

# newsletter

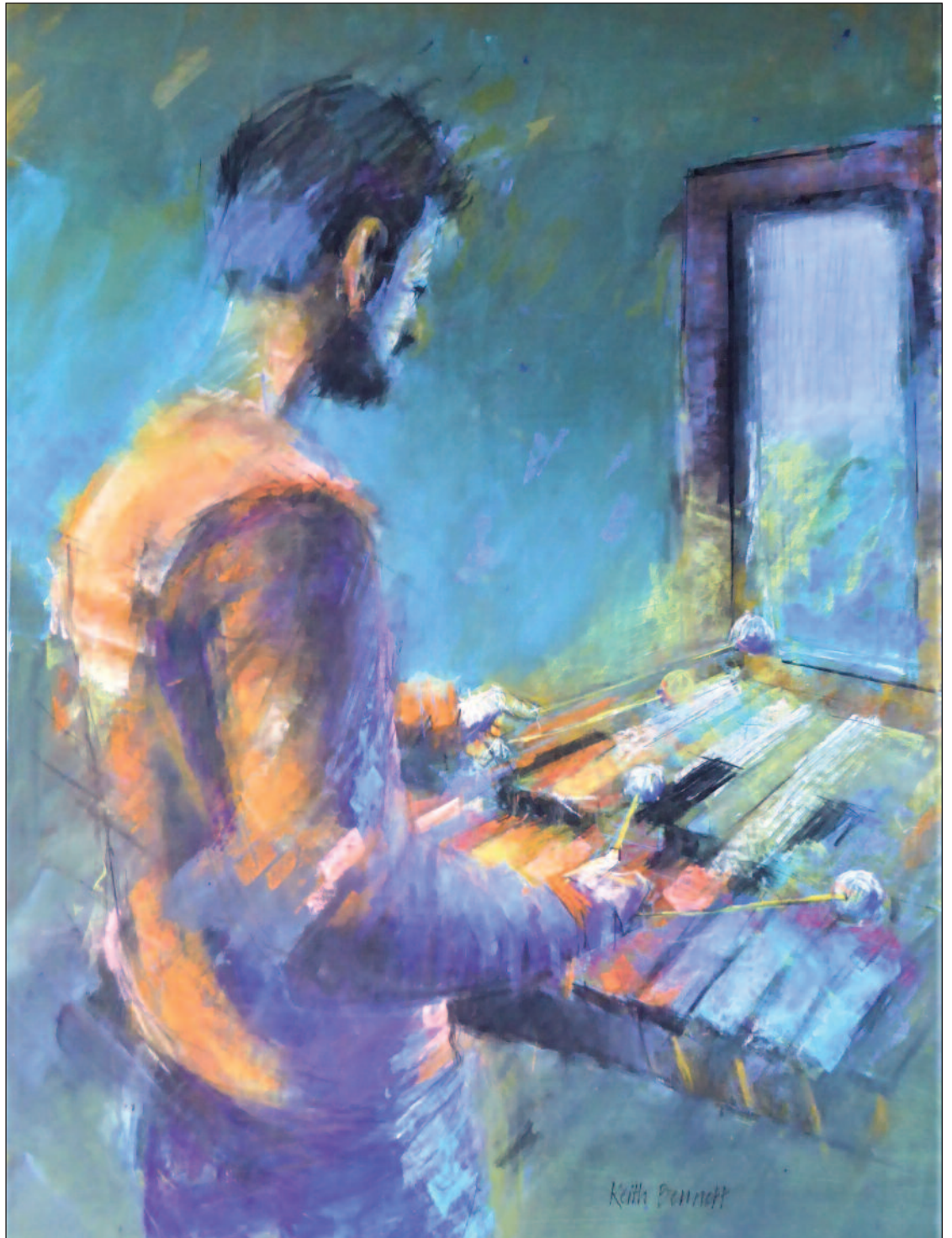
# 44

Summer 2023

website: [www.thepastelsociety.org.uk](http://www.thepastelsociety.org.uk)

