



Historic Houses Summer Art Competition

Entries



Anna Bolina Regia Anglia

By Martin Hinchcliffe

Hever Castle | Acrylic on oak veneer

I have only begun to visit Hever castle in the last few years, and inescapably, the building resonates with the memory of Anne Boleyn. No contemporary portraits exist of her, as Henry destroyed them along with her letters, but tantalisingly we hold an image of her dark hair and eyes, swan's neck and pale translucent skin. Of the two Tudor portraits at the National Portrait gallery, both have their merits and I have tried to blend them into one, capturing the enigmatic smile of the direct gaze with the closer parted hair, red rose and queenly hands at the base of the picture.

As I painted, I returned obsessively to the details and nuances of both paintings and began to see the emerging identity of my new portrait. She seemed to talk to me, control me and direct me as I finally made the decision to varnish over the finished picture. Over several weeks I agonised with different arrangements of the frame, but settled with the two lines of gold quadrant set against the matt black between.

Anne Boleyn had a short life but such a massive legacy with her daughter, Elizabeth, the realisation of the new protestant religion and the shocking injustice of her execution.

I sincerely hope I have added to her appeal with a contemporary painting that draws on potent echoes of the past. I salute our queen, Anna Bolina.



Holkham Hall, Red Drawing Room

By Paul Minter

Holkham Hall | Oil on canvas

The thing I like doing most in life is visiting historic houses. It has always been that way, and lock-down was very hard. So I decided to paint the places that I love and this is one of fifteen canvases that I have completed so far.

Although they are painted from photographs I did not want my paintings to be photo-realistic. Much of the detail is merely implied and the brush work is loose and impressionistic. I wanted to capture the grandness and opulence, but also the light and the feeling of the place, rather than just its appearance.

In Evelyn Waugh's "Brideshead revisited" my favourite book, the narrator Charles Ryder paints views of Marchmain house before it is sold and demolished. Waugh was probably thinking of William Ranken, who painted the for the Lygon family who were the inspiration for the Marchmains in the novel. I looked at many artists who painted interiors but the style that inspired me most was that of Ranken.



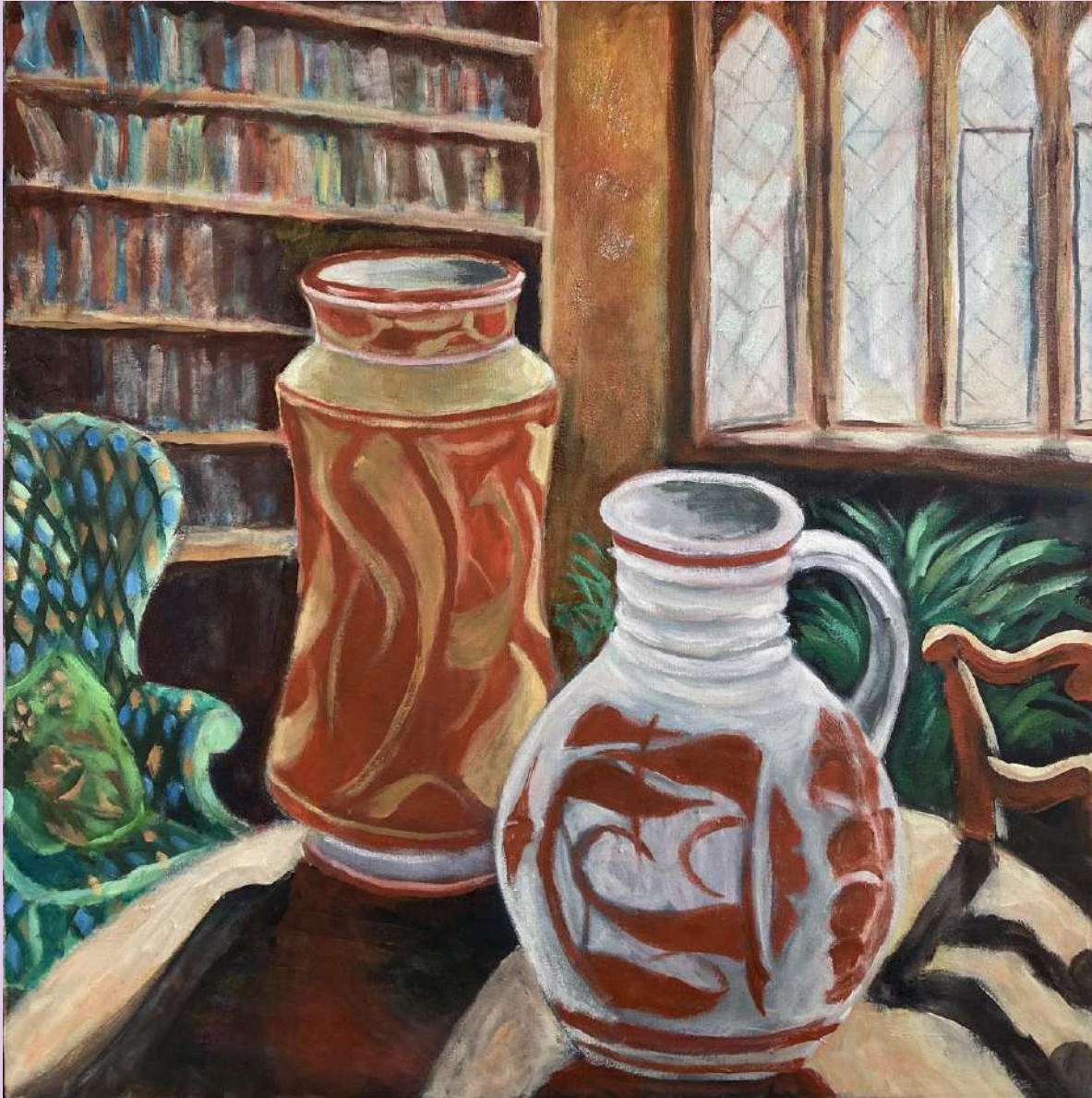
Combermere under the Starry Skies

By Sallie Humphreys

Combermere Abbey | Watercolours, Posca pens

I just adore Combermere Abbey! It was actually due to be the venue for my big sister's wedding - Olivia and Jason had planned to fly over from Connecticut, USA to get married at Combermere and we were all so excited. Unfortunately, the wedding has been postponed due to Covid, but we're all so optimistic that it can take place one day.

Combermere Abbey is just so magical and whimsical - I loved depicting it as a magical venue full of hopes, dreams and love.



Alan Caiger Smith Jugs at Great Dixter

By Natalie Singh

Great Dixter | Oil on Canvas

When I visited Great Dixter this year for the first time, I was not only greatly impressed with the house and gardens, but also with Alan Caiger Smith's wonderful pottery which I saw displayed about the Solar (room). So a natural choice for me was to paint a couple of pieces of this wonderful pottery in the setting of the Solar at Great Dixter.

The wing-back chair is covered with a green tapestry hand-made by one of the family members, as are other items of furniture in the room. I was struck by the homely and cosy atmosphere of the Solar which was created by the style of furnishing, handmade items and much use of natural wood, not to mention the pottery on display! Could have stayed there all day.



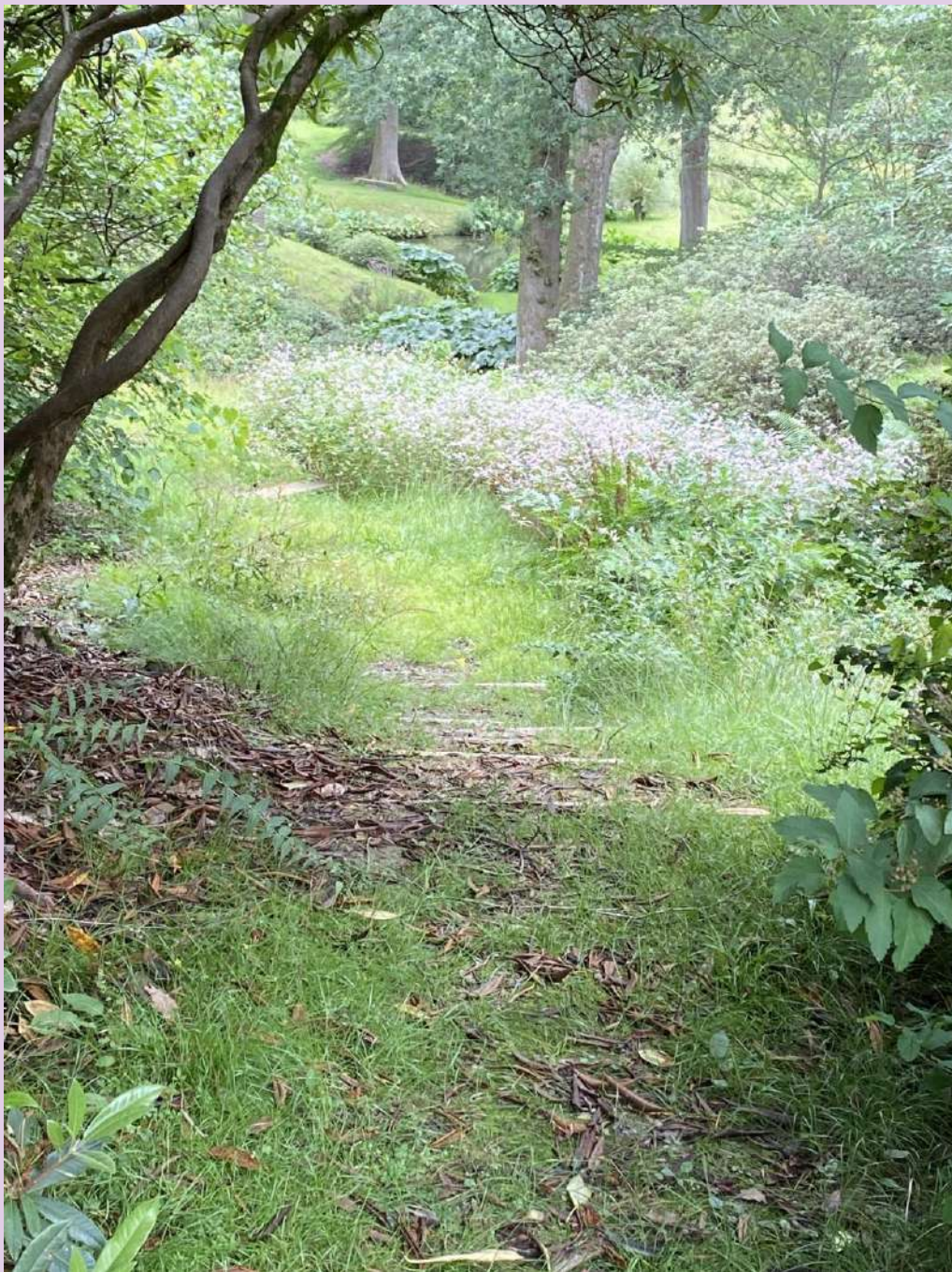
Come in and get us!

