

# THE RAINBOW

Box Art Group Newsletter - Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March  
2024

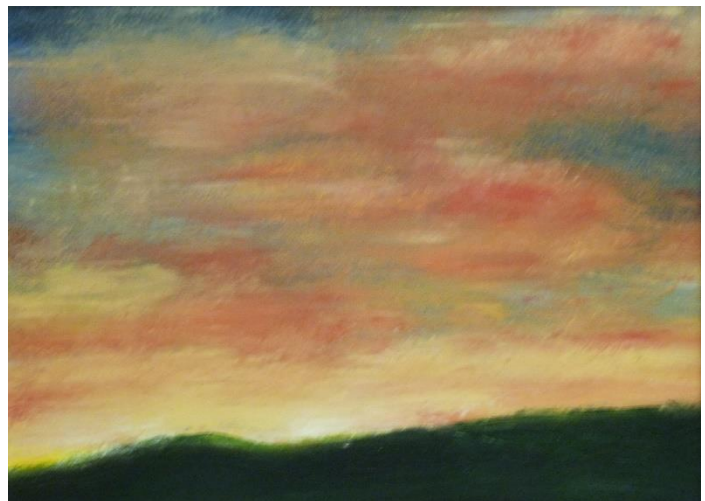
Written by and for the members of Box Art Group (No. 96)

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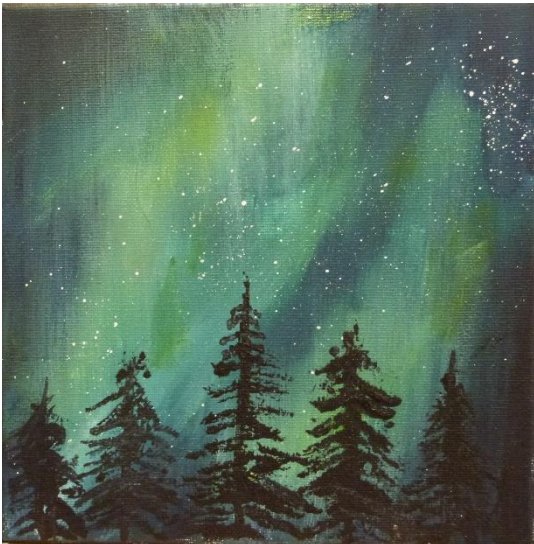
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## Spring Competition

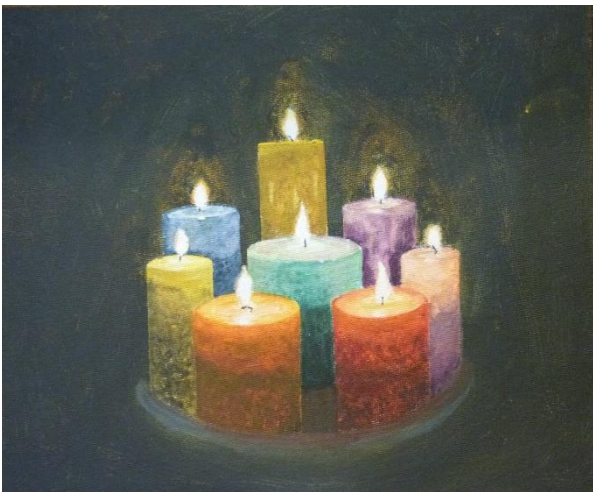
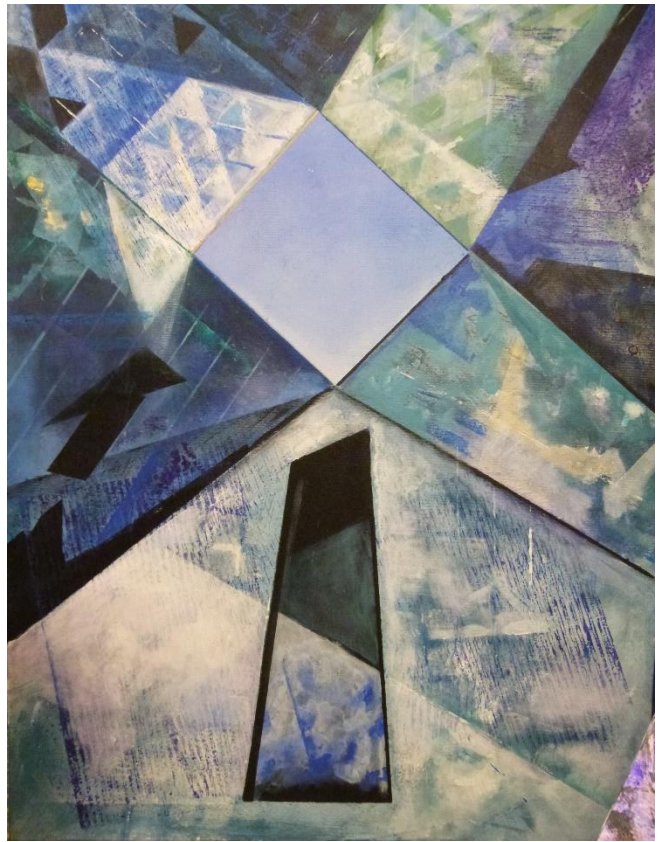
The spring term competition on the subject of 'Light' was critiqued by Roxy on 14<sup>th</sup> March. A total of 23 entries made for a fascinating and tricky vote for our members, as the quality and variety of the entries was pretty exceptional. Here they are:



