

THE RAINBOW

Box Art Group Newsletter - Friday 29th April
2022

Written by and for the members of Box Art Group (No. 74)

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Screen Printing

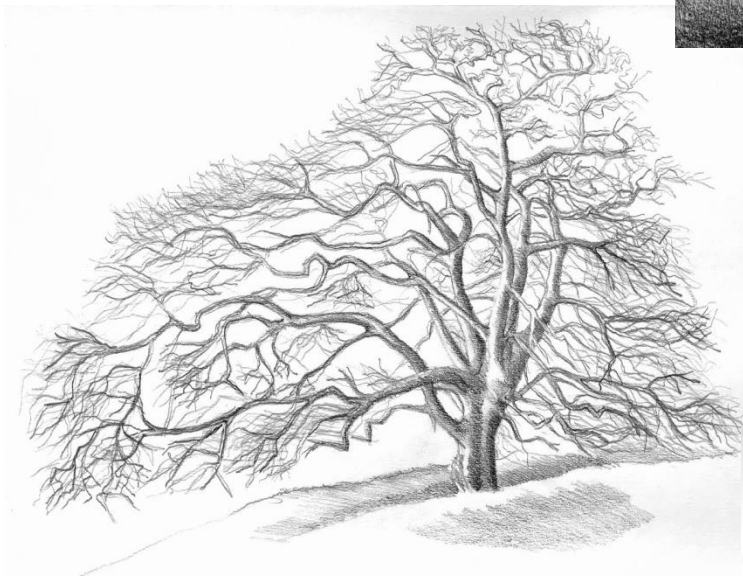
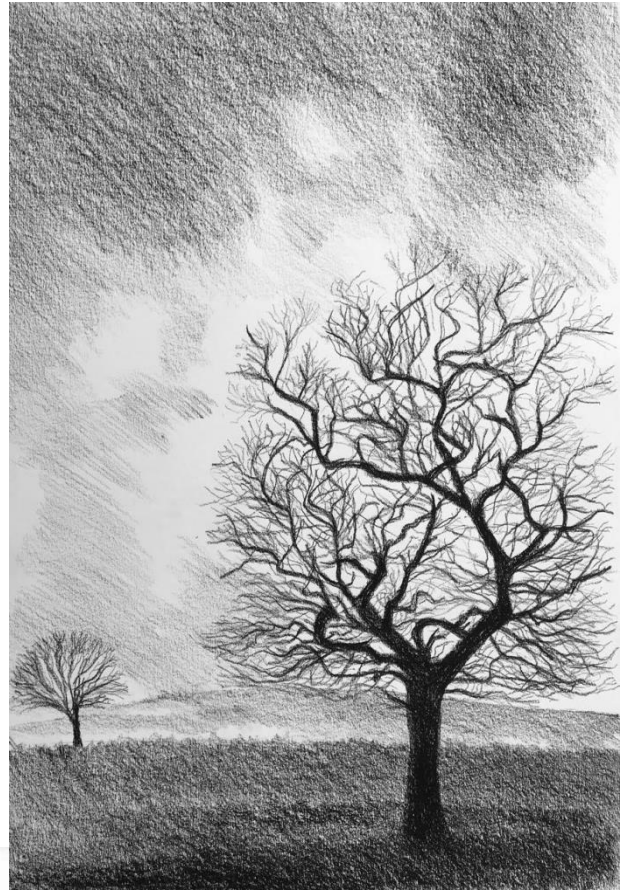
I have just finished a 6-session Screen Printing Course at Gloucestershire Printing Cooperative (GPC) in Stroud with Christine Felce. There were just 4 allowed on the course and there were two printing beds so we got plenty of opportunity to learn the technique. We created stencils, applied photographic emulsion and exposed screens, mixed the inks, and made multi-layer prints. Really enjoyable and a complete change from painting and drawing for its own sake. Here's what I created based on some plein aire sketches I did a year or two ago. You can use photographs or collage as well if you like in making up the screens - the possibilities are endless.

