a street scene and then every other person in the picture will have their heads at the same level and the usual perspective rules can be used for their feet.



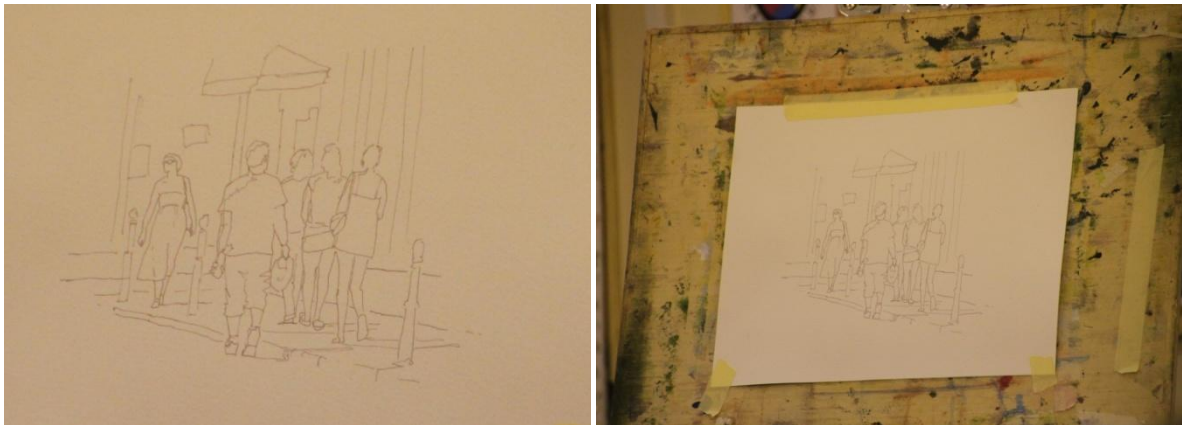
Fiona had prepared some pencil sketches of people in a street scene.



This also included tracings (TRACINGS ???; that's not real art!!!.....of course it is, it's an aid to drawing and composition) of single people and couples and as they are tracings, they can be moved about over the potential picture to give variations of positioning and even reversed. She tried to encourage us not to do completed pictures all the time but to do practice sketches with pencils, watercolour pencils and paint, whether watercolour, acrylic or oils.

Fiona told us that she went to a Flemish art school but because of her background as a designer, she found it very difficult to paint loosely which she was required to do, as in design she always had to be very precise and tight with colours and shapes.

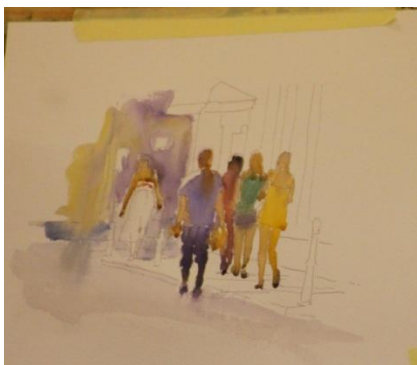
That said, Fiona then went on to start her first painting having pre-sketched it.



She does not stretch the paper, 140lb 300gm/sqm Bockingford, just fixing it along the top and the bottom corners using masking tape. The figures are painted from top to bottom starting with the brown hair, then the blue shirt, mingling the blue into the brown and leaving the light side with no pigment not allowing it to dry so the colours continue to mingle.



The brushes were used with the lightest touches on the paper with plenty of water. If there are yellow clothes in the picture, the yellow should be toned down with a bit of red otherwise the yellow jumps out at you. Flesh colour is made from Burnt Siena, Bluebell (a 'Purpley' colour) and Raw Siena. Raw Siena pushes Bluebell away which can be used to good effect. Use Gouache white for highlights but not for mixing.



Fiona's next picture was to be of a street scene combining two sketches, one of the street with people tapering to the distance, and the other of people seated outside a cafe.



Masking fluid had been applied with a small stubby pointed brush (called a wipe-away tool), and the whole paper was then wetted, Bluebell was washed in with Raw Siena brushed downwards and darker Bluebell shadow washed in wet-into-wet at the bottom.



She then used a hair-drier; more specifically a Snoopy hair-dryer and related the story of when she bought it in a shop which went something like:-

Fiona to shopkeeper, "How much is that doggy in the window?", shopkeeper, "Which dog?". Fiona, "The one with the waggely tail" .etc.etc.....Shopkeeper didn't get the joke; hey-ho..... Edges of buildings were put in the background, a red bus and some dark bits to highlight heads in the distance.



Dark colours were put in wet-in-wet on the figures hair and clothes.

Half a person was put on the edge of the picture which Fiona said creates a 'full-stop' on the edge. Vertical stripes of Bluebell were then put in for the large window panels on the left background...



...and then working down through the people on the left.

A 'pyramid brush' was used for the tree shapes in the background, as it can be twisted to obtain thin and wide strokes, which Fiona demonstrated.(see bottom of picture)



The masking fluid was then removed using a clean soft cloth to save causing sore fingers especially when removing large areas.

All highlight areas from removal of masking fluid do not need to be bright white and should be toned down with just a hint of Raw Siena, Yellow or Blue but only just a hint otherwise it will tone down the highlight too much.

This is the completed picture

compared to one she had painted previously.



Fiona gave us some excellent tips, ideas and food for thought for everybody throughout the evening. Thank you Fiona