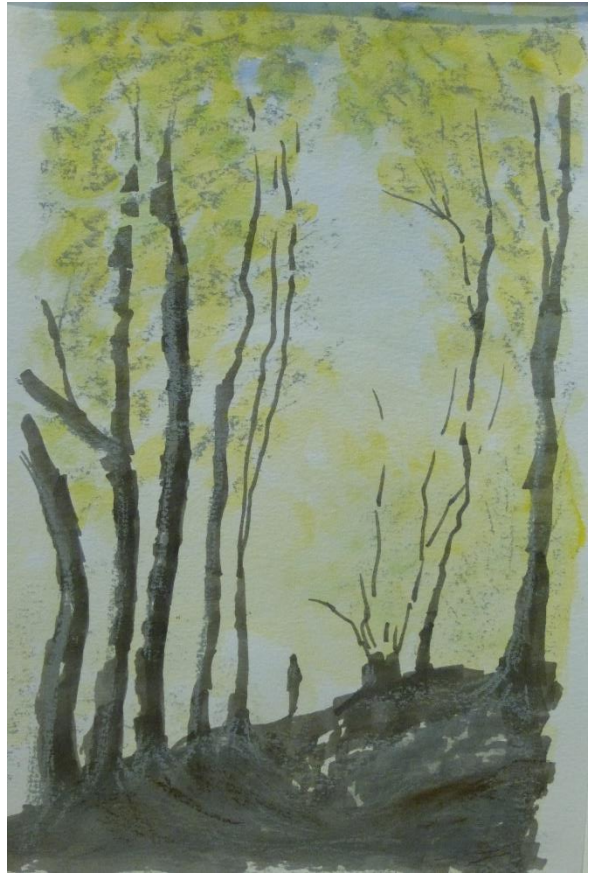




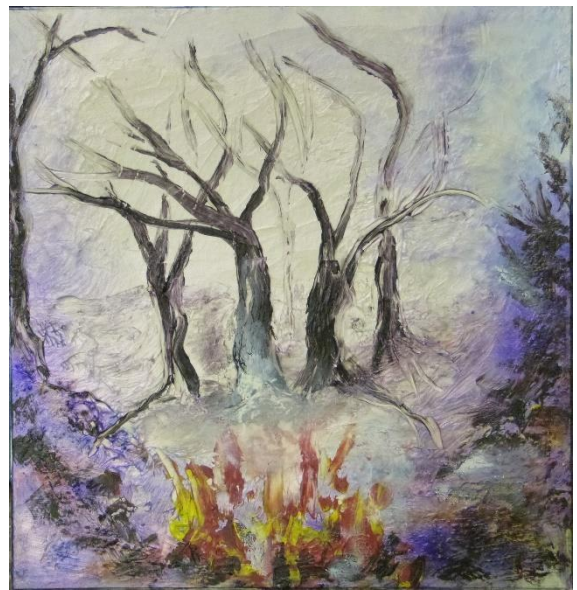












The winner was Jo Gale's avocado with Tracy Purshouse's magical wonderland a very close second. Both at the top of page 3.