Rosemary

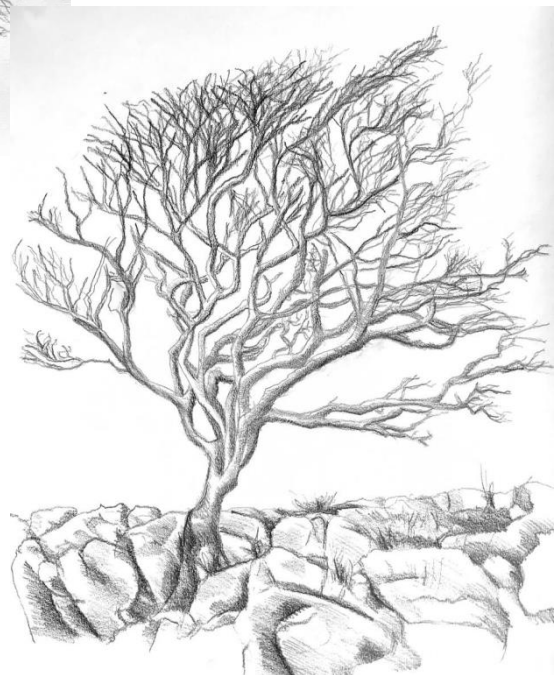


Winter Trees

I have been obsessively drawing bare trees for the last couple of weeks. The first drawing (charcoal) you may recognise as a derivative from the photograph which was published a couple of Rainbow's ago and that I captured the last time Pete Smith organised an outdoor session (on a notably overcast and gloomy morning, with just one gleam of light to outline this tree). The second is a tree near Rydal Water in the Lakes, that I encountered on a misty morning last December, while the wind-blasted tree on a limestone pavement is up at Malham Cove. (These are both in graphite.) The last, in charcoal again, is a March scene from a track up above Dovedale in Derbyshire. The challenge has been trying to capture the particular and individual fractal characters of each subject, trying to convey a sense of life flowing along the branches.



