

newsletter **CARAN D'ACHE** 45

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website: www.thepastelsociety.org.uk

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THE PASTEL SOCIETY



Barn Owl, Katrina Wallis-King, PS

Featured Artist Katrina Wallis-King PS



Moorland Cottongrass

Talk to Katrina Wallis-King about influences as a child and it becomes clear that creativity runs in the blood. On her mother's side she lists a family cultural legacy of publishers, playwrights and actors.

But it is on father's side that life gets interesting. Leafing through her paternal grandmother's letters and journals she found a series of illustrations. These allowed her to reflect on her hidden creative and sensitive side, despite finding her a bit intimidating. "I suspect my father inherited her drawing skills, thinking about his lively doodles of crabs and boats," she says.

Katrina did not follow a direct path to becoming a full-time artist – but then few do. She studied art in Florence, using her gap year to experience life abroad: "the culture, learning a new language and, of course, spending time in a beautiful studio space with other art students."

On her return to the UK, however, she started her degree in medieval archaeology, a course she'd picked because of a love of history. Sadly, she says, going to art school hadn't been seen as a credible pathway at the time.

Post-university she worked in a series of jobs. She had a brief stint as an apprentice silversmith, had

unremarkable roles in the editorial department of a magazine, an architect's practice, the social policy unit of her local university, and even at a land-based further education college.

Reading between the lines, it could have been her last role which would give her the confidence to explore art full time. "Working in the Looked After Children (Children in Care) team in Bath I was struck by how many of the birth parents had complex issues themselves," she says. "I decided I would retrain as an addictions counsellor and, after graduating, spent many years working in drug treatment centres in Bristol. It was very rewarding, working closely with people and their stories."

Since then, she says, there has been a 'process of becoming' an artist. "I've neglected my creativity for so many years. I sometimes feel like I'm playing catch-up but remind myself to enjoy exploring the process in itself and build on what I'm learning."

Katrina's art reveals a mix of influences: there is the landscape of Norway, imprinted on her during her childhood. "Every time I return there my sensibilities feel reconnected," she says. "I love the changing moods of the landscape – the weather, the light, the colours. From the expansive, wild Arctic in summer to the stillness of my mother's fjord cabin, with deer and badgers through the kitchen window. I think, as a landscape painter, visiting Norway amplifies my awareness of the natural world."

Her training in medieval archaeology, meanwhile, comes into play because she's interested in the geology of a landscape, the history of its human settlement, any traces of past cultures. "I'm a bit obsessive about maps and late night reading, joining up the dots and getting ideas," she says. "Maybe that comes through somehow in my work, I don't know."

Signing up to a pastel workshop with Sarah Bee, whose work she had always admired, proved a watershed moment for Katrina. Returning home, it gave her, she says, the initial tools and tips for working which she still uses. But she's also been exploring different ways of combining inks and washes alongside dry medium. "I sometimes work in oils, but drawing will always be part of my process," she says. "Sometimes I'll follow through

and develop a piece, other times it might be enough keeping things simple.”

Katrina works in a small studio at home, a situation which in the past has suited her well. Recently, however, she went on a short retreat in a studio in Cornwall and thoroughly appreciated having a more generous space to work. “I make a lot of mess, so in my current situation it can be challenging to stay organised. But I’ve been offered the opportunity to access space and resources at an art college in Bath for six months, so that’s something to look forward to.”

Printmaking has also played a part in her life in the past, and I’m curious as to whether it continues to. “I love medieval woodcut prints and pamphlets,” she says, “with their folk art images and social commentaries. I’ve done lino printing in the past and I’d like to revisit etching for the range of textures and layers you can achieve on a small place. There are so many talented contemporary printmakers – for instance, Sarah Gillespie’s beautiful mezzotints of moths – as well as past artists like Daumier, Rembrandt and Munch who also enjoyed printmaking.”