Thanks to all the contributors for spending some time and thought to produce an excellent display, and to Roxy for setting the subject and her instructive critique. Thanks also to Mary Smith for her chat about reflective paints, of which more below.





## Talking of Light

### Colour palettes and a little known artist who achieves luminescence in his work.

What I love about these competitions we have at Box Art is the way they challenge me to do something different. They make me focus on a theme. Not only do they make me think about the interpretation of a subject, but also make me research other artists.

This month the theme was LIGHT which made me think about artists who have achieved luminosity in their paintings, and I accidentally happened upon a little known artist I'd never heard of before; Henry Ossawa Tanner.(1859-1937)

I'm always interested in colour and frequently change my palettes always searching for my forever colours. Recently I've been looking at minimum palettes, playing about with colour mixes in watercolour, acrylic and oil. A few days ago a "Jackson's" link popped up on my Facebook page, I started to read about this artist I'd never heard of;

'Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859-1937) was a pioneering artist with a distinctive colour palette and painting style. Widely considered to be the first internationally acclaimed African American painter, his work was informed by artistic movements that were flourishing in both America and Europe. Tanner's colour palette is characteristic for its heavy use of blue, leading to his contemporaries referring to the 'Tanner blues'.

This article examines the practice of Henry Ossawa Tanner and explores his distinctive colour palette by looking at three of his paintings and recreating their colour relationships with pigments old and new. '



So I became interested and clicked on the link.

When I saw this painting of an oak tree by Tanner that had minimum palette and a glowing, soft light I was hooked and wanted to know more.

He was mainly a biblical scene painter who used a minimum palette, but what I loved was the luminosity he achieved in his paintings.

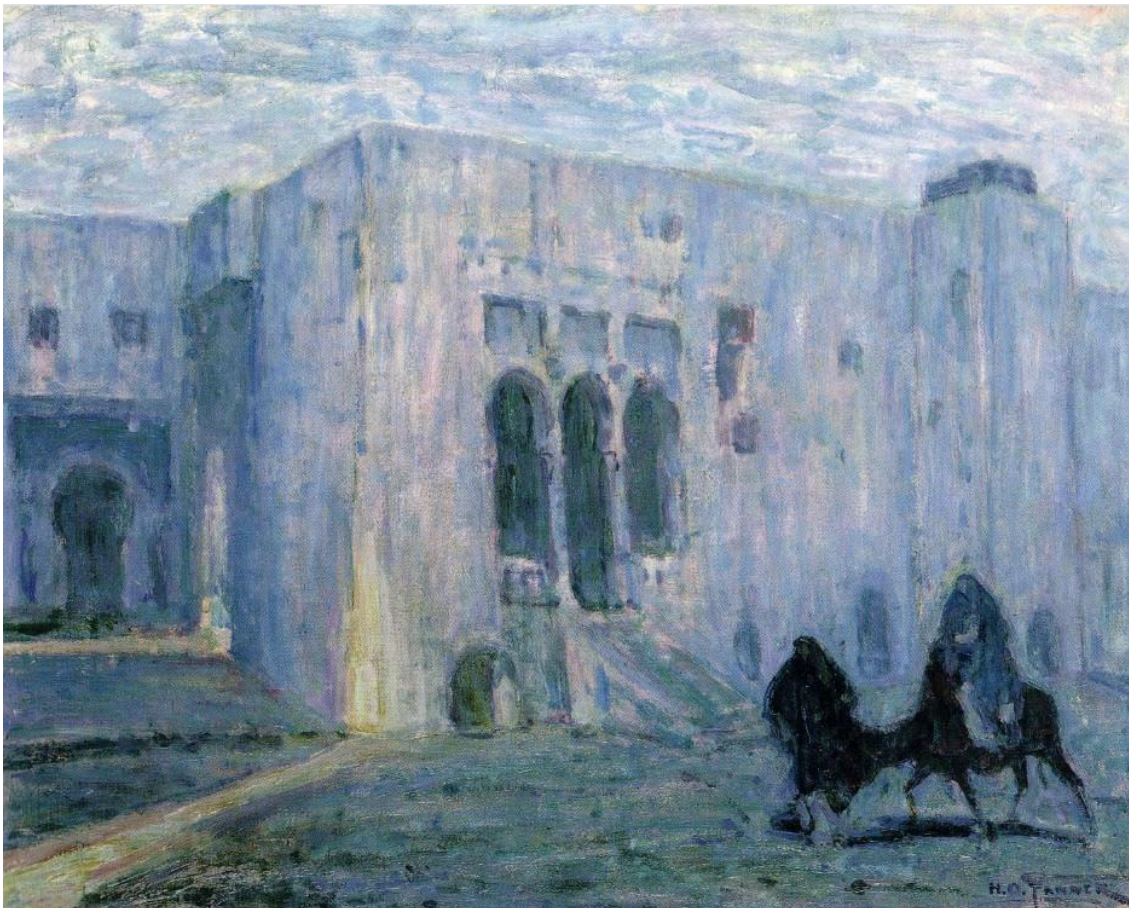
Fred Sanders wrote in his book;