Michael

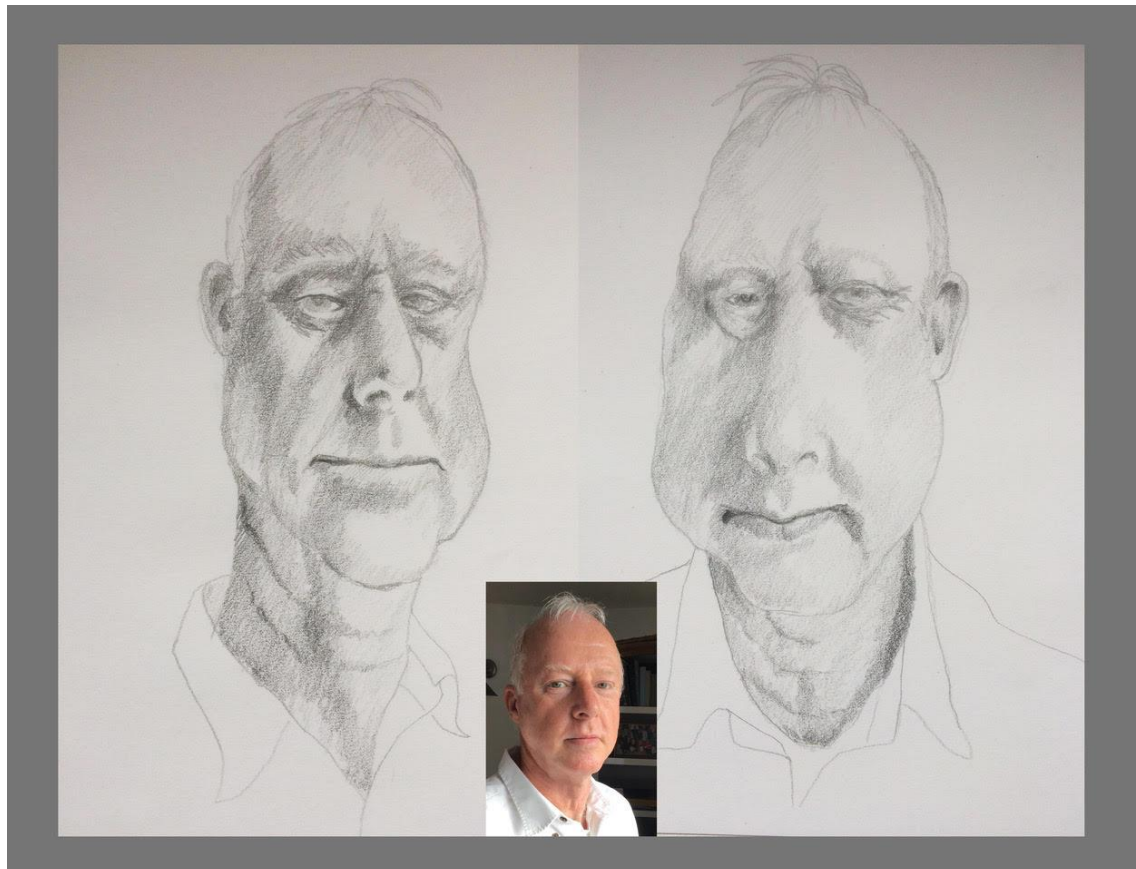




Sitters Beware!

I thought it might be amusing to attempt a caricature rather than a straight pencil portrait, but not wanting to hurt the sitter's feelings, I decided to caricature myself! I've included the source photo so you can see the relationship to the original. Well it made me smile!

Richard



Where Is The Feeling?

Some time ago I gave a talk on "Artful Computing" - that is, the production of art using computing algorithms - to a professional audience. I was listened to very respectfully, but in the question and answer session one of the audience members suggested that my digital art did not appeal to him because it did not express feeling.

I understand where he is coming from, but I think that it is an unnecessarily narrow view of what constitutes valid or worthwhile forms of art.

The emphasis in the modern art world on "self-expression" is after all relatively recent. Artists in the past have had many motivations underlying their work, mostly not self-generated: they have been required to provide decorative surfaces, tell stories, uplift the viewer to a higher moral plane, provide titillation, illustrate ideas, describe the world as it is..... and so on and so on. There are, of course, still many designers and commercial artists who continue to work to similar briefs.

Other kinds of media, however, now do many of these jobs more cheaply and perhaps even better than a traditional visual artist, so what is there left for the fine-artist hoping to live by their work? Possibly the only unique thing an independent artist can now offer is their particular view of the world, what they feel about it and perhaps what they can make *us* see and feel about it.

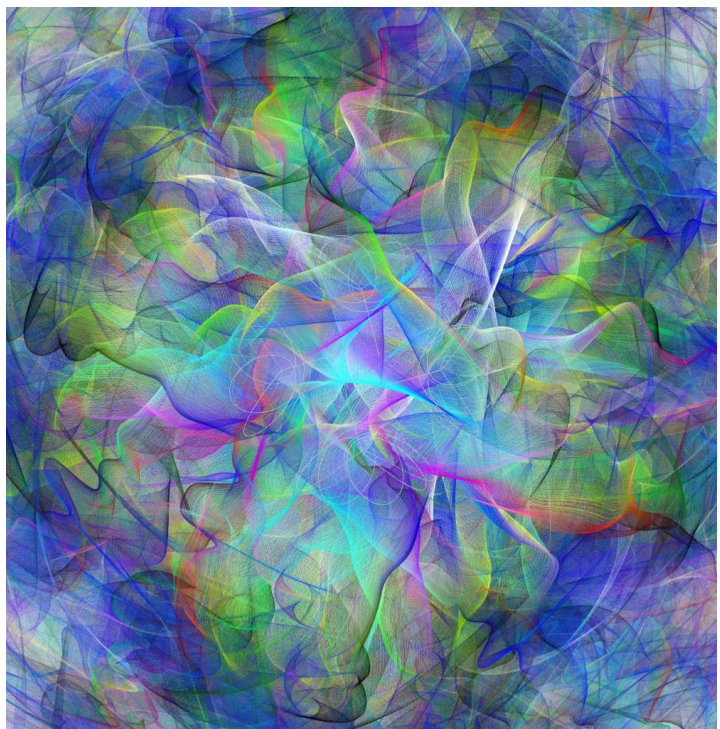
Unfortunately, it can be difficult to find a viewpoint that has not already been over exploited. It sometimes feels as though nothing less than Alexander Pope's "*What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd*" will make the work of art worth the considerable effort.