By Mark Pender

Sherborne Castle & Gardens | Oil on Canvas

I have been painting and exhibiting for many years and specialise in fantasy or mythical art, often with an element of dark humour. I moved to Sherborne, Dorset in 2017 and often visit Sherborne Castle and its lovely gardens.

This painting is based on a conversation partly overheard in the local pub about four girls who were caught skinny dipping in the lake and, when told to come out shouted “come in and get us”.



A Hidden Gem

By Cheryl Gibson

High Beeches Woodland & Water Garden | Digital photograph

A serene scene to quietly contemplate nature and it's healing power. Reflecting the peace of this hidden gem inspired me, therapy indeed for busy lives...



Crazy Legs Dahlia

By Angela Stanbridge

Kelmarsh Hall Gardens | Oil on Linen

Angela is a full time artist from Northampton with a studio in Northampton Town Centre. In 2010 she completed 3 years at The University of Northampton gaining a first class BA (Hons) Degree in Fine Art Painting and in 2011 gained an MA in Fine Art.

Angela said “The process of transforming paint into images compels and challenges me. Painting fills me with a sense of well-being, a satisfying way to translate visual ideas into physical reality. My focus in recent years has been on flowers. A flower shows everything from the seeds, stem, bud, and blossom, then returning to the earth to begin a new cycle of birth-life-death.

I have a particular fascination, if not obsession with Tulips and Dahlias especially by the endless variety of patterns and shapes, as well as the infinite diversity and intense colours of both.”

Angela is a botanical artist who adds a modern twist to her work that draws you to look at flowers in a new light.

The painting depicts the dahlia display in the walled garden.



Visitors, artist and hedgehog inspect Tony Cragg sculptures

By David Birtwhistle

Houghton Hall | Watercolour on Paper

Houghton Hall is, by any standards, a magnificent house but it fell on hard times and has been rescued from 'destruction and desolation' by the family. The North Pavilion is an hollow shell with the remains of cross-walls acting as buttresses, a most dramatic setting for Tony Cragg's sculptures.

Above, a glimpse of Palladian splendour contrasts with the brickwork; the history of the house and the 21st century combine in one image. July 2021.



Perfect Manors

By Stuart Gavin Jones

Duns Castle | Digital photograph

A Springtime stroll in April around Duns Castle gardens produced a variety of light and atmospheres and this particularly bucolic scene that could be almost timeless in the history of the Castle, slightly brooding in all its gothic glory in the background.

I particularly liked the dashes of light on the backs of the sheep, rather like a Joseph Farquhason scene. I also think Duns Castle and its history is integral to Borders political machinations. If lands could talk!



Layers of History

By Caroline Benzies

Lowther Castle | Photography - double exposures/layered & blended

I am fascinated by the chequered history of Lowther Castle – once a lavish building and still now, even without it's roof, a very imposing structure. I also love how it seems to take on different appearances in different weather conditions – from dark and imposing to wonderfully fairytale.

I wanted to use photography to capture and combine as many aspects of the building as I could, and so I have used several double exposure images (taken in over a couple of visits in July 2021) and combined them into a single image, with the addition of blended colour & texture to further enhance the structure.



Making shit you can't afford for people you hate

By Paul Ward

Chatsworth House | Acrylic, pencil, vintage book page

I had started to make a lot of illustrative artworks using classical sculpture as a jumping off point. The first of which I believe was based on a copy of Michelangelo's 'Moses' which I found in Cimetière de Montmartre.

This bust I found and photographed during my first (not last) visit to the Chatsworth estate, I believe he is Vitellius Germanicus. His well fed exterior was a beautiful meander into a discussion about 'essential workers' and the very rich people that seem to have prospered during a pandemic while others are left without the most basic opportunities.

For the title, I have to pay homage to comedian Doug Stanhope, who so eloquently described a demoralising life that far too many undervalued workers wade through everyday.



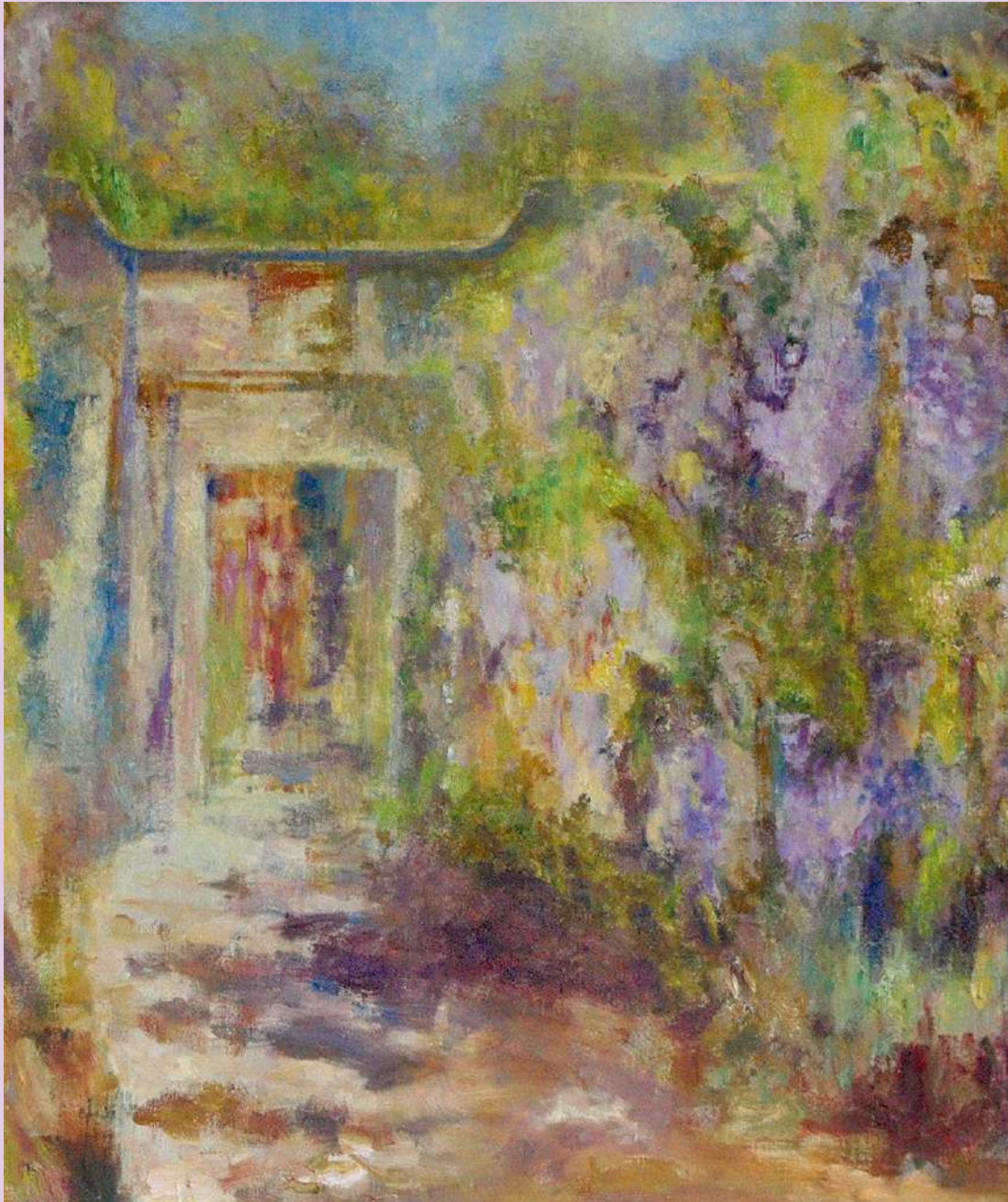
Gate at Hole Park

By Jackie Grant

Hole Park | Watercolour on paper

We visited Hole Park for the first time in April and were so impressed with the gardens.

This gate with the shadows was striking and as a very novice landscape painter I decided to give it a go - painted August 2021. It was challenging but am pleased with the end result.



Iford Manor Wisteria

By Shane Feeney

Iford Manor Gardens | Oil on canvas 76 x 60cm

Looking across the front of Iford Manor to the wall doorway with the Wisteria on both sides is a riot of colour.

This is what I wanted to capture together with a sense of warmth from the stone house and gravel path and light coming through the leaves and Wisteria flowers.



Water Mill

By Colin Main

Painshill Park | Oil on canvas board

Image captures the early spring when the trees are still bare but there is new greenery on the ground. A peaceful, tranquil setting in a lovely location.

Painted in April 2020.