Instagram: [pastelsociety.uk](https://www.instagram.com/pastelsociety.uk)

THE PASTEL SOCIETY



*Adam Plays His Glockenspiel, Keith Bennett PS*

## Featured Artist Keith Bennett PS



*Mermaids Pool Kynance Cove*

Keith Bennett is a man keen to experiment. Life may have dealt him a few knocks in recent years, including a period of double vision, but these have spurred him on. Indeed, he claims to be persistently experimenting and hopefully developing and aims to continue this way, not getting into a recognisable rut. "I once had a reputation for painting 'blue cows'," he says, "and had to struggle to get rid of it!"

The image that appears on this issue's front cover, *Adam Plays His Glockenspiel*, illustrates his fixation with people. This manifests, he says, "not necessarily as 'traditional' portraits but what I might call 'sense of person', in the same way as I want my landscapes to have a 'sense of place'. One can portray a person in many ways and not necessarily by facial likeness."

Adam, a neighbour, is a professional musician, teacher and conductor. Keith has simplified his portrait, highlighting the glockenspiel's coloured reflections in natural and artificial light while also emphasising a concentrated range of turquoise and oranges – a favourite colour combination.

He is fascinated by the physical relationship between musicians and their instruments, and this link has led him to paint a series of artists/craftsmen at work. To date, this includes a sculptor, a potter, a hairdresser and one of his window cleaner who can take up very balletic poses as he works.

His love of painting started as a child and runs in the family. His father was a self-taught artist and

designer, spending much of his career as an exhibition designer. He was also a talented joiner and wood carver making, among other things, church furnishings.

Keith, meanwhile, wanted to be an architect from his teens and studied it at what was then Kingston School of Art while also getting involved in its Fine Art Department. "I still have the smell of the oil paint and dusty plaster of the sculptures stamped in my memory," he says. "We were all creating and 'hands on', quite a contrast to some of my old schoolfriends who were doing National Service at the time!"

He consequently had an enjoyable and varied career in architecture, much of it in private practice working on the conservation and adaptation of historic buildings. "I have been drawing all my life," he says, "and painting since my retirement from my architectural practice. I had my first one man show in 1986."

Keith is keen to stress the difference between architectural drawing and painting, even painting architectural subjects. "As an architect," he says, "you are otherwise producing a two-dimensional – hopefully attractive – picture of a three-dimensional subject for a client or doing working drawings of a three-dimensional design in your head that instructs further people how to construct it in combination with your verbal instructions and supervision.

"A painter works in two dimensions and is only limited by the choice of size and shape of the 'canvas'. Everything on that 'canvas' is completely under his or her personal control."

Definitions of painting and illustration is another subject he constantly ponders, citing his relationship with the late Victor Ambrus. Keith attended his weekly life sessions for some ten years and learnt many drawing skills from him. "He was so imaginative in his pictures, far more than many painters," he says. "Victor was adamant that he was an illustrator and not a painter. His illustrated books give me far more enjoyment than that of many so-called painters."

Keith found his medium of choice gradually changing. His use of oils needed a lot of patience,



*Bathers at Compton Lock*

and he discovered that his best pictures were done quickly, giving the enjoyment of the brushstrokes, sometimes as initial studies or a quick version of a former laboured picture. "I also found I could not draw into the picture, which I often wanted to," he says, "wishing for a sharp edge rather than a brush stroke. I find a fine rigger brush difficult and prefer a firmer tool."

He appreciates the fact that pastels are already mixed and one can pick and choose instantly from a wonderful selection using their variety of possible marks. Spontaneity is key. "There is no preparation or tidying up. The traditional concept of 'pastel colours' is deceiving," he says. "There are some gorgeous vivid colours. Also, colours can be 'mixed' on the picture surface by applying several colours side by side, like Degas. I am now repeating some of my oil paintings in pastel. It is interesting to compare them. It is usually the pastel work that 'sings'."