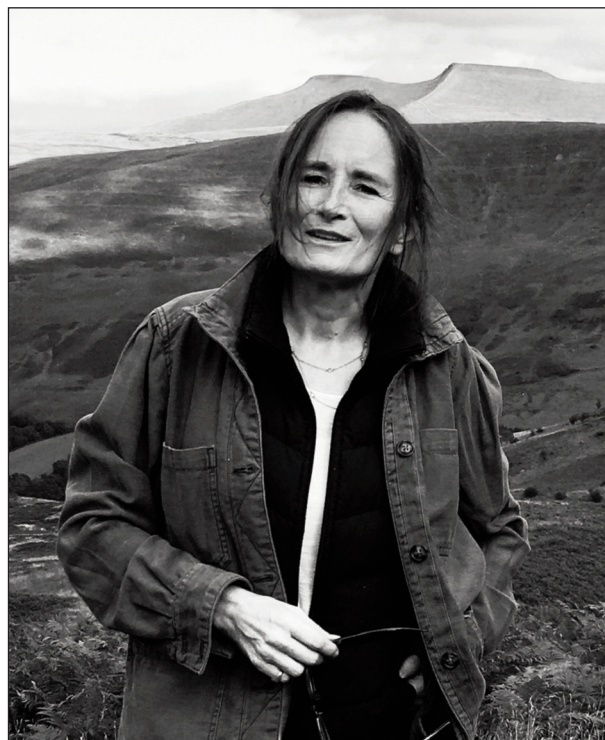
She is inspired, she says, by the atmosphere in the works of American painter Andrew Wyeth, and those of classical Russian landscape artist Isaak Levitan, who advanced the genre of the moody countryside. She’s also fascinated, despite not having done life drawing for many years, in how artists describe people in their work. She cites the intriguing narratives in Denis Sarazhin’s paintings, the mysterious quality of Colleen Barry’s work, the unsettling self-portraits of Helene Schjerfbeck.

Talking of inspiration, Katrina has developed into a teacher who enthuses her students with a passion for pastels and encourages them to experience freedom in their work. It’s hardly surprising as she admits that she really enjoys teaching, and sharing some of her experience with new people. “The dynamic energy is very rewarding,” she says. “And, of course, I always learn something new myself. It’s a real pleasure seeing the variety of students’ images emerging over the day.” Watch out for her Pastel Society workshop at Heatherley’s on 17 September.

<https://www.katrinawallisking.art/>



Winter larch



Katrina on Brecon Beacons

The President's Letter & Member News

I am very pleased to report that our 125th Annual Exhibition was one of the most successful in several years by any set of parameters. We had a record number of entries from non-members – 1,350. From these, ten of us selected 160 works. The members supplied 200 works to take the exhibition total to 360. To use our key word, this was REMARKABLE.

The idea, graphics and hang all gelled perfectly, the appearance of the exhibition receiving high praise from all quarters. The hanging committee comprised Jeannette Hayes, Roy Wright, Sarah Bee and me. Sales were great, achieving £10,000-plus over our sales target of £37,000 at £48,585. Some 62 works were sold, compared with 39 last year.

The private view was well attended, and our guest speaker was Michael Spender, historian and author, who gave a short appreciation of the Pastel Society's history. There was a special Tom Coates Prize of £2,000, created to celebrate the life of our former president who passed away in July. This was for the best non-member work in the exhibition and was presented by Tom's wife Mary Jackson to Curtis Holder for one of his magnificent pencil works of National Theatre staff.

The art event evening was a roaring success and had 38 registered attendees plus myself, Jenny Halstead, Roger Dellar, John Tookey, and Simon Hodges as members in attendance. Models were kindly supplied by Hesketh Hubbard on an antique dress theme. We thought the work produced was so good that we gave out two prizes – one each related to the two models.

The Sealed Bids brought in over £6,000 for the Society, which enables us to carry on in a healthy way. We give 10% of the proceeds to the AGBI. This was a credit to the generosity of all the contributing artists.

The Pastel Society Studio in the North Gallery was brilliantly orchestrated once more by Simon Hodges over an exhausting three-week period and was hugely successful. We had very good presentations multiple times from Simon on topics

ranging from framing to sketch books and different aspects of representation. Contributing workshop artists included Sarah Bee, myself, John Tookey, Roger Dellar, Andrew Barrowman, Felicity House, Katrina Wallis-King, and Martin Goad.

