

MARTIN CAULKIN

马丁·考尔金



英国当代水彩画家

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH
WATER-COLOUR
ARTISTS

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BIOGRAPHY

画家简历

- 1945 出生于伯明翰
Born in Birmingham
- 1959-1962 获萨敦戈菲尔德工艺美术学院中级毕业证书
Awarded Sutton Coldfield College of Art: Intermediate Diploma
- 1962-1965 在伯明翰工艺美术学院学习绘图和插图画，获国家设计学位证书
Studied Graphics and Illustration at Birmingham College of Arts and Crafts: National Diploma in Design (N.D.D)
- 1965 短期迁居伦敦，作自由画家，从事插图画创作
Moved to London, briefly, to do freelance illustration
- 1968-1969 于萨敦戈菲尔德结婚，为获得伯明翰美术教师证书而进修学习
Married at Sutton Coldfield, studied for Art-Teachers Diploma, Birmingham (A.T.D)
- 1969 在斯塔福德郡利奇菲尔德的牛眼画廊举办画展：2人展
Exhibition at Bulls Eye Gallery, Lichfield, Staffordshire: 2 man
- 1970 在埃文河畔斯塔福德的乔叟海德画廊举办个人画展
Chaucer Head Gallery, Stratford Upon Avon: 1 man
- 1971 迁居伦敦，教授美术；在伯明翰皇家艺术家协会举办个人画展
Moved to London. Taught art. Exhibition at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (R.B.S.A): 1 man
- 1972 伯明翰皇家艺术家协会：2人展，与祖父 F.E.H. 考尔金的作品同展
Royal Birmingham Society of Artists: 2 man, with Grandfather, F.E.H. Caulkin
- 1974 再次从事自由插图画创作，同时从事个人绘画事业。在汉普斯底的希瑟利·威尔森艺术学校教授素描和油画。
Took up freelance illustrations again whilst working on personal painting projects. Taught Drawing and Painting at Heatherley Wilson School of Art, Hampstead
- 1975 在伦敦肯兴屯莱顿美术院举办2人画展，与祖父 F.E.H. 考尔金的作品同展
Exhibition at Leighton House Art Gallery, Kensington, London: 2 man with Grandfather, F.E.H. Caulkin
- 1976 作品在伦敦麦克默里画廊展出
Work exhibited at the MacMurray Gallery in London
- 1977 作品由荷兰布鲁诺特出版公司印刷出版，全世界发行。获伯明翰皇家艺术家协会斐尼奖
Work published as prints and distributed worldwide: Brunott Publications, Holland. Won the Feeney Award, R.B.S.A
- 1978 迁居伍斯特，成为专职画家，开始定期在伯明翰（伯明翰皇家艺术家协会）、当地和美国（马萨诸塞州波士顿的马德琳卡特美术馆）举办画展。
Moved to Worcester and became full time artist, exhibiting from now on regularly in Birmingham (R.B.S.A), locally and USA (Madeleine Carter Gallery, Boston, Mass.)
- 1981 参加伯明翰莫斯利的提密斯美术馆举办的群展
Timaeus Gallery, Moseley, Birmingham: Group

- 1982 在伯明翰莫斯利的提密斯美术馆举办个人画展
Timaeus Gallery, Moseley, Birmingham: 1 man
- 1982 开始在赫里福德郡雷德伯里的谢尔画社展出作品; 与该画社有固定的关系, 一直持续到今年。
Started to exhibit at the Shell House Gallery, Ledbury, Herefordshire. This association continues on a regular basis through the year now.
- 1983 成为皇家水彩画家协会会员; 获亨廷集团奖提名; 成为伯明翰皇家艺术家协会正式会员
Made a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour (R.I); Short listed for the Hunting Group Prize. Made a full member of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (R.B.S.A.).
- 1984 在雷德伯里的谢尔画社举办个人画展
Shell House Gallery, Ledbury: 1 man
- 1985 开始参加皇家水彩画协会夏季画展; 皇家艺术院夏季画展
Began exhibiting at the Royal Watercolour Society Summer Shows (RWS); Royal Academy Summer Show (R.A)
- 1986 参加皇家水彩画协会夏季画展; 皇家艺术院夏季画展; 温哥华“1986年博览会”, 美国西雅图的弗莱尔现代艺术博物馆的展览。
R.W.S. summer show; R.A. summer show; Vancouver "Expo 86"; Fry Museum of Modern Art, Seattle, USA
- 1987 参加皇家艺术院夏季画展。
Exhibiting at the R.A. summer show
- 1990-1999 油画作品入选辛格·弗里德兰德,《星期日时报》水彩画展; 莱英风景画比赛。
作品被美国, 加拿大, 荷兰, 挪威, 澳大利亚和英国的收藏者珍藏。
Paintings chosen to be exhibited in the Singer Friedlander, Sunday Times Watercolor Exhibitions; Laing Landscape Competition. Works in private collections in USA, Canada, Holland, Norway, Australia and Britain.