So what is his method of working? He usually starts with a study in charcoal on white Pastelmat which

gives a good grip and takes water-based paint without buckling. Then, he overpaints with acrylic using a broad brush, which allows a faint echo of the study to appear. While still wet, he exposes white areas and indicates the general composition with a palette knife before starting to use pastels.

At present he is spending more time thinking about his work than painting. "I am wondering if I might hopefully get to a second childhood period when I can paint uninhibitedly and boldly, as most of us did when we were infants, and which proud parents now display all over their homes.

"As I get older, I get more impatient with my painting and working more boldly and quickly. In Kynance Cove, I employ all the varied spontaneous marks one can achieve with pastels in combination with the background contrasting brush strokes of acrylic.

"Bathers at Compton Lock is about an experience. I wished to express my personal experience of having had a bitterly cold wild swim and enjoying the welcome warmth of the sunshine afterwards.

"As for Lobsters and Prawns, I painted this four years ago. At the time, I'd developed double vision for several months which fortunately disappeared as suddenly as it came. Wherever I looked there were exciting tonal blurred coloured patterns and potential painting compositions. I was determined to paint harder afterwards, appreciating the gift of sight."



*Lobster and prawns*

## The President's Letter

The theme for our Annual Exhibition this year was 'Pastel Without Boundaries'. The response to this from members and artists submitting works was one of our most interesting and varied exhibitions yet. There was universal praise for the quality of the exhibition and our members and selected artists did us proud. The exhibition was opened by Sky Arts TV presenter and curator Kathleen Soriano, who has a history of curating pastel exhibitions. She mentioned her work on curating exhibitions of works by Edgar Degas and Jean-Etienne Liotard.



*Kathleen Soriano opens this year's Annual Exhibition*

As I said in my address at the opening, we are a long way behind oil paints and watercolours as the medium of choice for artists. This is because of ridiculous misconceptions about issues such as durability, fragility and limiting artistic expression. Many see pastel as no more than a sketching tool but overlook its directness and relative cheapness as a material for the beginner. I saw very few pastels at the RA Summer Exhibition this year, which was a real disappointment.

We had hoped that, by moving to a summer slot for the exhibition, our sales would increase. Unfortunately, a combination of rail strikes, and half-term holidays meant that a lot of our usual supporters and their friends did not come to the exhibition, so the sales were not as good as we would have hoped. This is important as we want our members and contributing artists to sell their work regularly.

I would like to welcome four new Pastel Society members: Susie Prangnell, Kevin Line, Michele Ashby, and Andrew Barrowman. Congratulations to all of them on their election to the Society. In this issue of the newsletter, we also have news of our sponsors' prizewinners at the exhibition. Once

again, Simon Hodges set up the immensely popular Studio in the East Gallery, which helped people engage with our medium. Caran d'Ache kindly supplied materials for the workshops.

Next year is our 125th Anniversary exhibition and we hope to mark this in some way. We have to plan this quite soon as the exhibition will revert to its early slot of January/February. The dates are 23 January to 10 February and that will be an unusual three-week period for us, as opposed to two weeks, so there is no excuse not to go to the exhibition, whatever the weather!

Heatherleys has once more lent us two of its studios for the 18 and 19 September 2023 and we have had a heartening response from interested participants. There were still some places available as we were going to press and details of how to apply feature on the back page of this newsletter.