We also had a number of Stewards giving out information to visitors in addition to the presenters. Our thanks go to Jenny Halstead, Susie Prangnell, Christine Watson, and Norma Stephenson. Simon has prepared a list of comments for the Council to review and feed back to the Mall Galleries and members. Specially made lanyards helped identify the Pastel Society members in attendance and worked well. Pastel Society membership candidate Maria Kaleta won the Visitors' Choice Award for her view of St Paul's Cathedral.



*Sunday afternoon at St Pauls Cathedral,
Maria Kaleta*

I have mentioned the loss of Tom Coates, but sadly there were other names that also need to be mentioned. Late in the year we lost three other members: Barbara Stewart (1929 -2023); Pauline Clough (1943 -2023); and Brian Plummer (1934 – 2023). Obituaries are included later in the newsletter. That was the sad news: on a more cheerful note, we had 11 candidates for membership this year.

This is a record number of applications and reflects a strong and healthy interest in our Society. Disappointingly, only 30 members decided to cast a vote and I had to chase the membership for us to get this number. After the final count, six new members were elected. They are Curtis Holder,

Tanya Avchinikova, Dave Roberts, Jayne Perkins, Jane Hodgson and Simon Klein. Short statements and typical images of the work of Curtis, Dave and Tanya are included in this newsletter. Simon, Jane and Jayne will be the focus of an article in the next issue of the magazine.

Our commiserations to the other candidates, many of whom received a substantial number of votes but failed to reach the 60% pass mark to be elected. We hope that they will apply again to be members.

We are getting a little ahead of ourselves by already starting to arrange the 2025 Pastel Society Exhibition! It will open on Tuesday 21 January. The opening speaker will be the Head of Caran d'Ache Europe Carole Hubscher. The company celebrates its 75th Anniversary this year and will be launching a new product which is still secret. It is sponsoring us once more so will be prominent on our publicity. The exhibition will run for two weeks (possibly three) and the AGM will be on Sunday 2 February at 1.30 pm.

The new Pastel Society Website has been well received following all the work going into its successful set-up by Cheryl Culver, Liam Culver and Simon Hodges. It has been praised for its look and useability. Well done to the team. On Instagram Sarah Bee has got us up to the 12,000 member threshold. Sarah, Cheryl and Janine Baldwin (on X) have done a great job in circulating news and images. Sheila Goodman retired as membership secretary after many years of dedicated work in the role and we welcomed Martin Goold who took over in the post at the AGM.

We have two Exhibitions in the pipeline. The first is at the Linden Hall Gallery in Deal and runs from 2 to 30 March. The second is an invitation only exhibition at the New Ashgate Gallery in Farnham from 4 May to 29 June. Our Exhibition Council member, Peter Vincent retired after serving the Council well and I would like members to consider if they would like to take over this role.

Heatherley's 2023 was exceptionally well attended, and four courses were given by Melodie Cook,

John Tookey, Katrina Wallis-King and myself. As a token of our thanks for providing free studios, we put a free advert for the venue in the Catalogue this year.

Heatherley's 2024

16 September: Richard Rees, 'Sky, Sea and Buildings', Felicity House, 'Underpainting & Pastel Still Life'

17 September: Katrina Wallis-King, 'Pastel Landscapes', John Tookey, 'Pastel Interiors'

Further information on the PS website.

The FBA is often forgotten by members but it is constantly working away through the Trustees and Mall Galleries Executive to maintain and strengthen our tenure of the Galleries and promote the societies to the outside world. We have a new Chair of the Trustees, Jane Ellison, who comes with a wealth of experience in running charity boards and has a fascinating background in broadcasting. A strategy for the future will be developed over the coming year and we'll keep members informed of progress.

I do hope you have a great summer, and that our members work hard to help us to continue the successes we achieved at the last exhibition.

Richard Rees

President, The Pastel Society

rees888@btinternet.com

Officers and Council Members

President	Richard Rees
Vice-President	Simon Hodges
Treasurer	GMP Accountants
Website	Cheryl Culver
Honorary Secretary	Jenny Halstead
Membership Secretary	Martin Goold
Publicity Secretary	Melodie Cook
Friends Secretary	Norma Stephenson, Felicity House
Education Secretary	Richard Rees
Exhibitions Secretary	To be filled

Council: Sarah Bee, Susan Relph, Roy Wright.