“Henry Ossawa Tanner was a student of the quality and character of LIGHT. After spending some time with his biblical paintings, I began to notice that what held them together was a particular presence light that affected all the colors and much of the paint handling. I think this must have been what drew him to take his study trips to the Middle East. All around Palestine and North Africa, Tanner seems to have been on the hunt for a unifying, restrained glow that is almost palpable.

Remember that light can be many things; light for illuminating an object or for creating a mood; for purposes of dramatization as in a theatrical production. For myself, I see light chiefly as a means of achieving a luminosity, a luminosity not consisting of various light-colors, but a luminosity within a limited color range, say, a blue or blue-green. There should be a glow, which indeed consumes the theme or subject. Still, a light-glow which rises and falls in intensity as it moves through the painting. It isn't simple to put into words.”

This is from Henry Ossawa Tanner: A Spiritual Biography by Marcus Bruce. Bruce's book is not the best place to get an introduction to Tanner –that would be the recent book Henry Ossawa Tanner: Modern Spirit. But Bruce's book does go out of its way to get at the religious impulse behind Tanner's work.

Tanner's Flight into Egypt Tangiers





Bruce notes that “Tanner was frequently bothered by the quick judgments people were inclined to make about his life and work. Because he was a painter of African descent, journalists focused on that feature as the most important aspect of his work.

Bruce also refers to the character of light as “the most conspicuous and unifying aspect” of Tanner’s work. “It is always a source of goodness,” he says: “It promises not clarity but acceptance and protection; even just touched by it, people are safe.”



For his biblical paintings, Tanner tended to choose scenes familiar not so much from previous paintings, but from Bible reading or from storytelling. This Nicodemus scene above probably suggested itself to him because John 3:2 says Nicodemus came to Jesus “by night,” which presented Tanner with some interesting lighting choices.

If Tanner’s artistic fame begins to climb again in our time, it will probably not be because of spiritual subjects but because he has a pretty good claim to be the first important African American painter to achieve success in salon culture. In fact, he has as good a claim as anyone to being the greatest African American painter.

His unusual middle name Ossawa, conjures the situation just before the Civil War: it is derived from Osawatamie, Kansas, the site of one of John Brown’s armed battles with pro-slavery forces.