A final word about our new website. This is now up and running thanks to our web designer Liam Culver and oversight by Cheryl Culver and Simon Hodges. I think it looks terrific and works brilliantly. Images of the works in recent exhibitions are on the website along with details of events so do have a look at it occasionally

<https://www.thepastelsociety.org.uk>

We now have 11,000+ Instagram subscribers thanks to sterling work by Sarah Bee. See [pastelsociety.uk](https://www.thepastelsociety.org.uk)

**Richard Rees**, President, The Pastel Society  
rees888@btinternet.com  
instagram: artyrees

### Officers and Council Members

President	Richard Rees
Vice-President	Simon Hodges
Treasurer	Colin Murfet
Honorary Secretary	Jenny Halstead
Membership Secretary	Sheila Goodman
Publicity Secretary	Melodie Cook
Friends Secretary	Norma Stephenson Felicity House
Education Secretary	Richard Rees
Exhibitions Secretary	Peter Vincent

**Council:** Sarah Bee, Susan Relph, Roy Wright.

**Newsletter editor:** Louella Miles,  
[Louella.miles@writers4management.com](mailto:Louella.miles@writers4management.com)

## Pastel Society Award Winners

This year we welcomed the familiar figure of independent curator, art historian and broadcaster Kathleen Soriano to open the Pastel Society 2023 Exhibition. Known to many as a judge on Sky Arts' Portrait and Landscape Artist of the Year, Kathleen has over 35 years' experience in the art world. She has been responsible for collections, contemporary and historical exhibitions at the National Portrait Gallery, London, and the Royal Academy of Arts, where she was Artistic Director (2009– 2014), as well as at Compton Verney Art Gallery, where she was Director (2005–2009). In 2004 she became one of the first cohort of Clore Leadership Fellows.

### The Anthony J. Lester Art Critic Award

Rebecca de Mendonca, 'Through the Haze'

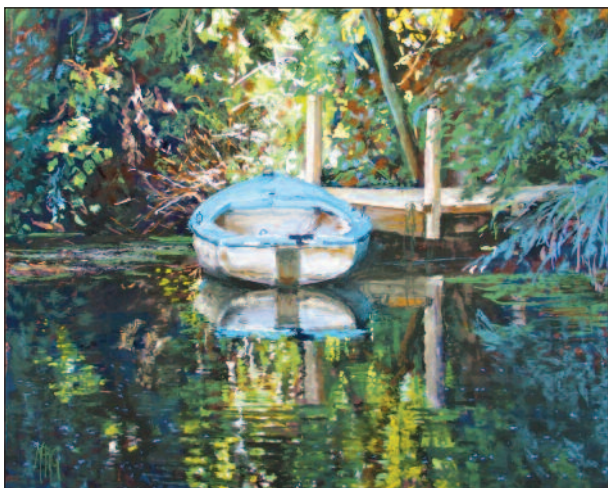
### The Artist Magazine Award

Fiona Carvell, 'Wonder'

### Caran D'Ache Award

Olivia Dunn, 'Under My Wing'

### Frank Herring Award



*'By the Landing Stage', Margaret Glass PS*

### Henri Roche Award

Lucille Clerc, 'Moving Windows - Forest 1'

### Mamut Award

Sarah Bee PS, 'Winter Sun by the Dart'

### The Pastel Society Catalogue Award

First Prize: Paul Murray, 'Arrangement on Black Table'; Second: Les Heywood, 'Between Showers Derbyshire Village'

### The Pastel Society Young Artist Award



*'Precious Time', Manon West*

### Schmincke

Ian Rawling PS, 'Ovaltine Van'

### Unison: Member Award

Angela A'Court PS, 'Belong II';

### Non-Member Award

Kaija Bulbrook, 'Thought Lines';

### Young Artist Award

Ginny Elston, 'Archeological Museum Garden, Piano di Sorrento III'

### West Design Award

David Hunt, 'Earth and Air'

### The Yoshimoto Prize

(£1,000 for an outstanding work, in any dry medium, by a non-member)

Julie Lawrence, 'Shadow Crossing'

### The Bob Last Prize



*'Still Life with Green Grapes', Jaana Fowler PS*

## Sun shines on this year's Exhibition...



*This page, clockwise, from top: Award winners of the class of 2023; Richard Rees (left) Rebecca de Mendonca (centre) and Kathleen Soriano (right); Sarah Bee (centre) and above David Hunt (centre)*

### **Stop press:**

Dates PS Exhibition 2024

Monday 22 January – hang Tuesday 23 January –

opening day Saturday 10 February – closing day

Sunday 11 February 1.30 AGM



...and highlights new stars



*Clockwise from top: The Flower Wall, Simon Hodges in VP mode, Kajja Bulbrook (centre) and Ian Rawling*

## Exhibition events

This year's Exhibition featured a bumper number of workshops, demonstrations and events. On this page we'll feature some photographs to give you a flavour – and whet your appetite for more in 2024.



