

CREATING DIMENSION WORKSHOP - 2 hours

Announcement:

CREATING DIMENSION - how to walk into pictures (2 hour session)

Bring to the session a painting or art print of your choice and you will be shown how to visualise hidden dimensions beyond its two dimensional presentation. You will be invited to draw out the results and experience how this can add quality and understanding to the original painting or print. The session is open to everyone and all drawing materials are supplied.

Set up:

Flip chart of at least 8 sheets of plain paper on stand.

A suitable print fixed over the top sheet of the flip chart - a landscape is always a good subject.

Three spare prints of other subjects.

Demonstrator's set of oil pastels (paper wrappings removed)

A large box containing oil pastels with wrapping removed including 7 spectrum colours and black and white.

Roll of paper towel.

One A4 lap board for each participant

Sets of eight sheets of plain A4 80gm. paper - allow two sets per participant.

Presenter's example print for demonstration (kept in portfolio until required - see para.4)

Chairs set out as a horseshoe with the presenter's chair and flip chart completing the circle.

Two or three rectangular tables outside of the horseshoe.

Tea, coffee, water, biscuits. Hot water thermos flasks. Polystyrene cups.

Clock

Welcome:

Playing a suitable CD as people arrive helps to ease the atmosphere (folk music has wide appeal) and, if practical, personally welcoming each participants is recommended.

Participation fees should be paid before the start of the workshop and receipted.

Have participants lay out their painting or print on one of the tables on arrival. As well as providing conversation topics whilst waiting for the session to start it can also help to ease shyness and build confidence in both the participant and the presenter!

Session Introduction:

1. Introduce self (3 minutes max)
2. Present the aims and agenda of the course and achievement expectations.
3. Outline the session schedule, refreshment break and expected finishing time.
4. Invite each participant to quickly introduce themselves to the group
i.e. name/where from/what do/any art connection?

Workshop Introduction:

How would you like to walk into your picture and explore its details and mysteries? I used to view a painting as simply an artist's two dimensional creation plus temperament. But then I realised that each picture could be seen as a threshold inviting the viewer to explore other dimensions. I began to recognise the picture's frame as a the doorway which, using my inner sensing and imagination, I could step through and discover aspects of the picture beyond the form and colour of the original image. If I stood very still in front of a painting and tried to close down my critical eye then I would begin to sense something beyond its conception and the brush and colour palette which had anchored the original idea onto the canvas.



This insight encouraged me to explore some of my earlier paintings. For the process I selected a print of a commissioned landscape in which I had featured Jock, the local gamekeeper, fishing the River Findhorn.



I was drawn to explore a section of the painting which included Jock and the local fishing bothy so I quickly painted a rough close up impression (1)



I thought it natural to want to explore the bothy but curiously I was drawn to take a closer look at Jock (2).



I saw that he was wearing a pouch and this was puzzling because a fisherman would normally have a large bag for his gear plus a salmon if he was lucky. So I took a closer look (3)



Yes it was a pouch and the next sketch showed me that it was partly open (4).

The resulting images in this dimension painting exercise were produced one by one and completely spontaneously without any preconception about what would finally emerge.



Taking a closer look (5) I found inside there was some object in there, possibly a stone

The result gave me a lot to think about, for example: Could this explain why I was asked to depict Jock dressed for the country rather than for the river in full wading gear. Did he hunt for gold in his spare time?



But what I did find inside took me by surprise (6)
It was a gold nugget.

Small flakes of gold are occasionally found in these parts, although, if someone does find a nugget then they are well advised to keep the information to themselves!

The process has developed into an experience I call "Dimension Painting" and presented in a group setting. Each participant is given the materials and opportunity to experience it hands on.

Presenter's Demonstration

- Take print from portfolio and pin or tape over the 8 sheets of flip chart paper.
- Describe print adding any background information and personal anecdotes.
- Ask group for ideas where in the scene they would like you to explore
- Begin dimension demonstration, painting out each step on the flip chart paper in oil pastel

- and turning each stage over the top of the easel. 7 or 8 paintings are normally sufficient.
- Turn back each painting to finish with the original print.
- Describe your process and thoughts to the group and ask for their observations.

Individual Process - 30 minutes approx.

- Each participant works on their own anywhere in the room, either on a table, the floor or in their chair.
- Have each participant place their artwork of print over the 8 sheets of paper on their board and take a selection of oil pastels from the large box and two or three sheets of paper towel.
- Suggest they spend a few minutes studying the picture until one section becomes the focus for their curiosity. Ask if there are any questions and if everyone understands what is required.
- After 25 minutes announce that the group will come together in five minutes and that anyone who isn't finished will have the opportunity to complete their work later.
- Reassemble the horseshoe and invite each participant to recount their experience to the group.
- If there is time, the presenter sets a follow-up exercise suggesting each participant quickly develops a new painting and explores its third dimension.
- After 25 minutes announce that the group will come together in five minutes.
- Reassemble the horseshoe and invite every participant to recount their experience to the group and give the presenter feedback on the session.
- End the session by giving details of any subsequent courses and how you might be contacted.

My experience shows that both adults and children find Dimension Painting a fascinating process. Children seem to pick up on the idea very quickly and have no difficulty in responding immediately to any invitation to draw or paint a picture and then visually explore its third dimension. Particularly for children, and if a sufficient number of small pieces of paper are used, they could be stapled together and used like a Victorian flick book.