Newsletter editor:

Louella.miles@writers4management.com

Exhibition in 125th Anniversary Year...



This page, clockwise, from top: It's Anniversary time! The rest of this spread looks at Award winners from the class of 2024; Ian Rawling between Richard Rees (right) and Michael Spender; Tanya Avchinnikova (centre); Mary Jackson and Curtis Holder.

Stop press:

Dates PS Exhibition 2025
Monday 20 January – hang
Tuesday 21 January – opening day
Saturday 1 February – closing day
Sunday 2 February 1.30 AGM



...achieves 'remarkable' sales



Clockwise from top: Mary Jackson, Barry Lowenhoff with Richard, Skye Seipp (Michael Spender left), and Sandy Fischer

Awards

This year, for our 125th Anniversary Exhibition, we welcomed Michael Spender FSA, Hon RWS, as guest speaker. Michael is a writer and art historian and presently Head of Culture for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. He is also currently working on a book about the art of Tom Coates.

The Anthony J. Lester Art Critic Award
Skye Seipp, 'Rokuyo'

The Artist Magazine Award
Andrew Barrowman PS, 'Trenwheel Hedgerow & Forgotten Gate, Morning Snow Nine Meadows, Cornwall'

Caran D'Ache Award



Ian Rawling PS, 'Balancing Act Red and Yellow'

Frank Herring Award
Louise Diggle PS, 'Hyde Park, Early Morning Light'

Henri Roche Award
Sandy Fisher, 'Plainsong'

Mamut Award
Halla Shafey PS, 'Garden of England 1'

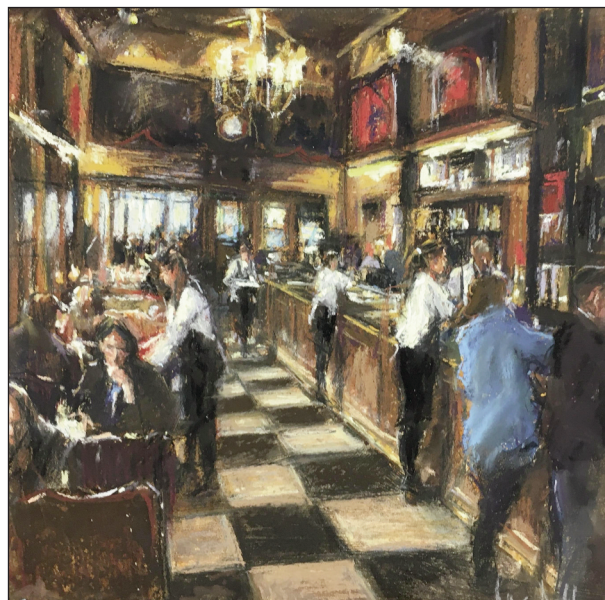
The Pastel Society Catalogue Award
First Prize: Barry Lowenhoff, 'Waterfall III, Inagh Valley'; Second: Alex Ayliffe, 'Coastal I'

The President's Prize
Thomas Gale, 'Crystal Back Alley'

Schmincke
Julie Cross, 'Klimesque Autumn'

The Tom Coates Memorial Award
Curtis Holder, 'The Puppet Maker'

UART Award



Roger Dellar PS, 'Portuguese Bar'

Unison: Member Award Sarah Bee PS, 'Cool Coombe Lane'; **Non-Member Award** Natalia Libman, 'Summer II'; **Young Artist Award** Alice Gompels, 'One Room'

West Design Award
Tanya Avchinnikova, 'Body of Work'

The Yoshimoto Prize
(£1,000 for an outstanding work, in any dry medium, by a non-member)
Rebecca de Mendonca, 'Sunlight and Steam'

The Bob Last Prize
Alex Ayliffe, 'Coastal 1'