*Model Brent and winner Tom Zaw*



*Roger Dellar demo*



*Art evening theme 'In the gym'*



*Mixed media workshop with Richard Rees*



*Providing support to visitors*



## Pastel Society News

### OBITUARY

#### **Tom Coates PPPS, PPNEAC, PPRBA, RWS, RP (5 May 1941 – 20 July 2023)**

The Pastel Society is deeply saddened to hear that our Past President Tom Coates has died. Tom was an outstanding figurative painter, totally dedicated to his craft. Continuously inspiring with his artistic knowledge, he gave huge encouragement to others. He taught by example, painting alongside other artists often with a commentary when he was not at his easel. His draughtsmanship and pastel drawings – made with just a handful of chalks were remarkable. A full appreciation and obituary will be included in the next newsletter.

### Enigma



*The Soul of Us*, Henry Jabbour PS RBA

The following Members have work in the Gallery Holt Exhibition entitled 'Enigma'. It runs from 29th July to the 5th September 2023 and features Roger Dellar, Simon Hodges, Henry Jabbour, Susie Prangnell, Ian Rawling, Halla Shafey, Norma Stephenson, Malcolm Taylor and Christine Watson. The Gallery Holt is at 23 Lees Yard, Holt, Norfolk, NR25 6HS.

### Pastel Pixel Project

The PS hosted a 'pastel pixel project' at this year's Exhibition, encouraging contributions which were then repeated to make up an image. Individual images incorporated can be found at <https://mosaically.com/photomosaic/85e72c26-c61c-4c12-af5c-90b52d8b431b>

We hope we will begin to get the message across to those that do not realise yet; Pastel is for sketching, drawing and painting. Pastel can be oil

smooth or chalky soft and water soluble. Pastel is immediate or for the long term. Pastel can be on its own or accompanied or accompany other media. Pastel is for young and old. Pastel is not to be feared.

### Sarah Bee PS

I'll be returning to teach a four-day short course at West Dean College in West Sussex this September. A great residential venue, West Dean is set in an estate which offers everything we need for landscape painting...no need to travel anywhere.

During my course 'Expressive Pastel Painting – Colour in the Landscape', we will explore the use of soft pastel as part of a mixed media process...with an emphasis on colour and expressive mark making. Why not come to join us?

[www.westdean.org.uk](http://www.westdean.org.uk)

Hot on the heels of this course, I will be taking part for the first time ever in Devon Open Studios from September 20 – 24. Details can be found at [www.devonopenstudios.co.uk](http://www.devonopenstudios.co.uk) and shortly on Instagram @sarahbee\_painter and [www.sarahbee-painter.com](http://www.sarahbee-painter.com).

### Simon Hodges VPPS

I am delighted to have been asked to show paintings at The Holt Gallery in Norfolk. Due to the closeness of its exhibition to our own recent show at The Mall Galleries, it has taken some of the work that was not sold and so I am delighted that I can now announce that I have work on tour for those that were not able to see them the first time. The exhibition, called 'Enigma' runs from the 29th July to the 5th September 2023.

From late June into September, I am visiting Switzerland, London and Shropshire with sketchbooks in tow. Look out for new work in our next exhibition in February 2024.