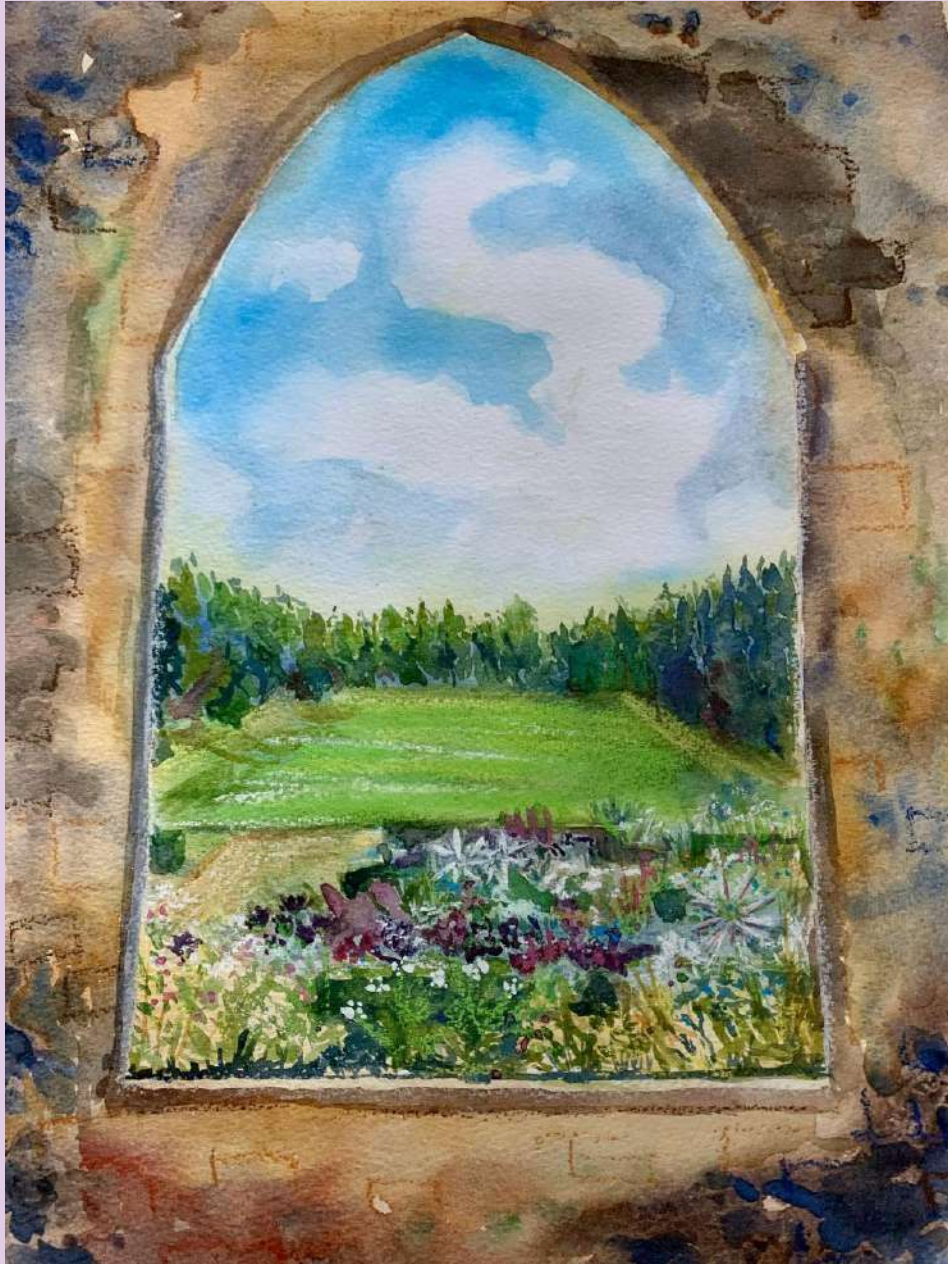
The Abbess

By Stephen McGowan

Chatsworth House | Paint, clay on canvas

The Abbess is about female power throughout the ages. I was intrigued by the powerful female figures connected to Chatsworth House historically.

Ultimately I was imagining a similar figure of the future, looking out over her universe through the windows of her stately space ship.



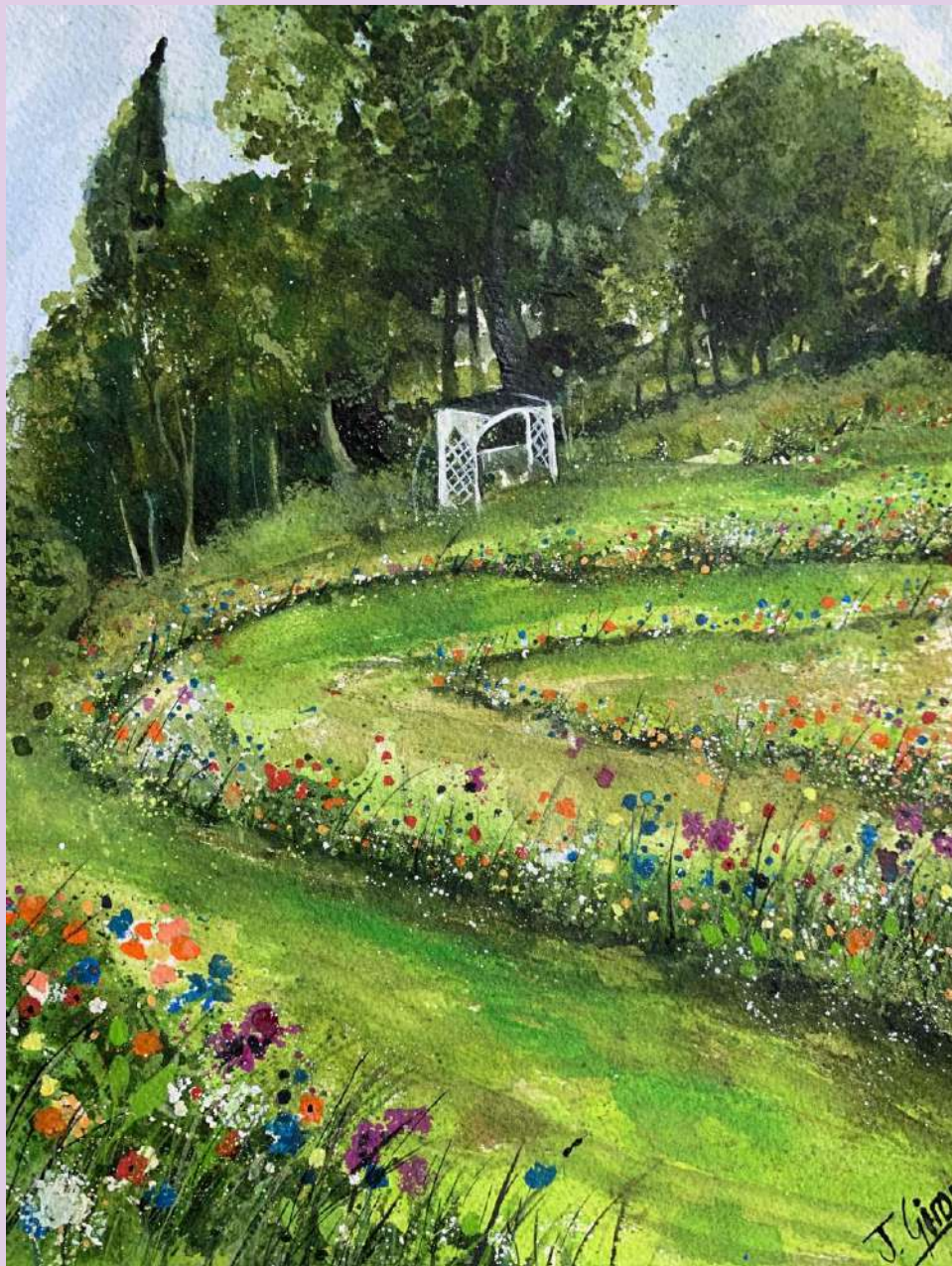
Arch

By Ciara Murray

Lowther Castle | Watercolour, inks, pastel

Since moving to Cumbria in March 2019, I have visited Lowther Castle quite often with my young son. Whilst his favourite area is the Lost Castle adventure park, I am always drawn to photograph the garden views from the large stone arches that would once have been the castle's windows. They form a perfect frame and look very dramatic in the sunlight.

I love what has been done with the courtyard gardens in the ruins of the castle, but I also like to imagine what it might have been like looking out from the windows as they once were. In this way the gardens form a connection with the past and present - those who owned the castle before it was ruined would also have looked out on them - and that's what I have tried to capture in this painting.



Maze of Wild Flowers

By Juliet Giron

Forde Abbey | Watercolour and graphite pencil

Having recently given my sister a birthday present of Historic Houses membership, we visited Forde Abbey last week.

We had a wonderful day strolling around the beautiful gardens and house but the highlight of the day was the wild flower maze, which we both thought was so much more stunning than the lovely manicured flower borders.

As an amateur artist I was immediately inspired to take photographs which I then used as a basis for my painting when I got home.



Village Pond with Stone Girl in Water

By Natalia Rozhkova

Parcevall Hall Garden | Pastel, pen, carton, pencil

I am self learning decorator, I adore water and spend a lot of time near the sea, the theme of water and women inspire me like one of the symbols of life.



Late Summer, Doddington Hall

By Jenny Aitken

Doddington Hall & Gardens | Oil on gesso board

I painted this in plein air on September 8th, in the very hot sun. Doddington is a richly historical place of grandeur, but also a home to the family with wonderful gardens that supply the farm shop.

The back-lit hollyhocks and verbena absolutely sang against the hazy trees and Doddington itself in the background. There is so much inspiration there!



Elizabeth Palmer in the Great Hall Parham

By Rebecca Grindley

Parham House & Gardens | Pen & wash

My drawing illustrates Elizabeth Verney wife of William Palmer who built Parham Park. I imagined her stepping out of her portrait and into the Great Hall once again there after 444 years.

At Parham Park it is friendly and informal, a lovely place with a wealth of inspiration in the paintings, ceramics, gardens, tapestries, furniture it was impossible to choose. I used a few of my own photos & a good guide book to refer to.



Reclining Woman (after Gainsborough)

By Fabienne Jenny Jacquet

Arundel Castle & Gardens | Oil on oil paper

What inspired me was the fact that Arundel Castle & Gardens is home to paintings by incredible artists such as an Dyck, Gainsborough and Canaletto. I wanted to do a piece of work that drew from their depiction of people but that also had a playful feel and pictured a character who could not be pinned down as belonging to particular eras. Houses and gardens do not exist in isolation as empty shells, they are also a reminder of the families who lived in these locations throughout history which is why I decided to represent people in my artwork, rather than just the house itself or its grounds.

My work always focus on textures and layers to give the characters I depict life and individuality. I also wanted to move beyond the depiction in traditional portrait of a stillness and perfection: the woman in my painting is eccentric, alive, naughty and colourful.

More generally, I am an artist based in London and my work is part of private and public collections in the UK, USA, Europe and Australia. I graduated from Central St Martin in 2008.



Entangled

By Lesley Gannon

Arundel Castle & Gardens | Ink on paper

The first time I visited Arundel Castle, one of the most striking objects I observed was the Rosary held by Mary Queen of Scots at her execution. Coming to understand Mary's connection with the Howard family and in particular the 4th Duke of Norfolk was a fascinating element of my visit. I was then horrified to read that this amazing artifact was stolen in a robbery in May of this year - prompting me to produce a piece of work with it at the centre.

The work - created in inks - attempts to illustrate the way in which Thomas Howard, Mary Stuart, Arundel and the gold rosary are linked in the public imagination. It references the visual style of the period and combines elements of Thomas Howard's coat of arms, Mary's monogram and a stylised golden rosary with 55 'beads'.

The title of the piece, 'Entangled' references the intrigue surrounding the relationship between the 4th Duke and Mary, the Howards and Queen Elizabeth as well as the more obvious connotations of the lost beads themselves.

Where the Wild Things are

By Danielle Vaughan

Blenheim Palace | Paper collage and plastic animals on cardboard base/MDF frame

After a visit to Blenheim Palace I began to satisfy my curiosity of the history of this monumental building. I researched all the characters who have inhabited the hallways, created a Winston portrait collage in a similar style (based on historical facts within the image) which is in the collection and decided to take a quirky overview.

I thought about how many historic houses have opened up to the public offering a niche experience and one of the things on my bucket list is to feed giraffes from the upstairs windows of a stately home (alongside rolling in mud with a baby elephant) and so I envisioned Blenheim with my bucket list desires.

< Details



The Tide Goes Out and the Sea Holds Hidden Secrets

By Mary Blue

Holkham Hall | Graphite, acrylic and pastel



My paintings reflect upon the impermanence of life and the forces of nature. I weave poetry into layers of jewel-toned colours exposing the overlooked hidden effects of time. I paint light and shadow, the far horizon and the passing of time. In the minds of man, the sea and land seemingly exist as opposites, yet around the edges everything changes every six hours; I'm attracted to the fleeting. At the crossroads of impermanence, beauty remains. I find in life the things that are most fleeting are very powerful.

