

March 2023 Demonstration – Colin Brown, Architectural painting in acrylic

Colin ventured down from Frome where he lives. He specialises in Acrylic street scenes and works commercially. He spent 4 years at Canterbury Art college, before becoming a full time visualiser in London and Bath. He created for 20 years in 3D, Advertising, Airbrush artwork before turning Freelance. He paints for Cotswold Contemporary and Buckingham Fine Art publishers Ltd. His work is not commercial, more Fine Art for people's walls.

He began with the painting upside down, the painting was drawn the correct way round but paint application begins upside down. He started with an Orange background and drawn lines in black felt pen and tonal, darks and white highlights, to show, not photographic realism, but a loosened up imaginative rendering.

His preference is to use Liquitex paint where the pigment saturation is stronger than alternative Sennelier Abstract innovative acrylics which are half the price but with not so much pigment. His subject matter and area of the painting determines which he opts for. He never washes out his pallets and uses the paint neat without water where they take longer to dry. He uses DaVinci and Pastow synthetic Mottler flat wide brushes.

Using bright blue to start, with plenty of other colours in the sky. Apply the neat paints in different colours, with a palette knife, directly onto the leading edge of the flat brush, apply it to the canvas as a streak. The orange offers an immediate vibrant contrast. His style is derived from marker visualising and that method is embedded after 20 years. The brush hairs give a ridged effect which when dry can be overpainted offering a textured surface. The foreground water section of the picture was executed in verticle strokes, creating the impression of reflections, waterproof when dry, allows horizontal strokes to contrast.

Don't press too hard or go over it before it dries. (He will often work on three paintings simultaneously to allow them to dry). Use pure colours and don't wash out the brush for half an hour, until it begins to deliver 'muddy' colours, then dry with a tissue. Blobs of pure colour, clean and intense, create texture and character. Brush strokes produce movement.

Try not to work in one section only, work around the painting you can easily come back to a point to rectify, its a bit like a jigsaw. Really the rougher you paint the better, tapestry like, no focal point, everything has equal emphasis. The more you fill in the orange background the more cohesive the painting becomes. The white highlights you started with get overpainted to look less formal. When I draw, I put in shadows and highlights, rather than shapes, and all lines are angular and square.

Colin likes to hang up his paintings to see what works under different light, natural and artificial (no painting is colourfast). Just paint 'what is right' even minute details, if you do too much you'll kill it! He paints in regular canvas sizes to be interchangeable in frames.

Accurate drawing at the outset gives the 'foundation' to the painting, use highlights to maintain contrasts and give life. Flick highlights towards the end a la Sickert. Going back to a dry painting he was able to create verticle building lines to contrast perspective angles. He used a ruler to lean on to steady his hand and ensure straight architectural lines. Never use black, oranges and blues blend in the eye. Mauve enlivens shadows as do greens, keep different directions and keep thinking contrasts. Accidents work, go back the following day to objectively reappraise. Welcome jagged edges or lines, if too smooth it leaves nothing to the imagination.