## The Annunciation

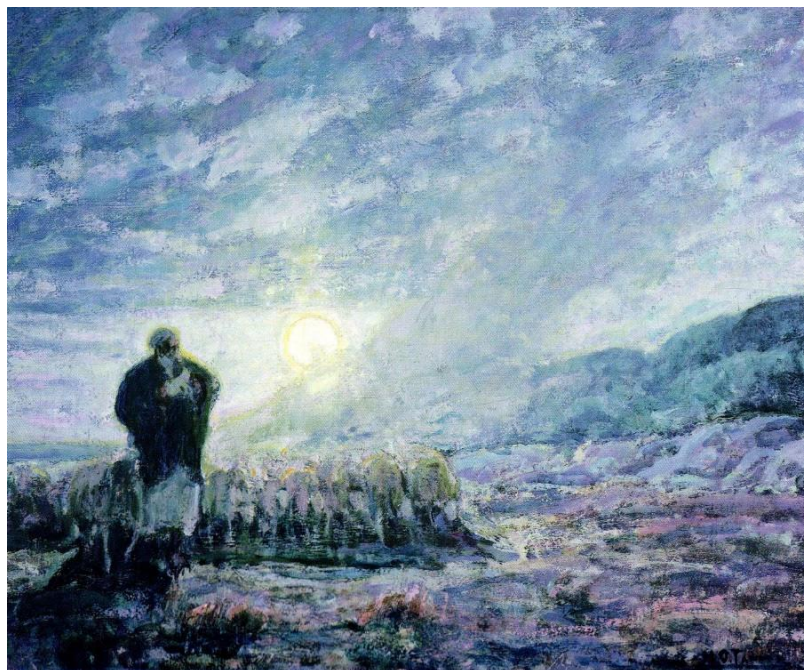


Depicting the angel Gabriel as a thin blade of flame gives Tanner a uniquely powerful light source. And in a couple of ways, the realism of the painting is increasingly warped and twisted the closer it gets to the gravitational field of that solar flare:

Consider how a vase on a shelf just behind Gabriel is transfigured into a study of yellow on yellow on yellow on yellow on yellow, more obviously made of brushstrokes than anything else on the canvas:

## The Good Shepherd.

I've really enjoyed getting to know this artist and have found inspiration in his art. I've also learned a little about colour palettes and depicting LIGHT in painting.





There are a number of paints that reflect light, although I've used them very sparingly.

Golden produce an interesting one called INTERFERENCE. This is different to IRIDESCENCE, and PEARLESCENCE.

I will bring some of these to the art group one afternoon to 'show and tell' if anyone is interested.

I hope this article has been of interest to you and hope you've enjoyed looking at some of Tanner's paintings. I did get a bit carried away and it's taken quite a bit of time putting it all together (whilst still in my dressing gown at 10:30am)!

It would be great if more people would submit something for our Newsletters, a drawing or painting, just a few words would suffice.

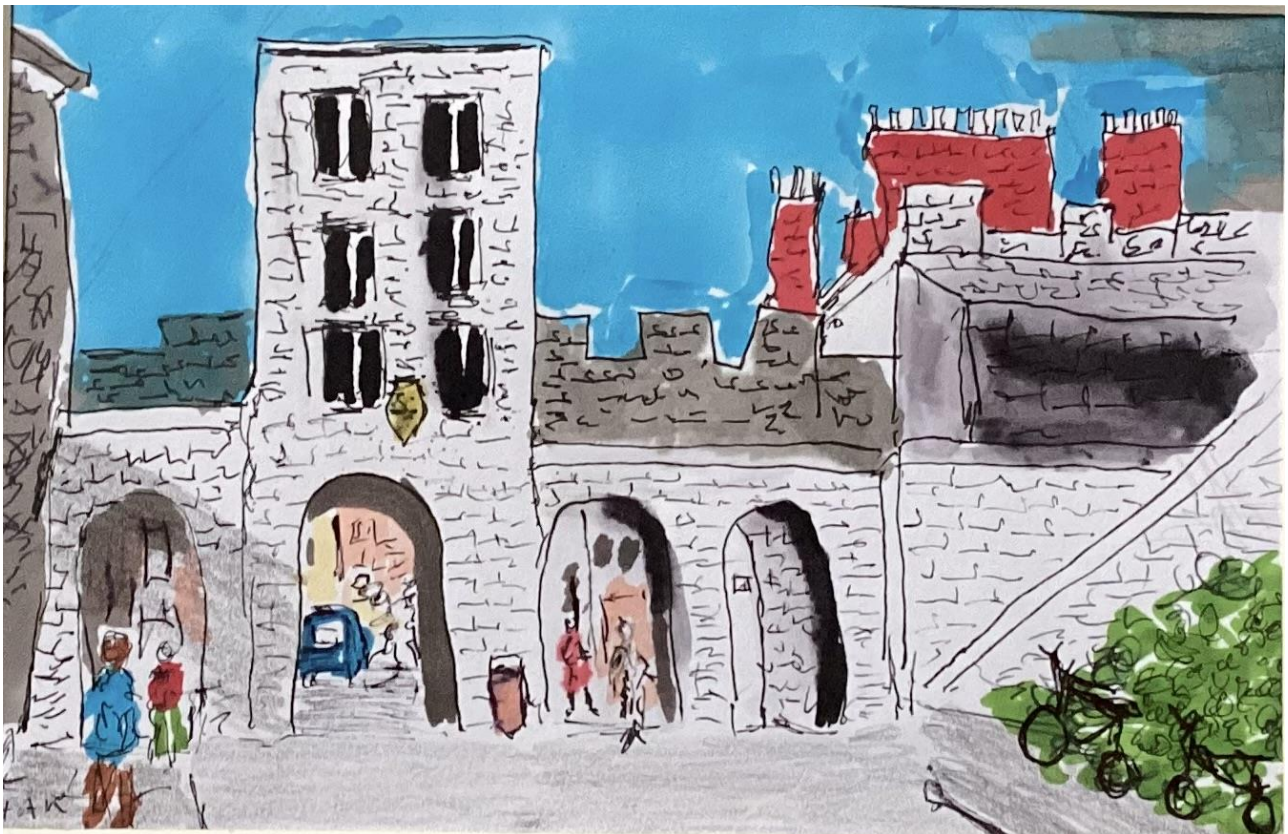
A big thank you to Peter who does a great job keeping us up to date. (I'll second that).

