

# THE RAINBOW

Box Art Group Newsletter - Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April  
2024

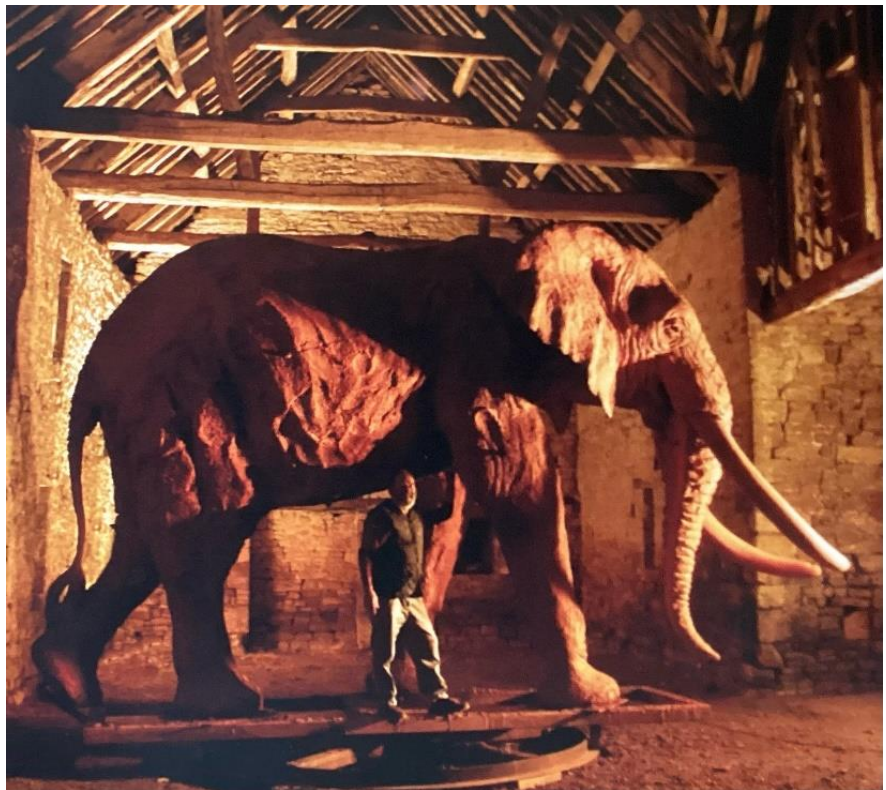
Written by and for the members of Box Art Group (No. 97)

## Contents

- **The Great Tusker**
- **Pastel Hints 3 - Painting**
- **Latest Construction**
- **Pebble Mosaics**
- **Nearby Events**
- **Next Session**
- **Competition May 24**

## The Great Tusker

After the very interesting visit to Nature in Art, I remembered a visit some years ago to view an amazing lifesize sculpture of an elephant, which we heard about by chance. The huge carving had been transported in pieces to a large barn in Kings or Leonard Stanley where it was pieced together ready for delivery to its purchaser. We never heard exactly where it was going, but it was transported shortly afterwards through Stroud on a large flat-bed track. A photo of this event subsequently appeared in the local paper.



The artist and sculptor of this monumental elephant is Michael A. Ghana, born and brought up on a farm in Tanzania, spending his life painting and sculpting the local wildlife. His work has been exhibited in the USA, South Africa, the UK (London and the Pangolin Gallery) and is also in private displays all over the world. He completed a larger-than-life commission of three lions before starting on his ambition, now fulfilled, to sculpt a lifesize elephant - "The Great Tusker".

