



ODIHAM ART GROUP DEMONSTRATION REPORT

ROGER DELLAR – INTERIOR SCENE IN OIL, 5th NOVEMBER

It was a privilege to welcome Roger for our November demonstration. The subject Roger demonstrated was the interior scene of a restaurant in oils, using as his inspiration a photo he'd taken when passing a restaurant in London. Roger paints on SBS board using Rosemary brushes from his own signature range. He preps the board with two coats of gesso and a third coat of gesso with grey. Roger uses a simple palette of Titanium White, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Yellow Deep, Cadmium Yellow Pale Hue, Cadmium Red, Manganese Blue and Burnt Umber together with white spirit to thin.

He began by painting in the outline of the scene with a brush, adding mid tones whilst making the areas of darker tones bigger so he can cut in. He followed that by painting in abstract shapes for the under painting, putting in the perspective, where figures should be and where spaces are by working loosely. He stressed that it is important to include the eye line. He added colour around the painting, not just in one place, and makes sure the board was covered. Rubber shapers are used to draw in detail and Roger checked that the vanishing point met the eye line. Do not overstate the detail so the viewer can interpret and see the painting for themselves. Less is more and light is king.



He told us to look for where to paint soft edges against sharp edges and, once happy with the composition in the mid-tones, decide what needs more work whilst leaving things you are happy with. He takes photos on his phone when not painting plein air but does not follow the photos slavishly, allowing himself the freedom to adapt the scene to suit the composition. He obviously loved working in oils, which allows easy cutting in of detail. Another tip he gave us was to always paint the darks in lean not fat as they need to be flat against the light. Try to see your painting by shape and colour rather than from the detail of the photo, changing the pressure and direction of brushwork and making suggestive marks rather than drawing in detail.



Having added the dark and mid tones it was now time to suggest some detail using a smaller brush, going back to the photograph to pull the painting together. It is at this stage too that consideration should be given to areas that are not working particularly well - perhaps adding an extra waiter, blurred as he walked through the restaurant. More specific detail can be added using a rigger or the edges of a palette knife, dabbing in small marks for the candles, the wine glass rims or the highlights of cutlery on the table. Further drawing marks to the backs of chairs broke up blocks of colour and added interest. The figure in the distance, possibly a waitress, had the light behind her so a highlight down one side brought her to life. The restaurant lights were layered with ever-lighter tones to bring out the brightness of the globes and lanterns. The paint was now very much thicker in parts but not across the whole painting, as a contrast between the original underpainting where it still exists and the impasto highlights gives extra interest.



He noted that, when using highlights on a person, it is important to remember to follow the natural contours of the limb. The waiter's arm for example had rounded muscles so the highlights needed to reflect this and once again a light tone behind the waiter brought shape and form to his head. Roger stood back to consider where reflections and highlights should appear, which would depend on the source of light. For instance, bearing perspective in mind, the table lamp would cast reflections across the table while the hanging globe lights would reflect dabs of light on the edges of the ceiling. The more you look, the more you see.



Each new mark helped to resolve the picture. Roger looked at the picture as a whole and didn't work on the same area for long. At home he would normally look at the painting reflected in a mirror to help identify problem areas. He varied the strokes and tones in one zone but then moved quickly on to another area to do the same, continually assessing what was needed to resolve the picture. He used a fan brush to blend hard edges or to smudge out highlights that were too strong. The painting was looking very good to us but Roger said that this was not yet a finished piece of work, it still needed adjustment to certain areas.

Finally, after treating us to an excellent demonstration, Roger gave us one final bit of advice which was to remind us that the main thing is to enjoy what you are doing!



Jenny Johnson and Sue Williams
November 2017