

Pulse Magazine

Issue #3 May 2022



May—the month of Oxfordshire Artweeks

Welcome to Mays edition. Plenty of ways to get creative
this month, plus new classes to plan!

Oxfordshire Artweeks rolls around and this year, here are the key dates:

May 7th-15th Oxford City

May 14th-22nd South Oxfordshire

May 21st-29th North Oxfordshire

This time of year is the best time to see all of the wonderful and local creative talent we have in the area: it's Artweeks in the Oxfordshire area and artists from all over the area are joining forces or exhibiting individually to exhibit and sell their works of art.

In this country, art exhibitions are in the grand scheme of things, relatively new. In fact, the first exhibition was in 1740 or 1741. How did it come about? In 1740, William Hogarth painted a portrait of his close friend Captain Coram, who established the Foundling Hospital in London. The portrait was then presented to the hospital as a good gesture between friends. Hogarth then persuaded a number of leading British painters to present their own pictures to the hospital which were then hung in rooms for the public to see.

Diary Date: **Free demonstration on
Saturday, 7th May**

**'Mount Fuji & Blossom in Watercolour & Wax Crayon',
11-11:45am in our classroom and live on our
YouTube Channel and website.**

It soon became the fashion for people to visit the hospital to see the pictures. Obviously, the artists donating these paintings did it for a dual-fold reason: it made them look benevolent, but also they knew it would increase the number of people able to see their work and hopefully buy and commission more. This new way of showing paintings and sculpture to the general public showed great initiative and proved successful.

There was so much interest shown in this semi-public exhibition, that it was decided to hold a much larger one fully open to the public. In the two weeks it was held, was a great success.

There were two more exhibitions held the following year and so the art exhibition was born!

Diary Date: **Beginners Full Morning
Saturday, 28th May**

**'Portraits in Pencil for Beginners', 10:30am-2pm in
our classroom and live on our YouTube Channel
£45 p/p inc. materials**



Captain Coram by Hogarth

Arty Tips

Working from a Tracing: A Helping Hand or Something to be avoided?

As a young artist-in-the-making, I was always taught never to trace my work from an image. I was told that it was 'cheating' and that it was wrong. When I began teaching art, I also passed these thoughts on to my students. Through growing up immersed in art and art history, I have however, changed my view totally! 21st Century artists have been frowned upon for their use of projectors, lightboxes, Photoshop, tracing paper, Imagematrix and other sources to capture an outline to work from, and phrases like "the old Masters didn't need to cheat, they used their own skill" abound.

Cennino d'Andrea Cennini wrote back in the 15th Century in his book *'The Craftsman's Handbook'* how to make tracing paper in two different ways. He actively encouraged tracing another artist's work that you admire. Why? So you could get to grips with how they drew or painted, understand the way they formed the image and be able to copy and eventually paint like them for yourself. In more recent years, David Hockney began to study the techniques of the old masters and in his book *'Secret Knowledge'*, he makes several discoveries. Indeed, art as we know it has always been drawn by hand, but during the Renaissance something changed. Hockney noted that throughout the world at a similar time frame, paintings went from looking hand drawn, to looking like a photograph. He noted too, that some artist's work changed drastically over that time.



David Hockney using the mirror to reflect the image

What caused this sudden change?

Were skills suddenly honed?

Well, it cannot just be down to growing painterly knowledge for it to spread across the whole world at a similar time. There must be something more. A tool perhaps, that artists were beginning to use. At the same time as this amazing revolution was occurring optics were being invented and used: mirrors and lenses. Coincidence? Hockney noted that a simple concave mirror could project a whole image on to a canvas. There are certain tales of artist working from darkened, enclosed rooms, while the 'sitter' was outside in the sunlight.

Why?

If a mirror was set up opposite the sitter (perhaps obscured from their view) and angled slightly, it perfectly reflects the image of what is going on outside on the canvas in colour, upside down. The artist would quickly trace this image, getting all of the information down. The next time they met with the sitter to pose, they could sit opposite them with the drawing now turned the right way up and the mirror gone.



A view from the outside of the studio

I recently tested this out and purchased a small, handheld concave mirror. The image you see to the right, is the scene from the classroom window on the left being reflect upside down on to the wall. I could easily and quickly use this method to trace.

Hockney also mentions the use of dramatic, Chiaroscuro lighting in these paintings. For years it was thought that it was just there as an artistic skill used to create drama, but if Hockney is correct, then the artists would have needed such contrast so they could see the projected image more clearly. Following the concave mirror, Camera Obscuras and Camera Lucidas followed to help artists project images and trace them.

Arty Tips

continued ...

Why did they do it? Even a skilled artists who relies on commissions for their source of income needs to convey information as quickly as possible, so they can spend more time on the actual painting and finish the work quicker to get paid. People do not want to wait an age for a commission, they want it sooner rather than later, so artists used whatever tools they could to work as quickly, skilfully and accurately as they could in order to survive.

So is tracing wrong or cheating? In my opinion, certainly not. If it is good enough for the likes of da Vinci and Caravaggio, then it's good enough for me!



My experiment using a concave shaving mirror. You can see the window view being reflected on the inside wall on the righthand side.



These paintings by Dürer were painted less than two years apart, yet the painting on the right looks far more photographic and has dramatic lighting. Could the use of lenses or optics be the reason?

Diary Date: Monthly watercolour
Sunday, 8th May

'Coaley Peak View & Gate', 10:30am-12:30pm in our classroom and live on our YouTube channel

£12 p/p in store

Shop News

Diary Date: Monthly calligraphy
Saturday, 14th May

'Tattoo Style Lettering', 10:30am-12pm in our classroom and live on our YouTube Channel

£12 p/p in store

Our July-December class booklets are now out in hard copy and available on our website, and ShopAppy platform.

We have some new classes:

- A monthly oil class on the first Friday evening each month
- - A weekly hour long, online only art club on for all ages, following the National Curriculum to help improve art skills

You can watch any of several hundred classes on our sister site www.artstreamclub.com for £6 payable by PayPal, and as the link to the lesson is emailed to you, no Facebook account is needed!

To book a live online class, that needs to be done via our online shop on ShopAppy

Get ready for MerMay!

#MerMay2022 Prompts

May 1 - #Workers	May 17 - #Emotional
May 2 - #Siren	May 18 - #Pirate
May 3 - #Glossy	May 19 - #Octopus
May 4 - #StarWarsDay	May 20 - #Diamond
May 5 - #Symbiotic	May 21 - #Peace
May 6 - #Doodle *	May 22 - #VirtualWorld
May 7 - #Ghostly	May 23 - #Warrior
May 8 - #Mother	May 24 - #Socialbutterfly
May 9 - #Sealife	May 25 - #Relaxed
May 10 - #Vibe **	May 26 - #DoublePonytail
May 11 - #Superstar	May 27 - #Fearful
May 12 - #Mermaze ***	May 28 - #Ethnic
May 13 - #Cyberpunk	May 29 - #Comicbook
May 14 - #Cozy	May 30 - #Impulsive
May 15 - #Pet	May 31 - #Potion
May 16 - #ElectronicGaming	

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*** Sponsored by MGA Entertainment, makers of the Mermaze Mermaidz