

September demonstration: Jake Winkle, Racehorses

Jake is a watercolourist from Blandford, who writes for Artist magazine, also tutors groups.

Jake had 'pre stretched' his Arches paper wet and secured it with gummed strip. He had sketched on that his horse racing composition and since he had no hairdryer, he had earlier applied Windsor & Newton masking fluid in a creamy consistency, to protect the jockies. (Tip: Coat your brush with washing-up liquid before using it for masking fluid)

He mixed and applied the Cobalt blue background wash sky down to foreground, keeping the brush attached to the paper. Using a warm mix of orange and warm red he started at the bottom and worked up, then applied a stronger second coat, wet on wet (this second coat needs to be dryer than the paper to avoid cauliflowering, crisscross for interest).



Once done, and while drying, he spoke with detail about materials, brushes, papers. Jake works to regular sizes, 50x70 cms for ease of mounting and framing. He prefers 140lb Arches for its rough and absorbent nature where colours bed in well, over Bockingford's less absorbent paper which lends itself to brighter colours which will sit on its surface. Natural hair squirrel brushes or Collingski sable, hold more liquid than man made brushes. Suggested on your palette to keep colours near your mixing area, explained the colour wheel, Primary, secondary and tertiary colours and the need for special Violets, reds and turquoise blues.

Draw by shape, we tend to draw what we know, not what we see. Horses legs are on the move, therefore less distinct. Use colour temperature to create depth, front legs to back legs. Warm colours will be orange and blue, raw sienna and sepia. Avoid complete detail, broken edges will create movement. Heads will be warmer, use turquoise and sepia to start, then cooler colours underneath, it is about suggestion and gesture. Mix cobalt and alizarin crimson for a grey horse. Mix 'sticky colours' the consistency of Marmite to avoid clashing with washes. Brushstroke, blobs and pegs for the horses legs and white marks to suggest shapes, gouache permanent white is very opaque, the black riding crops create a frame of reference, knitting shapes together, gives the impression of horses hurtling towards us.



Following a coffee break Jake went on to generate the riders. Beginning with pastel colour washes, put in Windsor Violet into the shadows for the jodhpurs. "Suspend reality in favour of the painting, design is more important than accuracy". Fragmentation helps give movement, blobs of raw sienna and crimson for flesh colour and sticky black for the goggles over the nose. At this point he enlarged on intellectual property, live and let live, you cannot copy precisely.

Finally, he introduced courageously, the shadow with uneven brushstrokes to anchor the horses running. Splosh it on and whilst wet, feather it up and spot on dark tones, introduce splatter for the mud patches and perspective lines to give speed.