Events

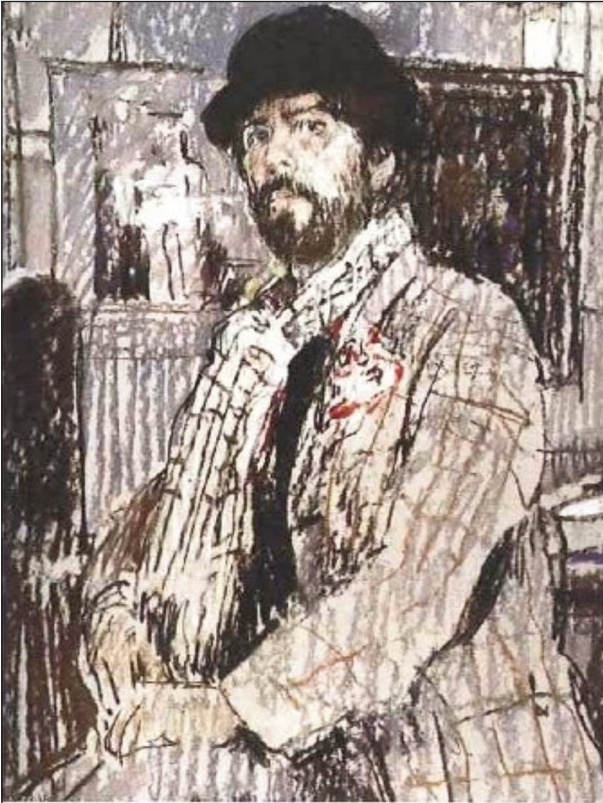
The Exhibition played host to a range of activities this year, from demonstrations, to an evening of life drawing and interactive events in 'The Studio'.



Clockwise from top left: Demonstration with Andrew Barrowman, joint winners of life drawing evening Bernardette Buckle and Nataliya Zozulya, and demos from Sarah Bee and Roger Dellar

Obituaries

Tom Coates, PPS, PPNEAC, PPRBA, RP, Hon RWA, PPSEA, OAS ,APF, Patron MAS (5 May 1941 – 20 July 2023)



Self portrait' by Tom Coates PPS, PPRBA, NEAC, RP

The art world was saddened by the death last July of one of its great artists and characters. Tom Coates was not only talented, he was also generous with that talent, sharing it with a host of younger artists along the way. He was dazzling in his facility with all artistic media, not just pastels, and this meant that he fitted into a range of art societies, eventually leading many of them.

Not only was he a President of the Pastel Society but was also President of the Royal Society of British Artists and the New English Art Club. All of us felt privileged to be the focus from time to time of his witty, gregarious, and energetic personality without ever feeling that he was spreading himself too thinly. The author Michael Spender has said that 'if the world was a street of restaurants, Tom Coates would be the gourmet trying the tasting menu in each one'.

Tom always had his sketchbooks available and worked in pastel, chalk, oil, and watercolour in a

huge variety of scales, but always coming back to the discipline of drawing. His intuitive talent was recognised worldwide, and he can be ranked amongst the outstanding British draughtsmen of the past century. His subject matter was catholic: from portraits to landscapes, animals - particularly horses - towns, cities, and sporting arenas. Whether working from memory or with his formidable visual memory he worked at his art all over the world from England to North Africa, Kentucky to Venice.

Born in Aston, Birmingham in 1941, from a difficult start, when his parents emigrated to Australia and did not support him, he had to work hard to keep his artistic ambitions alive. This included a stint in a local Birmingham coal mine where he treated the mining community to traditional songs in his excellent tenor voice in pubs as a means of making ends meet. From studying at the Bournville and Birmingham Schools of Art he moved on to the Royal Academy Schools where he had to get a cleaning job in the schools to survive (this did have the advantage that he could scavenge for unwanted materials left by fellow students and led to some very odd material mixtures).

Despite a misunderstanding with the cantankerous RA principal Sir Henry Rushbury, he won the David Murray Landscape Prize at the RA which enabled him to travel abroad for the first time. This was the first of many awards and recognition of his talent developed quickly. He recorded Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's 90th Birthday celebrations, he painted the late Queen at Royal Ascot, was artist in residence with the England cricket team and with his brilliance at portraiture amassed a string of distinguished sitters, including many military figures.