创作体验

CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

从艺之初

我和所有的孩子一样，自小喜欢涂涂画画。我记得自己一度非常喜爱红色和黄色，把一切都画成红的黄的——房子、飞机、人物，一切的一切。可惜的是，我们童年时期对这种涂鸦的钟爱等到长大成人时通常已被扼杀掉了。

成人之前读过的书少不了图画书和小人书之类，我那时除了看书上的文字之外，对书上图画的线条和绘制方法也产生了兴趣。我有自己最喜欢的连环画家，常常临摹他们的画。我的美术学习和模仿过程就这样开始了。

长大成人之后，人们的兴趣大多会转向别处，而我对美术的兴趣却从祖父那里得到了鼓励和培养。爷爷是画水彩和油画的，现在想起来，还能记的油墨、松脂和亚麻油的那种清香味儿呢。

爷爷家里满墙都挂着他的画儿，还有书可看。爷爷本人又乐于给我讲解，讲得兴致勃勃。他让我认识书籍，不单单是认识书中的内容，还让我感受书的实际触感、书的气味、书的轻重以及书的装帧，从而把对书的钟爱灌输进我的心中。

我俩经常一起散步，路上他给我讲解各类树木的名称以及云团的形状。我觉得当时他只是教我集中注意力、开阔视野、学会观察。爷爷是从维多利亚时代过来的人，浑身洋溢着那个时代的情愫，他将我领进了前拉斐尔时期的那个世界，当时在我看来是神秘、奇幻又浪漫的世界：那样细致入微，那么五彩缤纷！爷爷鼓励我作素描、画油画，从来不批评人，而总是给我指出其中的方法和道理。当我泄气的时候，他帮我挺过去，让我继续努力。不管怎么说，“人的成就大小，还是取决于他的眼界的高低。”

我小时候得到了引导和鼓励，这是所有人都需要的帮助。我应该感谢爷爷，感谢他在我艺术生命的形成期给予的慷慨教诲。当我面临事业的选择时，又是爷爷支持我进了艺术学院。

进入艺校之后，我觉得天地更为开阔，愈感有待于探索技法。一切都那么新鲜。当时好像是素描较为重要，由于早期的影响，加上我对插图作品的喜爱，我便从事了插图创作。

艺术熏陶

早期影响我的是爱德华七世时代的插图画家们，如亚瑟·拉克汉姆。我很喜欢他那种曲折粗犷的作品及带有日本风格的含蓄色调。

以后，我开始崇拜其他画家，比如描绘西部荒野的浪漫画家弗里德里克·莱明顿、德国神秘主义风景画家卡斯帕·大卫·弗里德里希，还有安德鲁·韦斯，我吸收他们的风格，为己所用。弗里德里希和韦斯的题材让我着迷，他们那出色的技艺也令我陶醉。我第一次看到他们的作品时，那是怎样的一种心荡神驰的感觉啊。仿佛心灵给什么震了一下，有如触电的感觉一般。我越来越喜欢伦勃朗作品的深度和人性化，喜欢维米尔作品的完美的恬静。

早期水彩画

我觉得插图作品不论是从艺术角度还是从经济角度看，都不太尽如人意，于是我开始试验墨水、水彩和水彩纸。

此时，我已经结婚，和妻子住在伦敦，并在那里教了几年书。当时的境况很令我沮丧，但我的妻子安妮救了我（她多次这样救过我）。她成为挣钱养家的人，把我从教书的苦海中拉了上来，让我有时间为自己找出路。

刚开始，我做些弗里德里克·莱明顿浪漫主义风格的油画，起初在插图画板上画，后来慢慢地学会了水彩画，就在水彩画纸上画。我将钢笔墨水与淡彩泼墨结合起来，不但逐渐形成了自己的风格，而且找到了自己独特的表现法，我的画也多了一些大家风范，少了一些摹仿的匠气。这一切需要多长的时间、多大的支持可想而知。

