

## Nina Squire – 8<sup>TH</sup> November 2021 - Pastels

There were 28 members who attended the demo on a damp dark November evening. Nina had brought along 6 large-framed pieces of work to show a varied scope of subject matter.

Nina gave a brief history of her career in Art. She trained as a professional artist and illustrator at Falmouth University some 25 years ago before moving to Dorset and developing her classes teaching in soft pastel about 20 years ago. She is now well known for her dog and horse portraits, but Nina's love of the sea has led her to creating stunning sea and landscapes which she will demonstrate for us tonight.

### Using Unison Soft Pastels

After a brief outline sketch was made on the pastel (colour of paper is not important but the quality is), Nina uses Fisher400 but colour fix is good along with any paper that has a 'bite' to it. A view from Sandbanks looking over the water to old Harry rocks was chosen for the demo piece. The base colours were then blocked in, blue and white for the sky, dark blue and greens or greys for the sea and the foreground in light browns and yellows for the sand. All very roughly.

We learnt that at one time Nina ran out of Fisher 400 Liquefier and need to think of an alternative she needed something wet but something that dries quickly so hence the use of Vodka or Gin was discovered and at a fraction of the price of the liquifier. (However, do not use any liquids on Sennelier paper). The whole picture was then sprayed with Vodka and using a large cheap paint brush from B&Q the pastel was quickly blended. Do not spray so much that you get drips apart from being detrimental to the picture it's a waste of Vodka!! It was now hard to imagine how this picture could be developed. At this point you could add more pastel colour to the wet and blend in or leave it to dry and this would become the base layer.

Get out ready the pastels you intend to use on the piece or any pastel pencils, Nina used faber-castell pastel pencils for sharp highlights. Tip: clean your pastel blocks in ground rice. Sharpen your pastel pencils carefully with a small craft knife. Do not use a pencil sharpeners or Stanley knife as these could very easily break the pastel. Of course, if you ask 10 pastel artists, they will have 10 different views on materials and tools, so it is up to individuals really.

You can now work back into the picture picking out highlights of the waves and of the clouds create your horizon line and Old Harry Rocks in the distance. Add the colours, water movement on the sands. It is sometimes useful to create a small colour study before working on the main piece as this helps to identify what colours will work well together. This is a method of wet and dry pastel work but of course a whole picture can be done purely in dry. If working in dry pastel people have been known to use a rolling pin over their work to fix the pastel to the paper. Never blow on your work as this will create a pastel dust in the air which you will inhale, just gently tap the work to remove any loose parts.

Nina asked a number of times if anyone had any art related questions and quite a few members asked relevant questions about the method and use of pastels. One member stated he only used oil-based pastels and we were told that oil and soft pastels are really quite different mediums they can be mixed

Making marks – sometimes this is useful to do if a 'texture' appearance is needed. To do this make the surface wet carefully scrape marks into paper with a knife, apply pastel either wet or when dry.

We were also shown how to repair areas that you may not be happy with. Simply spray and wipe off area with clean kitchen towel or paper let it dry and apply pastel afresh.

Plan your work, only take out the colours you wish to use. Do not take colours out randomly.





Jenny Frankland

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