I earned my Master of Fine Arts in Painting from the University of Pennsylvania in 1989 where I studied with the renowned landscape painter, Neil Welliver. I have also studied at the Vermont Studio School, the Maryland Art Institute and the American Institute in Avignon, France. My current work has been exhibited at Norfolk-by-Design, Paint Out, and Inheritance 2018, John Hurt Art Prize Holt 2020, 2021. Currently exhibiting at Contemporary and Country at Houghton Hall and Walsingham Gallery.



The Poetry of Farringford

By Dee Young

Farringford House & Gardens | Oil on stretched canvas

I use very intense saturated colour as it speaks to the emotional aspect of living life.

Moving through houses and gardens are my inspiration to represent the inter relationships between human and nature, knowing the poet Tennyson wrote his famous works from this amazing place, a place that award us peace, tranquillity and beauty.



In Bloom

By Grace O'Connor

West Dean Gardens | Oil on canvas

I was inspired to create a work which brings forth both the visionary life of Edward James, who was a lover of gardens and art, and the glory of the West Dean Gardens. James' patronage of Dali is referenced in the use of the pink glove motif which Dali created for James' tea service.

Another Dali reference is the outline of the two figures who represent James and his wife, Tilly Losch.

Their brief, tumultuous marriage brought James initially joy and later much unhappiness. This work reflects the early intoxicating love which they once felt for each other amongst the splendour of the West Dean Gardens.



Fingernails

By Claire Charnley

Temple Newsam | False fingernails, paint, earth, grease, black lead, saddle soap, plaster etc Size including frame: 12.5 x 17 x 2 cm. The frame is glazed (though the work was photographed without glass).

I have been thinking about work - about jobs historically carried out in Temple Newsam. Some of these overlap with contemporary maintenance jobs there. Washing, cleaning, polishing, blacksmithing, painting, cooking, chimney sweeping, hewing etc..

Through making (i.e through use of my own hands) I imagine others' hands engaged with soil, flour, soap, carcasses, stone, ink, clay, animals, fabric, dung, gunpowder etc..

Arranged like a servants' bell box, each nail is a tiny painting of how it might have been. They include nails that are bruised and damaged and the nails of children.



Crest

By Catriona Faulkner

Goodnestone Park | Hand-stitch, assemblage

This piece is a homage to the wealth of history woven throughout Goodnestone. Delving into the buildings history and its inhabitants has allowed my practice to build connections with objects that represent and symbolise elements of this rich history.

Pen nibs , a war medal , a baron's coronet, a stallion all signify details of the history. Jane Austen's writing , the family's Magna Carta reference , the requisition of Goodnestone in WW2. The use of a crown references the coronet of a Baron and the titles lineage, and the stallion Mr Plumtrees' passion for horses.

The piece takes these references blending them with notions of reinventing the heraldic opulence of a stately home but reimagined through a new context where an object takes on a different role , a hybrid identity of something familiar but is transformed. Embedded throughout my practice is an ethos of using found objects with intrinsic interest , re contextualising this treasure through hand stitch and assemblage.



HARRY

By Janet Payne

Chatsworth House | Mixed-media with oil paint, 4ft X 3ft on canvas.

The many artworks at Chatsworth, historic and more recent exhibitions, inspired me for this painting of Prince Harry. Mostly oil paint but the head is in stitch which reflects the tapestry found in many historic buildings.

The painting is based on a painting by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Burne Jones. I gained an MA in Fine Art in 2001 from Central St Martins college of art London.



Ionic Temple

By Stella Appleton Mitchell

Duncombe Park | Watercolour paint

After living in Helmsley for many years, this was our favourite walk. I have a great interest in trees in which most of my work depicts.



Hollyhocks

By Julia Fynn

Deene Park | Digital photograph

The magnificent hollyhocks which symbolize peace, commitment and beauty make a stunning border at this Historic Houses garden.



In an English county garden

By Peter Kilmister

Great Dixter | Leica M camera and APO lens

There was something enchanting about Great Dixter in East Sussex. While walking around the beautiful gardens I spotted a perfectly charming composition of two well-dressed people admiring the flowers. I focussed and shot the scene.



Sun King Reigns

By Timothy Easton

Bedfield Hall | Oil on canvas

The Sun King title refers to the following shrub, top left, which is a variety of *Sophora Microphylla*, a joyous harbinger of spring. This is seen through one of several south-facing windows at Bedfield Hall that overlooks the wide moat to open countryside.

These ogee-shaped windows of early 19th century date replaced the mullions of the 1620's kitchen. The changing shadows cast by the glazing bars and distorted glass offer different forms of perspective for the many times I have worked in front of these lights.



Redheads of Rockingham

By Jill Black

Rockingham Castle | Pencil, acrylic and ink

During a recent visit to Rockingham Castle with my husband, we spotted a family photo in the Castle of the two red head daughters of the current owners.

Being a redhead myself I used this as my inspiration for my entry into the competition and added the castle and gardens to their dresses.



Combermere Abbey

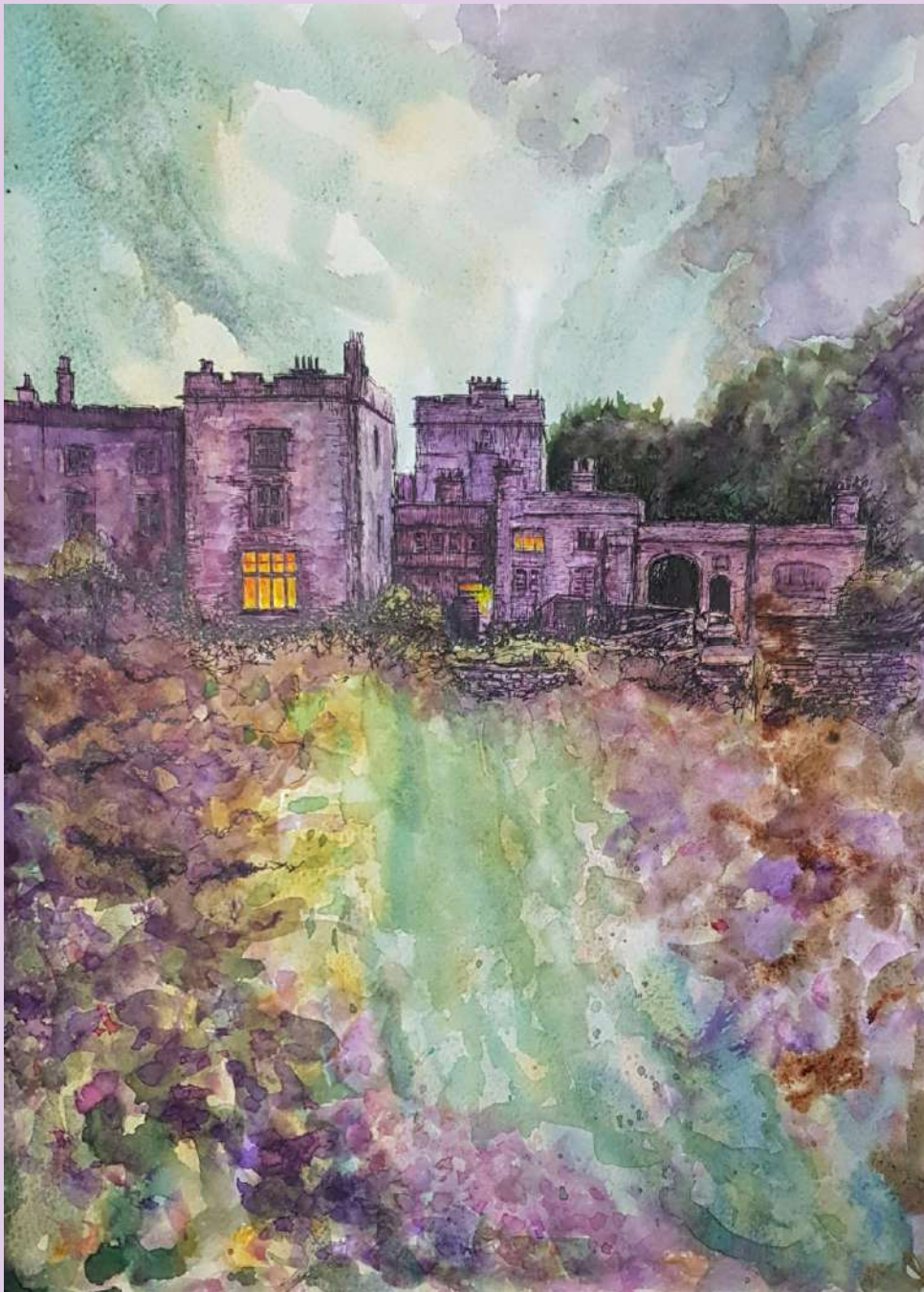
By Helen Holmes

Combermere Abbey | Oil on canvas

The painting was inspired by enjoying a short break at Combermere Abbey in July. By staying at the abbey one felt a real sense of history, with the opportunity to view a detailed book illustrating the painstaking work and craftsmanship undertaken over recent years to restore the abbey.

The painting is designed to reflect special elements of the abbey restoration: from the carefully detailed window tracery, the mouldings below the castellated parapet and the religious motifs externally, together with the original patterned timber framing internally.

Immediately in front of the building was a delightful knot garden, which glistened at night. The various edges of the elements and painting itself have been softened to evoke the dream like quality of the abbey and its setting.



Muncaster Castle at Dusk

By Vicky Dolan

Muncaster Castle | Watercolours and fine liner pens

I'm passionate about exploring historical buildings set within the landscape as subjects for my art. I explore places I have visited and enjoy recreating a sense of enchantment.

I visited and stayed on the grounds of Muncaster castle in 2020. I was captivated by the serene landscape it stood in and by the history of this building.

I need to developed a strong connection and appreciation for the buildings I explore in my art. My work is a mix of watercolours applied spontaneously, combined with loose but detailed pen drawings.



Doll (Anne Boleyn)

By Susannah Douglas

Hever Castle | Pencil on paper

I was interested that Hever Castle had been the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. A woman whose image has been represented and re represented since her time at Hever Castle.

One of these representations is the Peggy Nisbet doll produced in the 1960's. I was inspired by how Hever Castle focuses on Anne Boleyn as a child, rather than a scandalous narrative, and how the Peggy Nisbet doll turned her image to a childhood toy.



'Outbuildings' at Hever Castle

By Mark George Coppin

Hever Castle | Pencil on 220gms paper

I started sketching for the first time in October 2020. This is my 50th piece, many of my best reflect the passion my wife and I have for Historic Houses and National Trust properties.

The 'Outbuildings' view is inspired from photos taken from the upper floors of Hever late in 2020 after the second lockdown. And what buildings they are!



Sunset at Goadby Marwood

By Mark Nightingale

Goadby Marwood Hall | Acrylic on canvas (27cm X 35cm)

We visited Goadby Marwood Hall on 8th July 2021 for our first Invitation to View Tour which was given by the owner Victoria Westropp. We were staying at the property that night, and on our return from our evening meal out, we were greeted by a fabulous sunset over the lakes at Goadby Marwood Hall which we had walked around only a couple of hours earlier. A beautiful end to a wonderful and informative day.