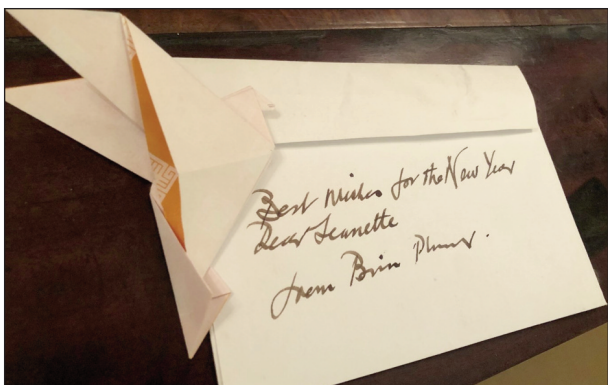
It was not all plain sailing in later life. There was a potentially life-changing scare when his eyesight deteriorated to the extent there was the threat of blindness from a tumour in his pituitary gland. It took three years to sort this out successfully and Tom was immensely grateful to the medical profession. He was supported by the AGBI and made sure that he repaid them in full when he was back on his feet. He was generous in all sorts of other ways, not only to charities but with his time with other artists.

For the last forty years Tom and his wife Mary Jackson (HRWS NEAC) and family occupied the Bladon Studios in Hurstbourne Tarrant near Andover. These were lovingly restored from a state of dereliction by Tom and had a connection to another great twentieth century draughtsman as Augustus John once exhibited there.

Tom's many painting sessions with fellow artists were legendary. There would be ample supplies of red Burgundy on tap and Tom would regale his fellow artists with anecdotes and the occasional song. The epithet 'Larger than Life' applied to Tom in so many ways and he will be sorely missed by the wide artistic community he contributed so much to for so long.

A monograph by Michael Spender, who kindly provided material for this appreciation, will be published shortly.

Brian Plummer (1934 – 2023)



I used to exchange Christmas cards with Brian. Or should I say, I would send a card and Brian would often send something much cooler. Because that's the kind of man he was. Cool. Not cool like the Fonz, which requires a leather jacket and a large motorcycle. Cool like the person who, when Pastel Society Membership Secretary in 2016, sent an envelope on the back of which he had written 'best wishes for the New Year' containing a small origami bird on the wing. Nothing else. At first glance it's a white paper bird but on closer examination there is an exquisite orange Japanese pattern visible in the interior folds. So cool.

Maybe I'm biased: Brian was one of my tutors at Kingston. Who knew we would both become such

active members of the same Society? It was always a pleasure to work and chat with him. A calm cheery presence who will be sorely missed.

Jeannette Hayes PPS

Barbara Stewart (1929 – 2023)

Barbara studied art as part of a teacher training course at Leeds but was largely a self-taught artist. She was elected to the Royal West of England Academy in 1987 and became a member of the Pastel Society in 1997. She counts amongst her many Pastel Society awards the Frank Herring Award 1996, the Daler Rowney Award in 1998 and the Thompson Gallery Award in 1999. She was a regular exhibitor in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Sadly, Barbara hadn't exhibited for some time. Her paintings were mainly semi abstract compositions, which the Council often chose as Pastel Society publicity images.

Pauline Clough (1943 – 2023)

Pauline attended the Bournville School of Arts in Birmingham where she specialised in heraldic embroidery design. She became a member of the Pastel Society in 1982 and served as a Council Member. She exhibited with the Women's Society of Artists, the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists and the Royal Wet of England Academy.

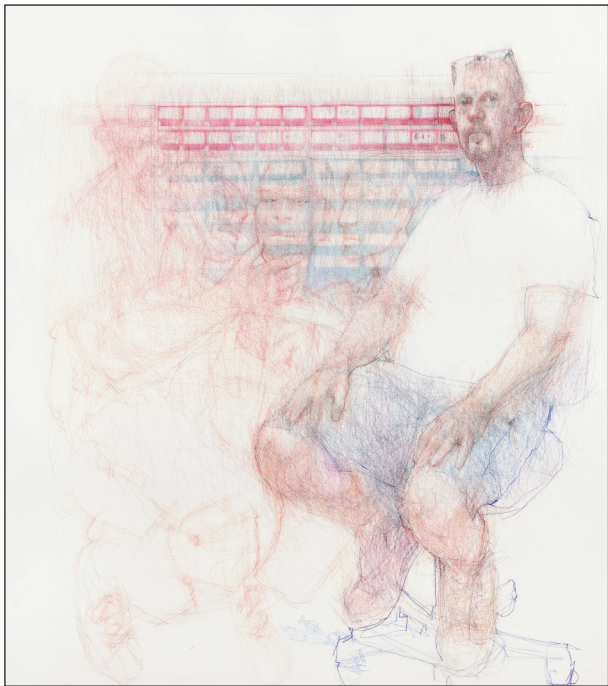
A talented artist, she won many awards including the Pastel Society Main Award in 1987, the Daler Rowney Pastel Society Award in 1982 and 1985, and the Birmingham Pastel Society Award on three occasions in the nineties. Sadly, in later years she developed Parkinson's Disease and died in a care home.