I also have to confess to a personal problem: I find a lot of critically well-reviewed material from modern artists just uninteresting - not worth a second look. The extraordinary efforts to be "original" and "shocking" leave me thinking "*This is all a bit more of the same. Mostly just noise and not a lot of signal. Entropy rules.*" Great art always has a high signal-to-noise ratio. (I am showing here the influence of my scientific viewpoint: engineers will know exactly what I mean.) Every bit of noise is completely different from every other bit of noise - but the more it is different in detail, the more it becomes the same. I tend to conclude the same with regard to much avant garde "serial" music.

I am maybe less ambitious, or perhaps I have a wider view. I think that it is OK to produce visual works that simply intrigue the intellect, without necessarily wringing the heart-strings - or even images that simply gives visual pleasure. I do not think that I am out of step with much of art history. We may now admire the Impressionists for the "feeling" in their paintings, and wallow in the colours, but to a large extent they themselves just believed that they were proving a better way of describing what their eyes experienced. Some of the revolutionary movements in abstract art in the early 20th Century were not at all concerned with feeling: they sought a language of art based on "meaning free" symbols, and its roots were entirely intellectual and even political.

All I claim for the algorithmic art that I do is that I found some interest in certain abstract ideas, possibly leading to a visually arresting result, and that it may, just possibly, interest you as well (even if not for the same reasons).

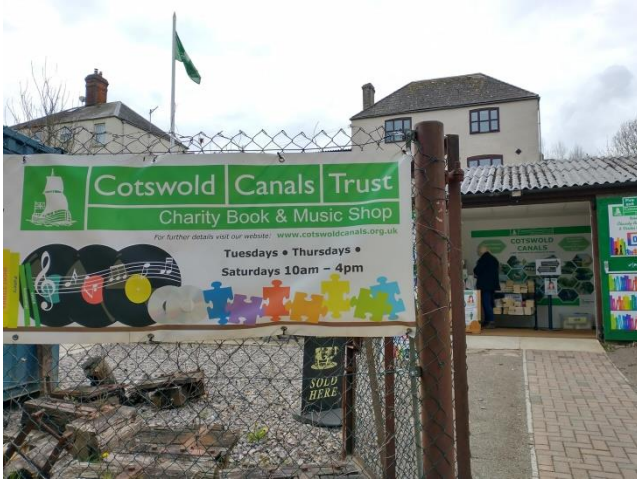
Michael McEllin explores computational art more extensively on his 'Artful Computing' website at <https://artful-computing.uk>



Canal Trust Bookshop

I went down to Brimscombe and found the Canal Trust Bookshop open. It opens Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. What is surprising is how big and well-organised it is, and that there is a really big section on art. It is one minute on foot from The Ship Inn in Brimscombe, down the lane that leads to the canal towpath towards Stroud, between the railway and the A419. Well worth a look. You can then get coffee and cake either at the Long Table further down the lane by the furniture bank, or at The Felt Cafe 5 minutes' walk the other way, wiggling round the big mill to pick up the path. Oh, and there are plenty of sketching opportunities all round too.