Having never painted a picture of a sunset before, I decided to try and capture the tranquil and atmospheric view which we had seen. The dramatic contrasting light, wonderful colours of the sky and sun almost perfectly setting in line with the end of the lake. We had enjoyed a gentle relaxing peaceful walk around the lakes in the painting, with our thoughts of grandeur and how wonderful it must be to have all of this as your front garden and vista.



Sunset over Kiplin Hall

By Robert Anthony Austin

Kiplin Hall & Gardens | Watercolour original painting, on Arches rough textured paper

Kiplin Hall and Gardens have been an oasis of calm and tranquillity for its thirteen owners spanning ten generations over a period of some 400 years. The Hall stands proudly as a symbol of solidity and permanence, nestled in the ever-changing landscape and skylines of rural North Yorkshire; and the Latin inscription 'Per Acuta Belli' above the front door alludes to this feeling of permanence.

My submitted painting, entitled 'Sunset over Kiplin' attempts to show the contrast between the permanence of the Hall and the dynamic, impermanence of its surroundings. Using appropriate watercolour materials and techniques I have in general used hard edges and dry brushwork to emphasise the structure and texture of the building. Whereas for the skyscape and landscape I have used 'wet in wet' and 'lifting out' techniques to establish soft edges and subtle variations of form and colour.

In particular, I have chosen a late summer sunset for the season and time of day, thus allowing a mellow light to pervade the landscape. Sunsets generally afford a rich collection of fast changing sky colours, and a dynamic play of light in the trees – I have tried to bring out these characteristics in the painting.

As a room steward for over five years at Kiplin Hall, I have increasingly appreciated its sense of history and its beauty in its surroundings. I hope this painting does some justice to this HHA 'hidden gem'.

8 Reasons Why

By Donna Caselden

Berkeley Castle | Plaster, house paint, gold and silver leaf

My work always contains an element of surprise. Once I make that first pass with my brush, I never know what will emerge. The finished design is never the way I expected it to be. I love that. I trust my intuition, and that allows my artwork to evolve organically. It is that aura of mystery that captivates the viewer, with a sense that my paintings reveal a secret, unknown space. I want people to feel that they're truly drawn into the painting and see something different every time.

I decided to submit '8 Reasons Why' for this competition for a variety of reasons. Since I live in Gloucester, Massachusetts USA, I wanted to paint something based on a property in Gloucestershire. The 8 people represented in this painting could easily have lived in Berkeley Castle, and are so gruesome they look as if they are describing the death of King Edward II's murder.





Harewood House

By Rachel Tonks

Harewood House | iPad drawing using the procreate software

I have worked and volunteered at Harewood for over 3 years. I draw places and people that are important to me in my life. Although I enjoy using more traditional materials for drawing and painting I have more recently been developing my digital drawing technique. It allows me to make art on the go and means I can save money on materials like paints and paper.

There are so many different and unusual aspects to Harewood House and I have sketched various things around the house and grounds from statues to the penguins in the bird garden. I chose to submit my drawing of the house itself as it is an interest in volunteering at the house that led me to discover more about Harewood as a whole. It is also the drawing I found the most challenging and so I feel the proudest of it.

Kiftsgate House and Garden

By Paul Middleton

Kiftsgate House and Garden | Pen and Ink with colour pencil

Just before Lockdown I joined the Historic Houses Association and I have a great love for houses and gardens. We have now visited well over 25 of these and during this time I have done a series of drawings of our visits.

During Lockdown in March 2020 I thought "I am going to do a series of drawings around my home". I did one every day over a period of 40 Days. It made me sit down and reflect about the everyday views or glimpses around me that we are not always aware of. I did not have a list in mind at this time. It was all very intuitive as I looked around. So starting with my study I responded to what was in front of me.

On our visit to Kiftsgate Gardens I responded intuitively and emotionally to the view in front of me. The contrast between hard and soft, building and landscape is always fascinating.

In Lockdown what is immediate becomes important and small things become more apparent. Catching the sense of what I see with energy and apparent spontaneity was what I wanted to achieve by looking intensely at it. Drawing involves sight, touch, sound and viewpoint which can only be learnt by doing it and through experience.





Grandmother's Trunk

By Ariadne Susanna Birnberg

The Charles Dickens Museum | Cyanotype solution, liquid chalk, oil sticks

On visiting the Charles Dickens Museum I found out that the family used to enjoy playing the game of 'Grandmother's Trunk'. This involved coming up with items, in alphabetical order, that might have lived in grandmother's trunk, presumably the more fantastical the better. I thought I'd channel the spirit of this game by thinking of my composition as a collection of artefacts or things inspired by my visit.

Dickens's pet raven, Grip, for example. Abacus beads, come loose from their frames. Rectangles that suggest windows or picture frames or books - or the trunk itself. And two of the house's most memorable occupants. Charles Dickens, in the grip of inspiration, and the suffragette Mary Richardson, known for slashing the Rokeby Venus, sat quietly and clothed, in counterpoint to the reclining nude she would go on to attack. A house of radical imaginations.

The ghostly nightgown in the foreground is a reference to Dickens's sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth, who died in the house aged seventeen, and who loomed large in the writer's dreams. I used colours inspired by the period, erring on the vivid, in tribute to Dickens's apparent penchant for vibrant colour.



Old Rhododendron Garden

By Isabel Pearce

Borde Hill Garden | Acrylic paint on box canvas

Throughout the garden there is an abundance of inspiration. However, I was particularly struck by the combination of magenta and lilac in the Old Rhododendron Garden.

I have tried to capture the intensity of colour in an abstract floral style. I hope it is as dramatic as the display, at Borde Hill Garden!



Into the Forest

By Helen Leith

Raveningham Hall | Digital photograph

The gardens at Raveningham Hall are my favourite in Norfolk and the arboretum and the stumpery at the end my favourite part of the gardens.

The stumpery in particular is so atmospheric - when you come across it, its like peering back through time into a primeval forest with all the magnificent ferns and giant upended trees with their splayed roots stretching into the canopy. Some of the upside down stumps draped in foliage resemble strange mythical creatures and you almost expect a dinosaur to come ambling out from the undergrowth.

The entrance looks both enticing and slightly scary with its majestic column-like trees like the entrance to a palace beckoning you down the path beyond into who knows what? I was there on a blissful late September day with superb light dancing through the trees and ferns, heightening the sense of marvel and mystery in this beautiful, prehistoric looking forest-in-a-garden.

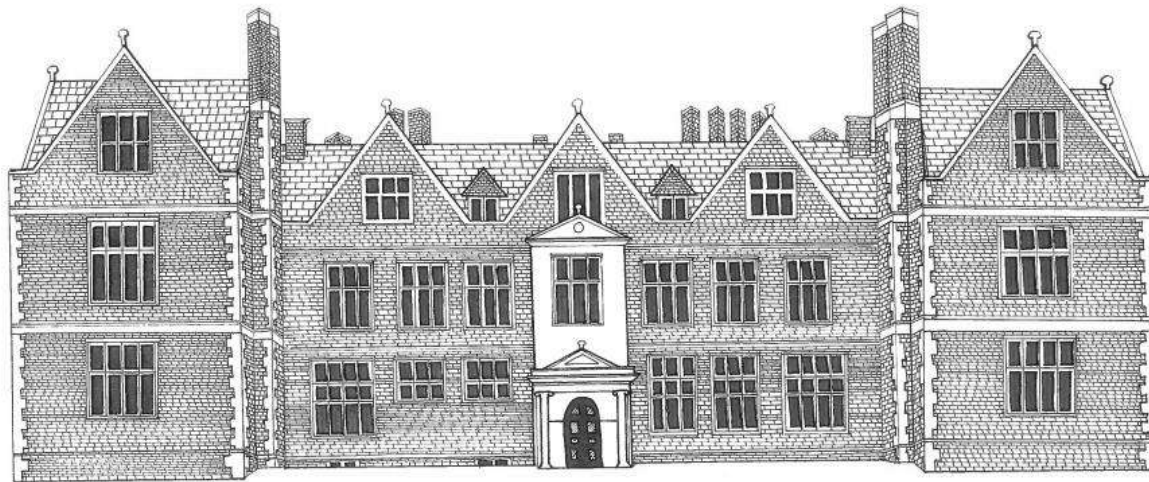
Shaw House

By Sarah Somerville

Shaw House | Pen and paper

Shaw House is known as a 'hidden gem' in Berkshire. Whilst I agree it's a gem, I want it to be less hidden! I have therefore written the first guide book for the House, and am also beginning to create art work too.

You often see architectural drawings of historic houses from centuries ago, sadly none have survived of Shaw so I created this as a modern version of a simple and elegant drawing idea.





The Bowood Fairies

By Jane Kemp

Bowood House | Pencil, ink and watercolour on HP paper

This painting was inspired by the climbing roses growing up the front of Bowood House in Wiltshire, softening its facade with splashes of colour across the brick.

I always draw botanical subjects from life, so I used 'models' from the garden at home to stand in for Bowood's own roses.

The Bowood Fairy Families populating the roses are assisting the gardeners with their mammoth task of cultivating and caring for the climbers. The fairies are also simply enjoying the environment they love - thorns and all.

I've been inspired by the work of Cicely Mary Barker, and by Arthur Rackham's otherworldly figures. By including these fairies in the painting, I hope to encourage children to take a more active interest in flowers and plants, as well as the insects and wildlife that flourish alongside them in Bowood Gardens. There's a caterpillar, a ladybird and a spider to find in this one.

I started the picture with a pencil drawing, which was then inked in, using 0.05, 0.5 and 0.1 nibbed pens.

Once the ink drawing was complete, I erased the pencil marks, and painted it using layers of watercolour on hot-pressed A3-size paper.



The Carpeted Steps

By Melissa Speed

*Haddon Hall | Fine-liner pen (0.4mm) on card
(210x297mm)*

I felt compelled to draw these steps the moment I saw them at Haddon Hall when visiting late August with my family. They had an untamed beauty about them and reminded me of a grand staircase despite being outside in the gardens.

I could picture Oberon and Titania stood at the top of them. I decided to use pen and card as I really wanted to draw rather than paint, using lots of fine lines to build up the image in an echo of the way the plants have gradually grown over the steps.



A Flibbertigibbet of a House

By Patricia MacGregor

Abbotsford House | Mixed media - paint, pen & ink, collage, gold leaf, acrylic pen and pencil

I love Abbotsford. I have visited the house and garden a few times and I love its charm. I love that Sir Walter Scott loved it too! I wanted my mixed media piece to include some items from his collections as well as show the appeal of the building itself.