### UART Workshop

UART, the pastel paper brand, is collaborating with artist Dawn Limbert in a two-day pastel workshop at Insight School of Art, 1a Cadbury Cl, London N20 9BD on 2nd and 3rd September. Further details are available on the link

<https://www.uartpastelpaper.com/uart-workshops-dawn-limbert/>

## Welcoming new PS Members



**The Pastel Society welcomes four new members this year, and we've invited them to give a bit of background about their lives to date, and their art. First, Michele Ashby.**

"As a child I was constantly drawing. I didn't have access to much in the way of art materials growing up, however I clearly remember taking a pencil home after school each day. I did a two-year Foundation Course at Colchester School of Art, followed by a B.A. (Hons) Degree Course in Graphic Design at Kingston Polytechnic.

After university I spent many years as a graphic designer, then ran my own graphic design business before spending six years as a teacher's assistant in a couple of high schools, working primarily with Special Needs students. At this time, I went back to drawing and reintroduced myself to life drawing classes, getting back to my love of pastels as my instant choice of medium.

32A (above) is my first painting selected and hung by the Pastel Society in 2017."

### **Next, let's hear from Andrew Barrowman.**

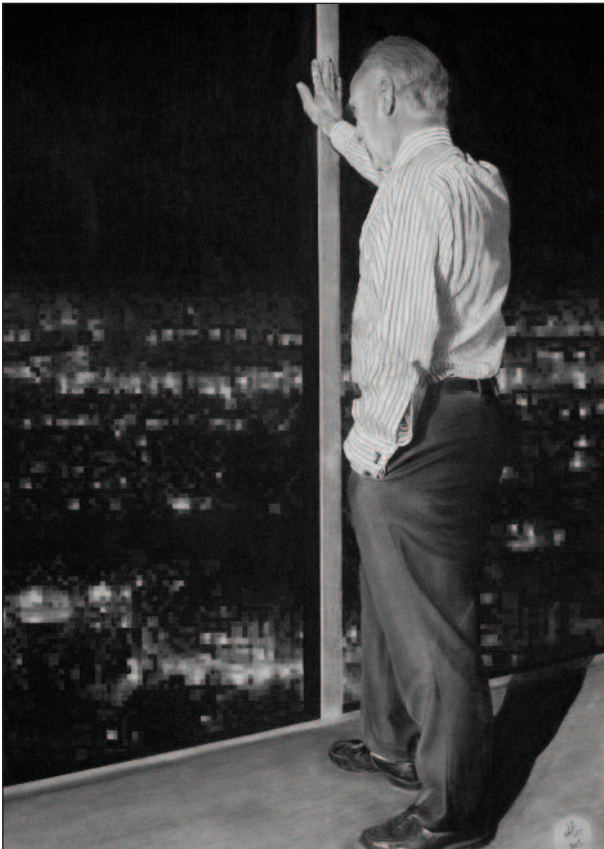
"I began by painting in watercolour (and selling work) when I was 18 years old. I had always drawn as a child (I think my mother bought me pencils and sketchbooks from Woolworth's to keep me quiet!). I enjoyed painting so much I quickly moved on to other media and now use anything I have at hand, especially charcoal, oils and graphite. I always wanted a career in art and was successful at first but when I bought a house the allure of regular money led me to a job as a postman. The early start and finish meant I could combine art and regular paid work. I did this until 2016 when I went full time as an artist.

I use pastels (soft pastels and oil pastels) mainly in my outdoor sketchbooks. My love is for charcoal, but I also paint with oils. I have two separate workspaces and easels setup in my studio: one for charcoal and one for oil painting. I usually work at both easels on a typical day, switching from one to the other. *Shed at Trenwheal Mill* (below) is a favourite because the combination of different perspectives, manmade and natural textures made for a challenging but enjoyable drawing.

My process is quite chaotic, and I don't follow a strict order of working – I follow my instinct and develop drawings and paintings as they evolve. They seem to take on a life of their own which I find fascinating and enjoyable."