So happy painting!

*Mary Davis Smith.*

### **Micklegate, York**

This is my first attempt at painting with Winsor & Newton Promarkers and shows an alternate view of Micklegate in York. It was fun to do and now I am looking for another view to try.



*Hilary K*



## Nature in Art

Several members of the group visited the Nature in Art gallery at Twigworth on 21<sup>st</sup> March, when the Box hall was unavailable due to the pantomime. We enjoyed the artwork, sculptures and two exhibitions. One was the Wildlife Photographer of the Year, in the house, and the other was the work of the Gloucestershire Society of Artists, which wasn't dissimilar from our annual exhibition in terms of the quality, but was smaller and also included sculptures. We also enjoyed the tea and cake.



The artist in residence, Neal Griffin, was starting work on a Marsh or Willow tit, (I can't tell them apart) and had just painted in the eye. A light pencil outline of the body showed the whole, but I was fascinated to note that he'd started with the eye, black, with a highlight. A good deal of his other works were available in the studio, and his range of sculptures, painting and materials was quite inspiring.

The garden has some interesting and quirky sculptures, including an ostentatious and very golden eagle, an impressive big cat, and what I took to be a weather vane on top of a building. However, looking at it again, it would need a more solid tail to react to the wind, so a sculpture, just perched.

*Pete*





## Nearby Events in April

### Three Storeys

#### [Six Artists, One Family](#)

- Tue, Apr 9, 2024 10:00 AM Sun, Apr 14, 2024 3:00 PM

### Lansdown Gallery

Contemporary artworks and sculpture by four local artists. 24th - 28th April open 10am - 5pm

### Art in the Attic



## Art in the Attic – an affordable art sale

**Holy Trinity Church Minchinhampton**  
**20<sup>th</sup> April 10am to 4pm**

We're raising funds for the repair of the beautiful Rose Window overlooking Minchinhampton High Street and would be grateful for your help in two ways:

- **the donation of art works for sale in aid of the window repair**
- come and join us on the Saturday Sale Day for teas, coffee and delicious homemade cakes will be served throughout the day. Bring friends and family.

Art works can be delivered to the church between 10am and 4.00pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April. Unsold art work can be collected from the church between 12 noon and 3.00pm on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April. Please do spread the word. Thank you.

Mandy Jutsum

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### Next Session

The summer term begins on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April. Programme below:

Date	Tutor	Programme
11th April	-----	Closed due to electrical supply updates to the hall
18th April	Roxy	Still Life
25th April	Roxy	
2nd May	Beth	Competition
9th May	Beth	Still Life
16th May	Beth	
23rd May	Roxy	
30th May	Roxy	
6th June	Beth	Critique
13 <sup>th</sup> June	-----	<b>Sessions continue throughout the summer !!!</b>