



8 April 2024: Catherine Beale – Watercolour Landscape

Catherine spent time in the Singapore and Malaysian expat community. She found this quite isolating so she took up painting, beginning in oils and was initially influenced by Indian and Islamic Art. She returned to UK in 2006 and began three years of life drawing which underpinned her connection to subjects. However, she missed colour, particularly the strength of oil colours but turned instead to watercolour. As a geography graduate she was struck by her observations of light and weather, often taking photos from which to work but not to copy from.

She is a great fan of Daler Rowney Aquafine watercolour artboard (cold pressed - rough textured). The pads are glued all round to eliminate the need for stretching. As for paints, she recommended no brand loyalty, just pick colours with pigments that work for you. In watercolour painting just remember three points - the paint will dry lighter, the paper becomes your brightest white and water = atmosphere

Painting is all about light. Plan your painting as a rough sketch, identifying the light and dark areas. Use masking fluid for smaller highlight areas. She makes up plenty of colour before applying with a 1" flat brush at an angle. Catherine uses a flat 3/8th" removing brush to blurr, lift off and soften edges and to obtain the light rays through the trees, some thick some thin. particularly effective through indigo.

When you encounter problems, leave the painting for a while and trouble shoot later. As a throw away comment she added "If I get unstuck with an abstract landscape I will switch for a while to a portrait which requires reality, accuracy and sensitivity of colours.

Don't be a slave to realism, make people lean in to see what you have created.

She showed us one watercolour painting on wood, that was primed with gesso and subsequently sprayed with 15 layers of anti-UV varnish, framed without glass; it was very effective, without reflections.