Moving swiftly on, let us introduce Kevin Line. Kevin is a 74-year-old artist who has chosen his technically challenging image *Dominion* (below), to accompany this article.



“At grammar school in the early 60s I showed evident artistic talent, gained a GCE O level in Art and stopped [and regretted doing so!]. I have never had an art lesson [formal or informal] in my life. I spent 20 odd years in industry, consultancy and commerce, and then, because at heart I am a maker, a similar period scratching a living on the fringes of the creative world. Designing gardens, building a house [actually converting a Georgian cart shed/stables/granary], altering other people’s houses, designing and making furniture, etc. In 2009 I finally stopped prevaricating and started making paintings.

At heart I am a portrait painter and like the best professional portrait photographers prefer to work in monochrome. Somehow working in black and white allows you to get deep into sitter’s character in a way that colour does not.”

Last, but not least, is Susie Prangnell, an artist for whom painting and drawing has been a lifelong obsession.

“Poster paint and rolls of wallpaper lining were my favourite toys as a young child. My family had art books on the bookshelf and Van Gogh prints on the walls. By age seven, I had discovered the joys of collage, and enjoyed using coloured chalks on a blackboard my dad made for me.

Despite all this early enthusiasm, I left school straight after my last A Level, got a full-time job and started saving for a house instead of going to art college. Yet I studied independently, attended life classes at weekends, read and went to exhibitions whenever I could. I finally did a short course with the Open University in 2006 because I felt the lack of formal art education in my life. My first full time job was on a factory production line, and my last full-time job before I was able to concentrate on my art practice in 2008 was working in the Civil Service.

Pastel is my favourite medium because I love working directly with my hands and fingers on the paper surface. It is exciting to use a medium which is almost pure pigment, and I relish the challenge as different brands and forms of pastel behave very differently. Sometimes I finger paint with the dust collected on my easel shelf, and I never waste the tiny chips. I crush them and mix my own colours. *All About Now* (below) is a very recent piece that I very much enjoyed working on, and a personal favourite. It is inspired by the strange times we live in.”



# The Pastel Society Workshops 2023

18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Heatherleys School of Fine Art, 75 Lots Road, London, SW10 0RN**

Tutored by members of the Pastel Society, the workshops will cover a wide range of subjects for amateur and professional artists that will run from 10:30-16:30 each day.

Participants may bring a packed lunch. Drinks can be made on site but please bring your own drinking vessel. You should bring your normal range of materials. Easels and drawing boards will be provided. A further materials shortlist will be sent on enrolment. Models will be available but, where the subject is landscape, participants are recommended to bring sketches or photos from which to work.

Some parking is available in the Heatherleys car park at 75 Lots Road but must be booked. Entrance from 10am – First Floor Studios.

**Pastel workshop fees are £65 per day or £60 per day if booking two.**

## The Pastel Society Workshops 2023 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September Application Form

Name .....

Please tick box if you are a Friend of the Pastel Society

Address .....

.....

Email ..... Email receipt tick box

Tel .....

Title of workshop (1st choice) .....

Title of workshop (2nd choice) .....

(The workshops of Katrina Wallis-King and John Tookey are already full, so please add an alternative, second choice, to your first one to avoid disappointment)

We regret that we are unable to refund fees in the event of late cancellation by a participant.

Please send this application form with a cheque made payable to The Pastel Society to:

Richard Rees PPS, 19 Durand Gardens, London, SW9 0PS or email it to Richard Rees and pay by BACS. The Pastel Society Bank details are as follows: Santander Bank Account Number: 87805188 Sort Code: 09-01-55

*To receive a receipt by post please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.*

*Mobile: 07753 913493 Email: rees888@btinternet.com*

**Alternatively, book online at [www.thepastelsociety.org.uk](http://www.thepastelsociety.org.uk)  
Where the full schedule is available**

**Don't forget to visit our website at [www.thepastelsociety.org.uk](http://www.thepastelsociety.org.uk)**