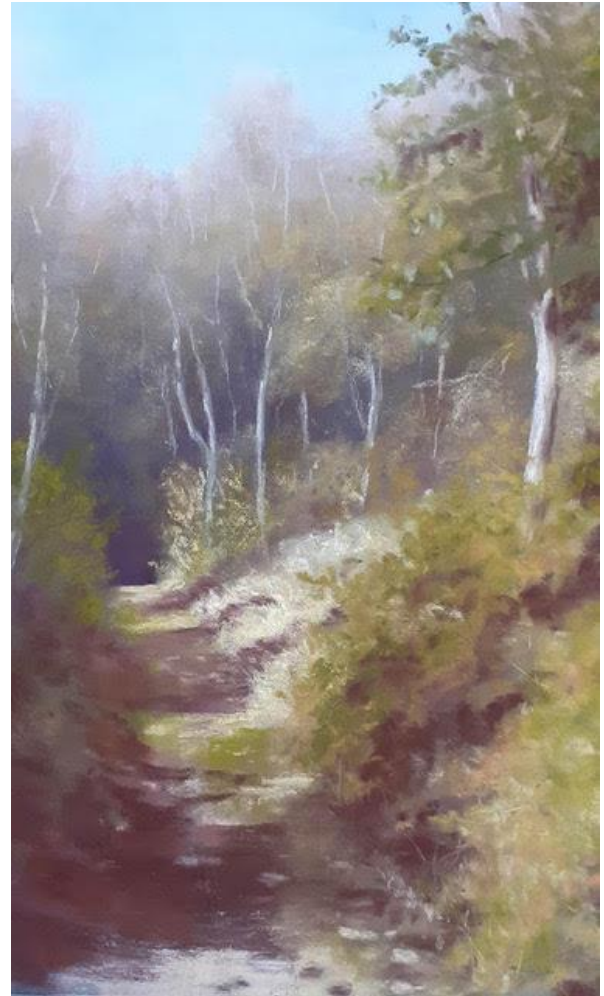
### Pastel Hints 3 – Painting

After a couple of month's break, here is the third of the four Pastel Hints. The final one will be on fixing, mounting and framing. Once again the pastel hints are to suit my style of painting.

I paint with the paper fully taped with masking tape to a board which I position almost upright on an easel. This allows surplus dust from the pastels to fall off.

As I usually paint landscapes, I'll describe how I go about this. I work top to bottom and distance to foreground, building up layers. My paintings below are a good example of this. Map out the subject very roughly with a mid tone pastel. This will be covered later but it gives me an idea of what I will place where. Work in layers, starting in the background with the sky, which should extend below the tree line. Once trees are added, the sky will then show through the branches.

I blend the sky with my fingers to cover the paper. Some artists wear plastic gloves, but I prefer not to. Paint the further away hills in blue/purple to give a sense of distance. As I move forward, these distant hills may be partially covered with layers in the foreground as I work down the paper.



When I first started painting in this way, I found it a bit strange. I had been used to blocking in darks or lights over the whole page, but with pastels this can result in smudging. I may very roughly block in a building or path to give me some idea of how the painting will work out. I blend some areas, adding marks with the pastel to denote more detail. Using the pastel on its side, graze across the blended colour to show texture. The type of marking will depend on what you want to achieve. I once did a pastel painting using only vertical lines which created an interesting effect.

As with any type of painting, observe the lights and the darks. A tree will not be one colour. I use pale yellow or lime green to show sunlight or spring foliage. Use of dark brown between leaf laden branches or below the lowest branches gives the tree a sense of form. I have a number of greens which I have never used as a find olive and lime green shades more pleasing to the eye.

Water reflections in pastel are quite straightforward to create. Paint in the shapes being reflected, then with the side of your palm, gently drag downwards. A few pale horizontal lines help to give the water a surface.

When I think I have finished, look again at areas that may need extra highlighting or shadows and add any that are necessary. A touch of yellow ochre may enhance a large area of greenery or building. Check shadows are present and going the right direction! Pastels are very forgiving and if you find an area you want to amend, use a hog hair brush to brush away the pastel and repaint.

Once completed, remove the board from the easel and holding it vertical to a hard surface, give it a good tap downwards to get rid of excess pastel dust.





*Jill H*

### **Latest Construction**

The latest construction of a fort, manned by Romans by the look of them, is coming together. Some work still needed on the drawbridge and gate, and a flagpole. And possibly some paint and stoney wallpaper for the outer walls. There's also a request for bonfires to stay warm, as these Romans were used to sunnier climes. So I'm looking at flashing yellow and red LEDs covered in strands of straw and fine twigs to produce the right effect. It will be a hi-tech Roman fort!

*Pete*



## Pebble Mosaics

Following on from Michael's articles on geometry, symmetry, patterns and tiles, and Richard's panel paintings, abstract, seahorse and dragonfly wings, and assuming readers are suffering from withdrawal symptoms as we haven't seen the like for a few months, I thought I'd try to fill the gap with a few words and pictures about pebble mosaics.

This seemed appropriate, as some patterns repeat like the tiles, whilst some are one-off artworks and others abstract, and they are all based on discrete pebbles (or tiles, slate strips, etc). The art form goes back a long way, with some wonderful examples from around 2,400 years ago at Olynthos, and Pella, northern Greece. But the earliest known major work is the Megaron 2 mosaic, an interior pavement that was discovered at the archaeological site of Gordion near Yassihöyük in Western Turkey. Dated to the 9th c. B.C.E., the pavement is the earliest known decorative floor mosaic in the world. The mosaic pavement originally measured approximately 32' x 35' and was composed of white, dark red, and dark blue-grey pebbles in a mud clay bedding.



The Megaron 2 mosaic in situ after discovery in 1956

Jonathan Last watercolour of the mosaic,  
9' x 9' (Gordion Archive, University of  
Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and  
Anthropology).