I chose his bust, a brooch belonging to Helen Macgregor, his top hat and gloves, the Chinese wallpaper, a wooden chest. I added tartan, a map and some of his books. I added small squares with a stamp to echo the architectural brickwork. Walter Scott had many names for his house which I also added into the collage. My hope is that my art work would appeal to Sir Walter in its flibbertigibbet fashion.

Vincent's Room

By Ranjini Chatterjee

Van Gogh's House | Research, digital images from original Van Gogh paintings and illustrations, Dickens' poem, photographs, adobe photoshop



My artwork, a large-scale digital canvas is a collage of love, heartbreak, art, poetry, texture, sound, space and everything that consciously and sub consciously crowded the mind space of a restless yet hopeful 20-year-old Vincent in London. 'Room' is used metaphorically here depicting not just his physical room but the room in his mind and heart during this period. Anyone walking into this house as if walks into a young Vincent's consciousness and can take back Vincent's room to their own room.

An original Vincent canvas reveals fascinating multi layered hidden emotions, the micro-stories along with the vigour of the main story line that gives the viewer a taste of his emotional state at that moment. I have used several visible and hidden layers in my piece which came out of my research about his time in London and only a careful study brings these details out to the true Vincent lovers!

He was deeply inspired by Charles Dickens and in a letter to Theo he mentioned he used to buy Dicken's books with 6 shillings. Being a young hopeless romantic trying to find eternal love in this world, I realise the importance of poetry in his life at this time. The poem used is 'Lucy's song' by Dickens which reflects this unwavering belief in eternal love! I recollect my 20s in a similar state of mind when I first discovered Van Gogh's work!



Visiting the Sidney Oak at Penshurst Place

By Kate Anderson

Penshurst Place | Ink and watercolour on paper

I visited Penshurst Place with the purpose to draw the Sidney Oak, as part of my Meeting Trees project. This ancient tree has been in decline for some years and I had no idea if it was still standing at all. I was touched to find it's striking skeletal hulk, polished creamy smooth through so many seasons and histories, diminished yet venerable to the end. The August heatwave transpired against me and I didn't manage to look around the house itself; but I did find a kindred sense of sanctuary in retracing Sir Philip Sidney's steps.

The artwork is in two parts; a black and white portrait of the Sidney Oak, and a 22 panel graphic sequence about my experience meeting the tree.



Inveraray Castle

By Kuznetsova Elena

Inveraray Castle | Oil on canvas

Of all the beautiful castles in the UK, I was inspired by Inveraray Castle. It's like something out of a fairy tale and a real Duke lives there!

I wanted to add characters, a medieval girl and a raven.



Cleves & Boleyn: Femininity in Hever

By Luna Gosling

Hever Castle | Digital, Photoshop

My piece focuses on the women of Hever Castle. (From left to right Mary Boleyn, Anne of Cleves and Anne Boleyn). I have an interest in women in history, the wives and mistresses of Henry VIII are particularly interesting figures who are rarely removed from him in context. These women inspired me to choose Hever Castle as they all owned/lived here when they had no connection to the king.

This piece depicts the strained relationship between the Boleyn sisters contrasted by the better fairing Anne of Cleves. This piece also features stained glass windows found in Hever Castle, an art form that was often used to depict the heraldry of different noble houses.



Budle Hall Waiting for Brides

By Mado Mado

Budle Hall | mixed technique (paper, acryl, oil, collage)

This delightful old house. I thought, what should be the place where the bride wants to come to take a photo in memory of the solemn day? But these are not Barbie's dreams, but rather a Mermaid. These are dreams that are so far from reality and at the same time they are naive in a childish way.

I got a diptych. Why? Because every girl has 2 ears, and an angel whispers his fantasy into each one. And every girl has 2 eyes and they run away, because she don't know what to choose!



Dunvegan Castle

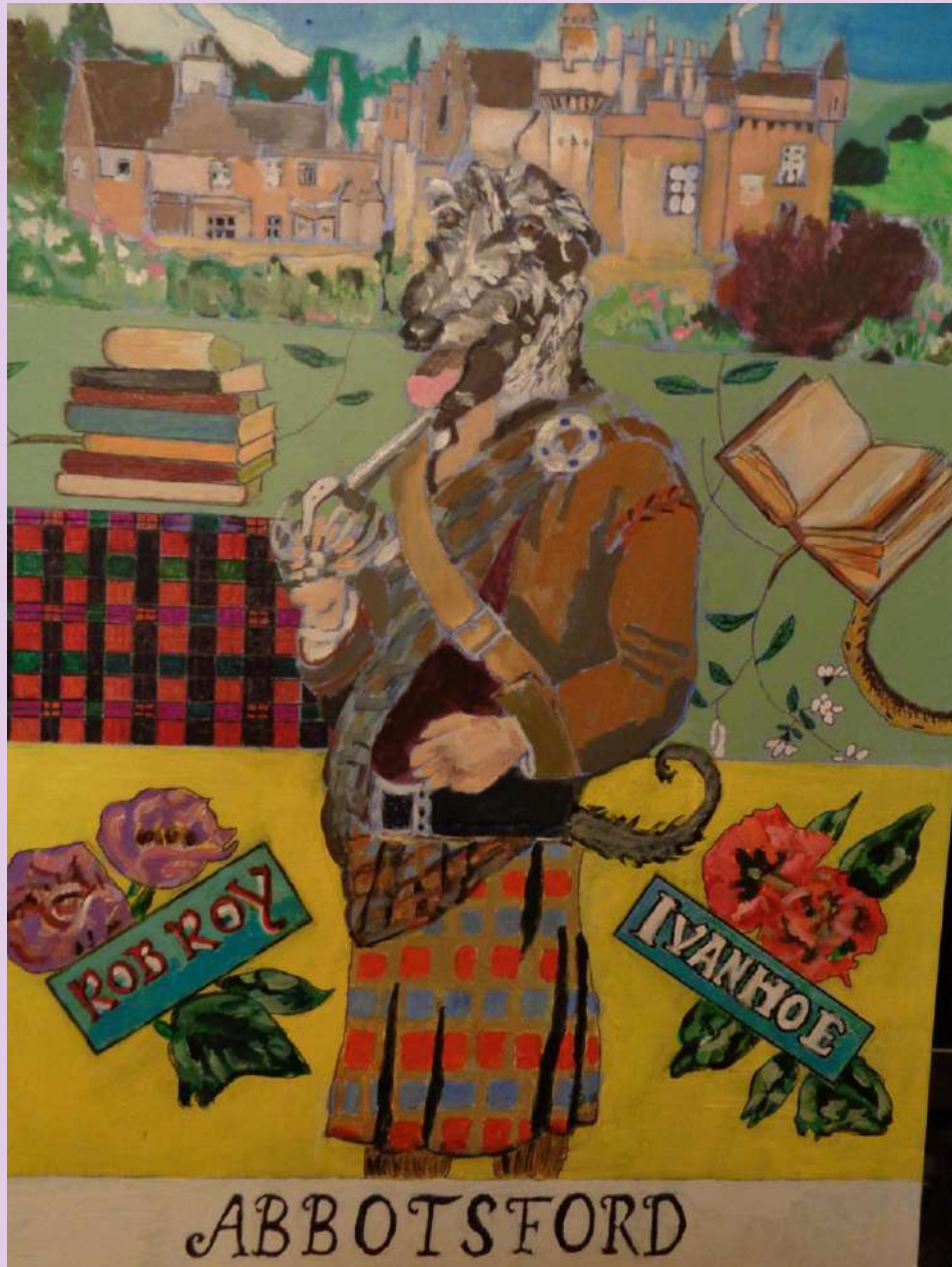
By Jason Cordingley

Dunvegan Castle | Oil on canvas

My oil compositions are evocative and dramatic. By playing with extremes of texture in paint I aim to create intense lighting effects that then interact with abstracted images of sky, sea and land. I have developed this approach to landscape painting over the past thirty years using multiple layers of oil paint thickeners and glazes.

I am particularly interested in capturing the changing nature of light's interaction with the landscape.

Through a love of texture and a passion for the elements I aim to create work that echoes both the vitality of nature and, the splendour of man's architectural endeavours. The geography and setting of Dunvegan castle provide a perfect balance of these two forces.



Abbotsford

By Jean Hamilton Lamb

Abbotsford House | Acrylic paints and fine liner pens on board

Sir Walter Scott's *Abbotsford*: This is Maida, Scott's beloved deerhound, posing as Rob Roy in homage to one of the adventure books written by Sir Walter. Abbotsford has always made a great impression on me on every visit, and amongst its riches I have referenced the library's magnificent Chinese wallpaper.

Sir Walter Scott contributed substantially to notions of Scottish romanticism, and, taking a leaf out of his book, I have placed his favourite dog at the heart of this depiction.



The Cloister

By Natalie Truan

Beaulieu Abbey | Acrylic and watercolour paint, coloured pencils

My name is Natalie Truan and I am a London based illustrator and Visual artist.

I work with an array of materials, most often combining drawing and painting techniques with textiles and printing methods.

The artwork I am submitting is based on the 13th Century English Abbey and the medieval Cistercian monks that lived here. I was inspired to create an artwork based on this house as it is beautiful and tranquil and I liked the idea of creating a piece depicting the monks at work in the aromatic herb garden.



Overcast

By Olesia Krivolapova

Acton Court | Ink, pen, pastel

I am an illustrator. I really like to use the view of old buildings in my work, so I was very inspired by the given theme.



Waddesdon Manor

By Lily Fossett

Waddesdon Manor | Digital painting

After a recent visit to Waddesdon Manor, I was greatly inspired to capture the detailed and stunning architecture.

I create my work with a combination of digital techniques and enjoyed adding texture to the illustration whilst using line work to highlight the shapes and style of the Manor.



The Inner Courtyard (at Syon House)

By Alicia Griffiths

Syon House | Oil on Canvas w 45cm x h 60cm x d 2cm

The rationale for my painting is simple. I fell in love with the peace and quiet of the formal building and restrained planting of Syon House's Inner Courtyard Garden when I visited it this September (2021) and wanted to capture that feeling in paint.

I have lived close to Syon House for over 20 years. I've frequently walked my dog in Syon Park, visited the garden centre there, but never been into the House. What a terrible admission and what an amazing place I've missed out on - until now. I had the most glorious day there, within the house and in the park. I went, I saw and was inspired to paint!

I've seen many photos and paintings of the amazing Great Hall created by Robert Adams, similarly of the splendid Great Conservatory, (both of which are even more incredible in real life) and I contemplated painting them, but decided that I wanted to create a different angle or image of Syon House, one not known to that many, even those who've visited the House.

Due to Covid regulations, the doors from the Great Hall leading on to the Inner Courtyard were open, giving a "secret garden" feel. I wanted to keep the feeling of stumbling upon something not in the guidebooks or on the tours, hence my inclusion of the door on the right, the majestic Percy family lion on the roof, the glimpse of late September sunlight in the left hand corner and on the glorious stone walls.