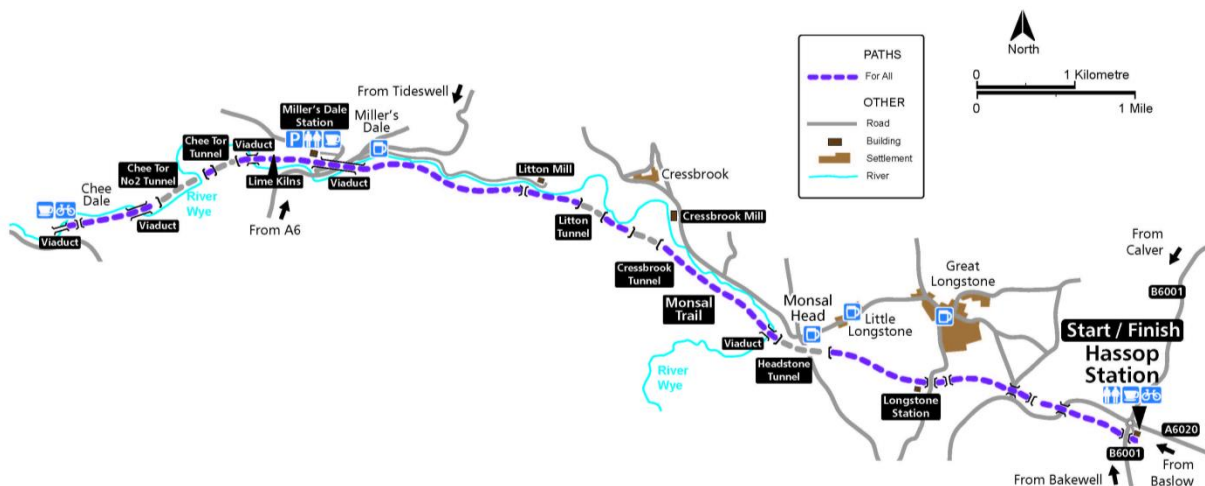
Rosemary



Rosemary also mentioned that Wallspace, just off the market place to next to Oxfam in Cirencester offers members of Box Art Group when making a purchase there a 10% discount. No proof required! They are already competitive in price terms and always helpful so a discount as well is great.

Monsal Trail

The Monsal Trail is a 8½ mile track along a disused railway, (which means it's pretty level) through some lovely Derbyshire countryside. I had previously sketched a view from a photograph in pastels, but I thought I'd try the same view in watercolour.





Pete

Irises

In watercolour.

Sheila



Box Art Group - Jubilee Celebration Artwork



We would like everyone, whether you are able to attend the weekly sessions or are working at home, to take part in producing a collaborative artwork to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Unlike the competitions, you are welcome to work on your artwork during the sessions in the summer term if you want to. The final works will be displayed together during the exhibition in the autumn.

The brief

Create a portrait of the Queen.

You have (almost) total freedom to choose how. The only restrictions are:

- 1) Head and shoulders only.
- 2) All images are to be A3 in size.

You can choose to portray the Queen at any time in her reign and in any medium that you choose to use - painting, drawing, collage, photo-collage, pastel, print.... You can also choose the style you will produce your portrait in. We want as much variety as possible.

If you are not confident about your portrait making skills, remember you can use your window as a light box to lightly trace a photograph onto your paper. You could also work directly onto a print of a photograph.

Think about the background. Will you use it to illustrate things or places associated with the Queen during her reign.

There is plenty of time to think about what you will do and to complete your idea.

You'll find plenty of inspiration on the internet and no doubt, in a few weeks time there will lots of supplements in newspapers commemorating the occasion.



Please aim to complete your artwork for the 26th May session. *Roxy*

Local Exhibitions

I thought I should mention any local exhibitions, and apologise for those I've missed.

Beth has work in the Art for Ukraine exhibition, open until Sunday 1st May, with more details of this and future events on:

<https://lansdownhall.org/exhibitions/art-for-ukraine-stroud-artists/>

The Museum in the Park has an exhibition: A Thread of Light - Exhibition of Kiln Cast Glass Sculpture, from Sunday, May 1, 2022, 11:00 am to Sunday, June 12, 2022 4:30 pm. Details at <https://museuminthepark.org.uk/calendar>

Also at the Museum in the Park, for our early risers is an event: Dawn Chorus in the Walled Garden from 5:00am to 8:00am on Sunday 1st May.

Pete



Our Exhibition Events

The Box Art Group Exhibition in the village hall is planned for 7th to 9th October, with set-up on Thursday 6th, so we won't have a painting session that afternoon. We'll sort out the arrangements for this exhibition when we start the Autumn term.

The plan for the exhibition arranged in the Nailsworth Natural Health Centre is for the artists to bring their paintings to next week's session (5th May). Please include your name, the title, price and your e-mail address for each painting, and bear in mind that the NNHC has a 10% commission in the event of a sale. The aim is to take the paintings along to the centre on May 10th to hang them.

Paintings can now be hung on the walls of the village hall, but please provide only glass-free frames.

Pete