These mosaics are made with small natural pebbles of various colours, carefully matched and laid. Pebble mosaics persisted as the major form of mosaic decoration until approximately the 3rd century BC, when they began to be replaced with mosaics of cut stone cubes, or tesserae. The later pebble mosaics, including those at Pella, were increasingly supplemented with stone tesserae chosen for colour intensity and with lead or terra-cotta strips for delineation of detail.



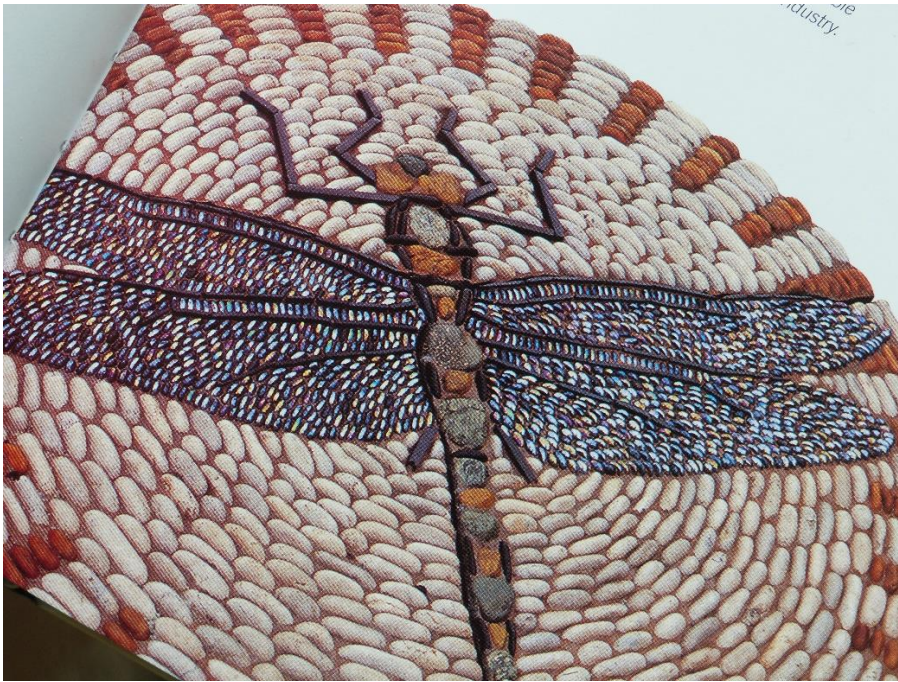
Alexander Mosaic (detail), House of the Faun, Pompeii circa 100 BC (source Wikipedia & The Guardian)

Note the detail rendered in (~1cm) tesserae of Alexandre the Great and his horse found in Pompeii from 100BC, and compare this with the pebble mosaic from Olynthos from around 400BC which used pebbles of around 2-3cm (below left) and the mosaic from Pella, a hundred years later when Gnosis used 1cm pebbles with a very limited colour range to produce an image with much more detail, (below right).

Whilst the detail and colour options available with the use of tesserae are undoubtedly clear and valid, the use of pebbles does offer a remarkable scope for textural effects.







At last we have the dragonfly in pebbles, though the wings are made from glass nuggets with slate outlines. The glass tends to be rather softer than the pebbles, so it should be sited to avoid excessive footfall.

The swan, right, makes use of different sizes of pebbles to produce a very effective texture, set off by the radiating black background.

Maggy Howarth has written a book (*The Complete Pebble Mosaic Handbook*) which comprehensively describes virtually all there is to know about the design and construction of pebble mosaics. Many of the photographs used in this article are from this book.



She also has an amazing set of designs on her website at <https://www.maggyhowarth.co.uk/portfolio>



The Isle of North Uist Mackerel mosaic was designed by Rosalind Wates and is composed of local pebbles (white marble, black basalt), shells, and sea-worn glass and is 5m long. It was built on the shore and is constructed to withstand being submerged by high tides.