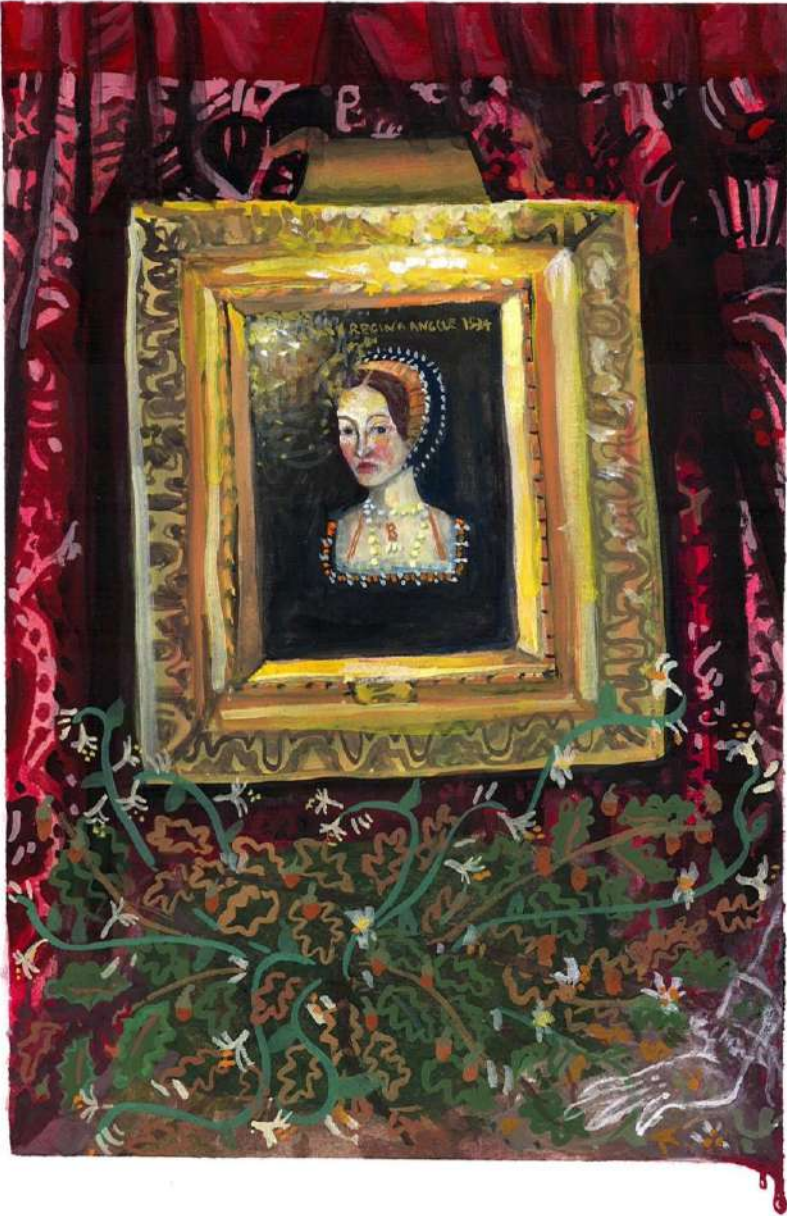


Misty Garden

By Svetlana Leshcheva

Coton Manor Garden | paper 100% cotton, watercolour, pencils, pen, soft pastel, oil pastel

I like to catch little pieces of life to create little cosy worlds, where everything is changing but everything is perfect as it is, perfect in its messy and imperfections. I like when my materials live their own life, because only if you let things go you can get something new.



Legacy

By Maddie Williams

Hever Castle | Gouache paint

My painting shows the portrait of Anne Boleyn hung in her bedroom in Hever Castle.

I was struck by the beauty of the portrait, and enjoyed the way Anne's pale skin and striking gaze emerge from the gloom of the backdrop. The relative simplicity and sombre tone to the portrait contrasts with the plushness and detail of the drapes and the golden frame, perhaps appropriate for representing someone who's life was full of such contrasting darkness and brilliance.

The electric lamp shining over the portrait brings us into the present day, a sad reminder that we have so few existing portraits made of Anne during her lifetime. I have imagined an arrangement of honeysuckle and oak branches bearing acorns, Anne and Henry's chosen motif, symbolising love, devotion, fertility and new life. These romantic sentiments were, of course, cut short, and along with Anne herself, much of the iconography related to her was destroyed by Henry.

In the right bottom corner I have imagined the ghostly hand of Anne, whose spectre is said to haunt the castle. I wonder what she would think of how she is remembered, reinvented and mythologised, would she be amused, proud, disappointed, frustrated?



A Place of Solitude

By Peter Mollett

Doddington Place Garden | Acrylic on canvas

Peter Mollett (born in 1944) is self taught artist, who has been making paintings for over ten years.



Hole Park Gates

By Sara Christmas

*Hole Park Garden | Dry-point print from Rhenalon plate.
Sepia ink on Bockingford Paper*

On a visit to Hole Park in July 2021 I was inspired by the detail and shapes within the iron memorial gates as well as the story of Captain Wilfred Barham who died of shrapnel wounds at Ypres. I spent the afternoon making a sketch of the intricate detail of the gates.

This September I returned to my sketch and decided to develop a print that reflected the detail and historic qualities of the gates. I chose to make a dry-point print with Rhenalon plate and used sepia ink and bockingford paper. I'd like to think that my print draws people to read the sad and interesting history behind these beautiful gates.



Sir Walter Scott's Abbotsford

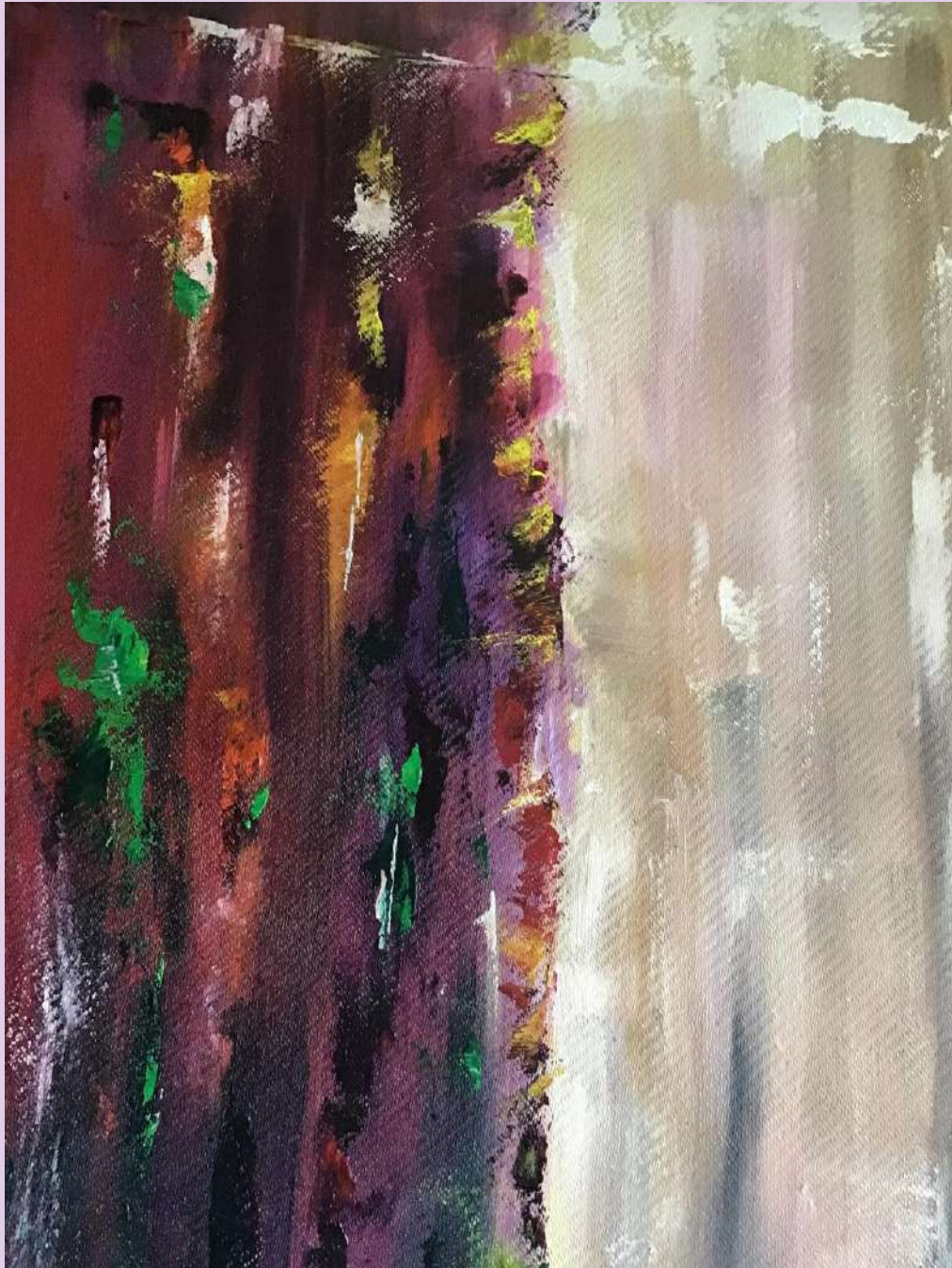
By Kuznetcova Anna Vladimirovna

Abbotsford House | Watercolour, watercolour pencils

The mysterious castle Walter Scott captivates with the atmosphere and rigor of the lines. Abbotsford is an incredible place that has preserved the spirit of the past.

The preserved library of the brilliant writer and the magnificent collection are striking.

This is Walter Scott's tangible world.