Lanzarote, Pauline Clough

New members

The Pastel Society welcomes six new members this year. Here are a few details on three of them, with the final three appearing in the following newsletter. First, Curtis Holder.



The Puppet Maker (Tom Coates Award Winner)

"I have exhibited at The Pastel Society annual exhibition as both a non-member and invited artist over the past four years. Each time it has been such a joy to exhibit with other artists who are dedicated to using dry mediums in their practice. The private views and events are a fun opportunity to catch up with like-minded artists who get equally passionate talking about pencils and pastels. The work on show at the exhibitions is diverse in style and subject matter and always inspirational. I'm looking forward to joining the Society as a member and enjoying further exhibitions and conversations about the work we do in the future."

curtisholder.co.uk

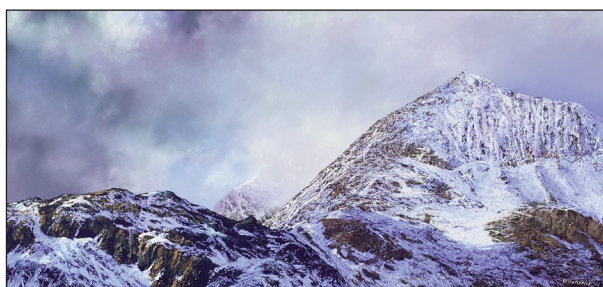
Then on to Dave Roberts:

"I paint exclusively in pastel and when I started my pastelling journey many years ago, the idea of becoming a member of The Pastel Society seemed like nothing but a wild and distant pipe dream. After

all, I'm entirely self-taught and surely such a prestigious society wasn't for the likes of me?"

"But then, when I plucked up the courage to enter, my work was selected for the Society's annual exhibition; then again and again. Over and over. I even won a prize. To have now been elected as a member makes me so incredibly proud and is a wonderful validation not only of my own work but self-taught artists everywhere!"

daverobertsartist.com



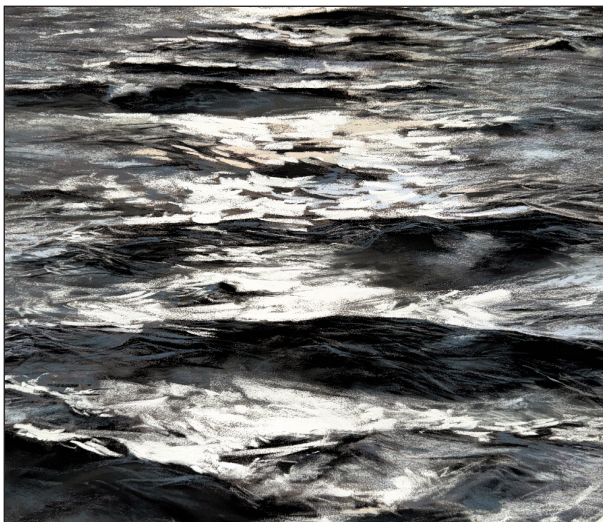
Crib Goch

And finally, let's hear from Tanya Avchinnikova.

"It is a big honour to become a member of the Pastel Society, a society with such a great history. It is incredibly cool to feel part of a big pastel family, to share ideas, to learn, to create and exhibit alongside fantastic artists. As much as it is great to feel the unity of pastel and paper while painting, it is amazing to feel this unity with people who share this love of pastels. It's all so inspirational!"

tanyaavchinnikovaart.co.uk

Silk, Cornwall, (below) is a recent work.



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