

Oil Pastel Demonstration – Stephen Cheeseman Saturday, 7th November 2015

On a damp and miserable November day we were treated to a lively and colourful Oil Pastel Demonstration given by Stephen Cheeseman.

Stephen commenced his demonstration by encouraging the group to always travel with a note book and pencil to be able to sketch people, scenes etc and later to enhance the images with a fine line pen for durability and future reference.

Today, however, Stephen was referring to two black and white pictures of race horses and riders and discussed how he was going to plan his picture using both images for reference. He recommended using a coloured, good quality pastel paper, and today he was working on a maroon coloured sheet of 140 grms.

Stephen planned and outlined his picture using a low cost, fairly hard pale blue Pentel Oil Pastel stressing the importance of measuring constantly whilst creating his images. Once satisfied with his drawing he then changed to an artist grade Sennelier Oil Pastel, a type of oil pastel that was created to the specification of the great Picasso himself! These pastels have a soft, lipstick like consistency. He started by using a large white oil pastel to put in the highlights both on the riders and horses, explaining that should he make a mistake it is possible to go over the error with a different colour, or scratch off with a palette knife.



Stephen added a sky using four different blues describing them as dark, light, turquoise and very light blue! He then introduced colour to the picture, stressing the importance of using cold colours in the background, warmer colours coming forward and hot colours at the front on the leading horse. When he was happy with the images he blends the pastels using an old brush and a solvent, such as white spirit as he used today. This was left to dry and, although the solvent had soaked through the paper, Stephen assured us that the paper would dry flat and not buckle.

Once the paper had dried Stephen continued to add layers of colour to enhance images and add dimension, lights and shade, adding two more riders in the background to make the picture look more balanced. He used bold diamond and triangular marks for the horses features and then when he was satisfied that he had added sufficient colour to get the effect that he had wanted he blended the artwork with a dry brush using loose strokes to encourage movement. Once the picture is finished to his satisfaction he will seal it using Sennelier Spray. In less than two hours Stephen produced a work full of movement and colour, an enjoyable and instructive demonstration of an often overlooked medium.