Tale of Two Lives

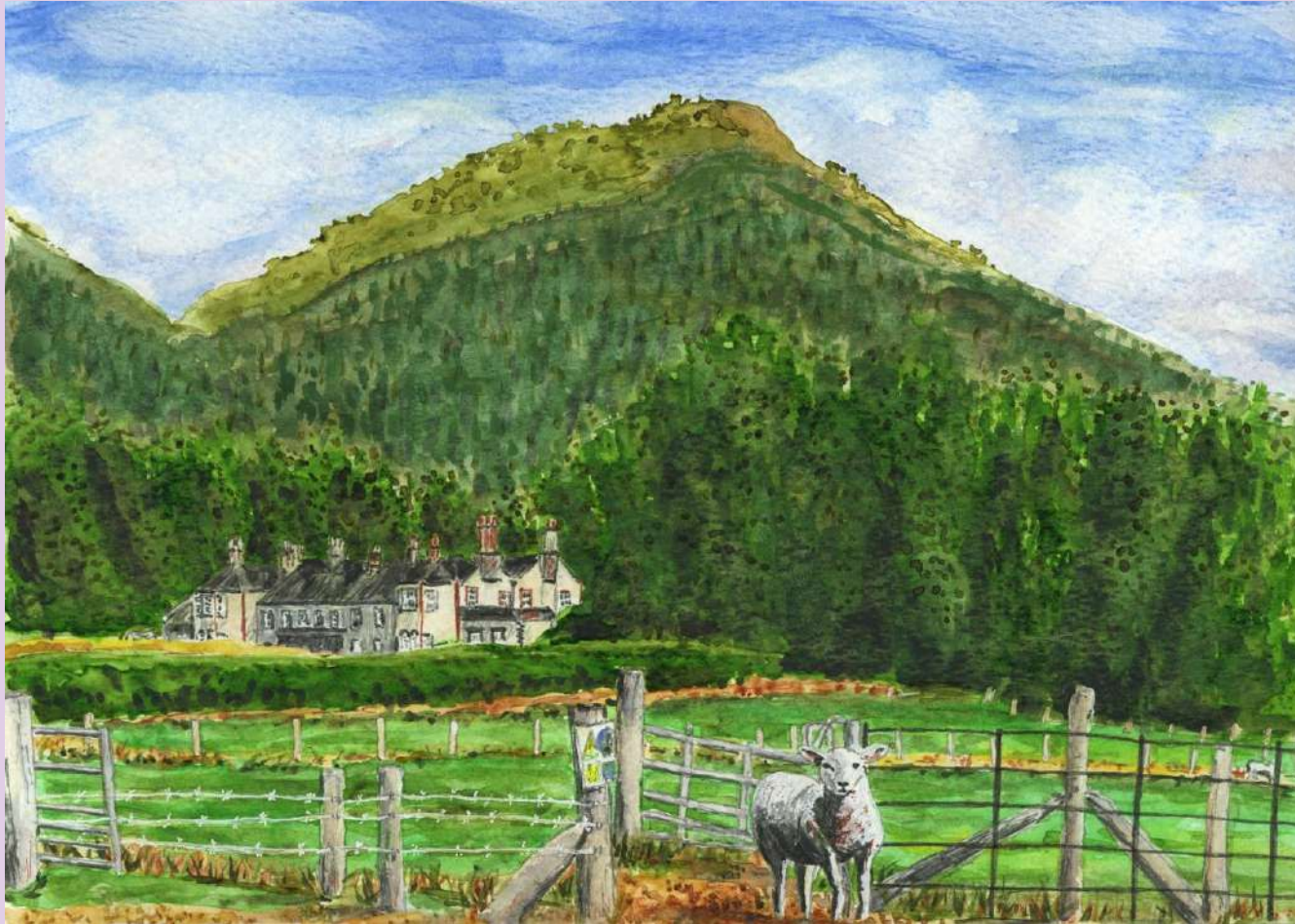
By Ilesha Denize Ledeatte

Charles Dickens Museum | Oil on hardboard

My artwork was inspired by colour. The difference in the spaces within the house were the inspiration behind my work. The spaces of work, e.g. washroom, kitchen, nursery and servants room are pale and bland in contrast to the vitality of colour at the core of Dickens house. It felt like two distinct spaces within the same space defined by colour palette and tells a different story of the past. In line with my practise there is text as part of the painting.

Following an absence from the arts of over 35 years, I am an artist in recovery and 10 years a creative. On that journey I discovered that storytelling is an art, that stories conjure imagery from words in any language. This fuelled my existing fascination with text and image which on reflection has always existed and manifests in my earliest work.

History to me is the body of narratives which nations choose to tell themselves about who they are. I am continually intrigued about the stories people tell themselves about what they have done and the reasons why. I digest Histories and spit out the bones into Grande Visual Narrative Art Books my signature style.



Sheep Pens at Mirehouse on Bassenthwaite

By Samantha Ann Robson

Mirehouse | Pen and watercolours on watercolour paper

Sheep Pens at Mirehouse on Bassenthwaite was inspired by a glorious evening walk my husband and I took in August this year. We headed down to St Bega's church and the shore of Bassenthwaite and then walked back past the sheep pens, seeing Mirehouse nestling between the trees under Dodd Fell. One of the flock came out to see who was passing and looked a little indignant at the disturbance.

The piece is worked in pen and watercolour. While I enjoy working in a range of mediums, I am frequently drawn back to pen work and watercolours, mark making in ink and blending tones from highly pigmented pans of paint. It feels like getting back to basics: using techniques and materials that already have a rich history and a softer footprint ecologically.

The beautiful scenery here at Mirehouse always feels like a reward for my efforts to keep mobile. The chemotherapy I had for blood cancer caused five of my vertebrae to collapse and, with my being in the clinically extremely vulnerable group who had to shield, I must work at keeping my fitness and mobility up. One of our neighbours in Keswick is on the team that helps keep Mirehouse and gardens in such excellent condition, so I appreciate the care that goes into keeping a property like Mirehouse, and the generosity which the family shows in sharing it with local people and holidaymakers alike. This is one of the reasons why we are Historic Houses visitor members.



Highclere Castle

By Roger Hutchins

Highclere Castle | Pen, Ink & Watercolour

I have visited Highclere Castle several times with my wife and based this artwork on photographs taken when we went to this years Battle Prom.

I was inspired by the contrast of the house and it's surrounding landscape.



Lowther Castle

By Gillie Cawthorne

Lowther Castle | Watercolour on paper, 45 x 30cm

Is the castle rising from the forest, or being swallowed by it? It looks like something from a fairy tale, with elements of a venetian palazzo. Who wouldn't want to paint it?



Claydon

By Nicola Saunderson

Claydon Courtyard | Watercolour and pencil

I am drawn to the relationship between urban architecture and landscaping, in particular in recent work where landscaping begins to become overgrown. Creating in watercolour detailed descriptions of foliage and its surrounding architecture.

Claydon is a site I have visited on numerous occasions and have been particularly keen to explore its greater sense of history. A wall within the garden is a spot I am always drawn to where a beautiful plant cascades over and down it. In my piece Claydon I have combined it with another image of another wall space at Claydon where foliage is also growing down the wall. I have been interested in the idea that the wall may become lost, although it doesn't quite become lost in this piece I feel it might within the next piece I make.



Turner's House

By Jan Lee Johnson

Turner's House | Drawing, mixed media

I have often visited Turners House and have helped fundraise for its renovation .I have been inspired by the beautiful colours of the elegant exterior brickwork, and also its compact nature, and its situation in a dense area of suburbia.

I have tried to focus on the textures and colours of the house which seems to glow in the surroundings.



Exploring Bamburgh Castle

By Dawn Hodgman

Bamburgh Castle | Acrylic paint

An archway of history invites you in to turn back time, encapsulating the romance of the sea views into an enrichment of the day with the spellbinding bloodiness of the past.



The Beauty

By Kun Fang

Blair Castle | Mixed media on plates

The work of Kun Fang isn't limited to one style and can be organised in series along intersecting themes. The viewer who becomes familiar with the recurring symbols and the intense colour is struck by the beauty and energy of each individual work.

The colour use is inspired by European modernism and eastern traditions of refinement.

The way the painter and her characters are looking for a positive way to identify, by times strikes as uncannily real and fragilely human. Their search never lands in easy irony or critique but rather in double meaning.



Waiting for Marlene D.

By Myrta Köhler

Alnwick Castle | Digital photograph

Alnwick Castle is a place of longing: Not only because it is a family home, but also because it has featured in several films and has therefore acquired an immense "fictional" popularity.

My work hints at this aspect of popularity acquired by the media. "Waiting for Marlene D." references the brickwork of the Castle, while at the same time indicating the face of world-renowned singer Marlene Dietrich, who has been an idol and person of longing for many.



House by the Sea

By Lisa Jones

Smedmore House | Acrylic on canvas

Smedmore House, is near Kimmeridge on the Jurassic Coast, and it looks out to sea, as it has done since 1620. It is both grand and romantic. It was originally built by a Sir William Clavell but has been rebuilt and augmented since then. The strange tower on the right of the picture is Clavell Tower, it stands on a headland and can be seen from the beach below. It was built in 1830 as an observatory and folly.

Kimmeridge beach is very popular, especially with families. It is natural and unspoiled, it has rock pools teeming with life and the grey cliff face reveals an incredible number of fossils and ammonites. The best time to find fossils is after a really good storm! When my children were little we used to go there a lot.

The house is not really open to the public but it does host weddings and the guests can camp in yurts. The aim of The House by the Sea is to capture the mood and history of the house and it's surroundings, particularly on a Dorset summer's day.



Laidley Worm (2021)

By Anya Bliss

Bamburgh Castle | Oil paints, Linseed Oil, Turpentine, on A1 Canvas Paper

In my artistic practice, I work in a variety of mediums, typically producing three-dimensional sculptural or installation pieces but recently started working with oil paints with a perspective of ignoring the laws of physics to produce outcomes I would not be able to with real-life sculpture.

When I was working on my painting in response to Bamburgh Castle, I wanted to paint a likeness, enhancing the colours that resonated with me but also incorporating a visual sense of story-telling. Showing movement while also literally including abstract objects representing key aspects of myths and legends surrounding the history of Bamburgh Castle. For example, The Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh is represented beside the castle, this story, being one of the most exciting folklores of Bamburgh had to be featured. The 'Laidly Worm' in the stories actually refers to a princess who turned into a dragon so depicting her (the dragon) as a giant earthworm adds a comedic twist. In the ocean, King Oswald's indestructible hand can be found which, as St Aidan declared, never decayed and the anecdote remains feeding the poor, or perhaps now - the land.

The rough, turbulent sea hints at the history of attempted invasions while the castle stands high and proud in defence. The pinkish clouds directly above the castle might suggest a dark and gloominess but actually, the bright and airy background adds a sense of comfort, holding the castle while also adding to the sense of height, towering over the sea.



Two Girls, Yellow and Grey

By Julie Blankenship

Elizabeth Gaskell's House | Found nineteenth century photograph with ink and dust

During the past year, during the time of covid, while working on this painting, I read, watched and listened to many Victorian works, including Elizabeth Gaskell's stories and novels. *Two Girls, Yellow and Grey* shows the duality of life—the sick and the well and the haves and the have nots. I strongly relate this painting to the women in *North and South*, and their struggles to define their own identities and be true to themselves, in the face of almost insurmountable challenges and restrictive social norms, grinding work, poverty, grief, illness, alienation, and family pressure.

I create mixed media works with anonymous photographs, responding to the ways in which, throughout the industrial revolution, these mediums began to be employed in the construction of identity. Standards of living improved for some, but income disparity increased at the same time. England, and other western countries, underwent painful transformations, reinventing themselves as consumer cultures in an increasingly industrialized environment.

Originally, these photographs encouraged a feeling of connection to distant people, places and times. I interrupt these (now unknown) narratives—recycling and altering the photographs to create new meanings, responding to both the content of the materials, and to the physical objects themselves by working the surfaces with collage and painting techniques — drawing, soaking, tearing, cutting, layering, and burnishing. I deconstruct and reassemble flotsam and jetsam from the industrial revolution into works whose beauty arises out of processes that nearly destroy them, alluding to metamorphoses, dark histories and gothic struggles.