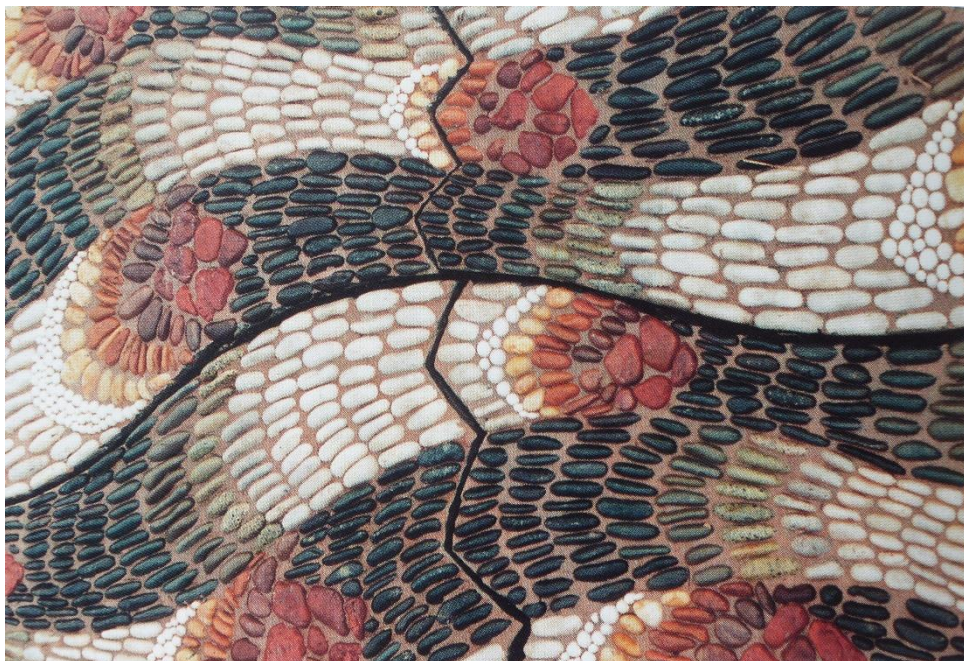




Two paintings in rock by Johannes Vielmetter.

And finally, a fairly abstract pattern, in the form of a detail showing flames and smoke from the phoenix mosaic in Gateshead. Again, the texture of the pebbles adds greatly to the effect.

*Pete*





## Nearby Events in May

### Three Storeys

Four Stories – A Joint Exhibition 21<sup>st</sup> May to 26<sup>th</sup> May

### Lansdown Gallery and Sub Rooms

100 Stroud Artists Cooperative exhibition May 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>

### Lansdown Gallery

Earth Sea and Sky Charlotte Harvey and Rachel Hope exhibition 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May

### Aleph Contemporary

Gordon Dalton exhibition 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May

### The Long Table

Abstract Oceanic exhibition by Rossie Henderson-Begg Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May 17:00 to 21:00

### Museum in the Park

Black Severn Angel – Paintings by Pete Hoida from 4<sup>th</sup> May to 2<sup>nd</sup> June, but closed from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>

### Fox Talbot Museum, Lacock

Light Struck exhibition by Ellen Carey ends on 5<sup>th</sup> May (National Trust)

## Next Session

The summer term continues with the programme below:

Date	Tutor	Programme
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>

## Box Art Group Competition

**May 2024**

Abundance



This is the time of year for abundance. Roadsides are decorated with great swathes of lacy cowslips and woods turn blue with bluebells or white with wild garlic. Colours are saturated, skies are dramatic, weather is unpredictable with rain and hail followed by rainbows and brilliant sunlight.

This competition is about things in abundance or multiples, you can interpret it however you would like to but here are a few pointers.



Basket of Apples – Paul Cezanne

Downpours, hail storms, bright sunlight against dark skies, dramatic, sometimes awe inspiring, miserable to be caught out in, we are all used to an abundance of weather.....

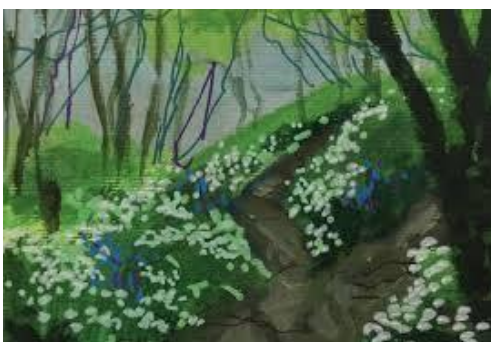


D B Waterman



Chiang Lee

Bluebells and wild garlic are the spring showstoppers, with wild orchids and hedges full of hawthorn flowers to follow.



Sarah Wimperis



David Young



Animals or birds are good subjects, although the cows on the common might be easier to find than zebras.



David Miller



Jason Morgan

You might be inspired by a collection of buildings.



George Braques



Picasso

Or harbour scenes Stanley Curster

Amit Kapoor





People



L S Lowry

Flowers or Fruit



Unknown

Frida Kahlo



Or Cake...

Abundance and the 4 elements - Brueghel the elder and Hendrick de Clerck



**Abundance**

The subject is wide open for interpretation as long as you are choosing things or people or activities that are happening or existing in abundance.

You can portray the subject in any medium you choose, in any way you choose.

Judging/critique on 6<sup>th</sup> June *Beth*