从伦敦迁居到伍斯特郡并退出插图创作之后，我一边继续发展我的水彩画风格，一边开始顾盼风景画。我以前的灵感来源于文学描写，现在则来自我周围的真实风景。

主题与立意

光线

光线以及时辰一直是我灵感的不竭源泉，尤其是黄昏时分，甚至月夜。一般情况下，英国的光照对比并不十分强烈，不像在阳光充足的地方。英国的光照适用于表现着色的精微以及色调的梯度变化。那正是黄昏时分光线即将消失的时刻。在那稍纵即逝的瞬间，飘忽在可见与不可见之间的朦胧中的，正是人们试图捕捉的那种令人激动的东西。渐弱的夕照转瞬即逝，变化万千，对心灵具有如此的震撼力，又如此地变幻不定、不可捉摸，有时显得忧郁黯然，却又美得神采飞扬。光线，抑或消逝的光线，正是变换景象的魔术大师。

光线向我的水彩画提出了挑战，既是对我技法上的挑战，也是对情感的挑战，看我画水彩能走到哪一步。我认为，水彩作为一种绘画媒质可以超越淡彩泼涂、湿地加色、表面覆彩的技法，水彩可以更深一层，可以和油画相媲美！我不是在标新立异（当然用水彩标新立异大有用武之地），而是追求一种基调、深度和气氛。

基调与色彩的营造

我试图留住——或许应该说“冻结”——引发情感的那一刻。将这种情感与色彩及其应用联系起来。我往往只用数量有限的色彩来表现我的情感反应，并将此方法比作我最喜欢的音乐演奏形式——弦乐四重奏。这种音乐的音域很有限，但如此狭小的音域却能表现出多少东西啊！这里面有巨大的潜力。色调范围的局限是一种挑战。在我看来，最优秀的油画都是那些用色最简练、表现最直接的作品。

对我来说这件事情似乎具有两面性，既抒情又苛刻。抒情面体现于风景画中营造光线的技法，而苛刻面则体现在我喜欢描绘风景中的客体。

然而，二者都与时间的流逝有关，与世界上事物的短暂易逝有关。正是时间让事物变得宝贵起来，因为事物不能永久。这使我必须寻找那永恒的一瞬。我喜欢那些被时间捕捉的事物，静静地冻结在时间长河里的物体，那才是作品的魅力所在。

结构

我喜欢景物的结构：谷仓、旧货车、遗骸、农舍、林中凸起的树梢、地上人工留下的痕迹等。这里面仍旧带有永恒变化的全部特征。创造的过程常常起始于心灵对于所见到的物体形状的感受，一种抽象的闪现，激发情感的物体轮廓。那辆旧斯卡美尔货车是个例子，我看中的是车的前头，仿佛车子正朝一边歪下去，样子很难看，像个畜生。然而画上去却很美，赏心悦目。

若换在别的时刻，让我动心的就可能会是一座粮仓的质感、颜色或者风吹日晒后的外观了。

老栎树以及所有的树木画起来真是让人快乐，它们是沧桑岁月极好的哨兵和见证人。

作画地点

我多在本地作画，没有因为寻找素材去云游四方，而是呆在我住所附近挖掘灵感。

我在伍斯特郡住了二十多年，使我对熟悉的事物看得更深一层。农田、原野、柳林间的小河、树木、谷仓，还有当地的地势，以及冬日里的骸骨。我喜欢冬季树木的形态，那时都暴露出它们生长的本来面目。我所在的地区没有多少壮观的景物，所以我必须用心地看、细心地察、耐心地等，静心地思！我全副身心都沉浸在它的氛围里，将它融进我的心胸。这一切都颇费时间，需要耐心，还要有一双敏锐的眼睛。

多年来我经过许多地方，没发现什么有趣的东西。后来，出现了情感上的幻觉，一切平常的东西都变得不平常了。例如，我年复一年地从那座“天光”谷仓边经过，看着它日渐败落腐朽。我眼见谷仓的房门朽烂、屋顶塌陷、墙壁开裂，这一切我都用照相机拍摄记录了下来。多年之后，用绘画形式来记录它的时机似乎已经成熟。为了产生戏剧效果，我把一堵墙“搬”出了视野，把一座小屋也请了出去，而在地面上加上了一滩滩积水，通过水汪的反射引入天空。“天光”的创作过程可能花了10年功夫。

伍斯特郡与赫勒福德郡是养育我多年的地方，在观察它们时，我看到了造物主上帝之手的杰作，不胜佩服。我愈看愈有发现，愈看愈觉得陌生、愈感到神秘莫测。

在过去的一年多来，我得到了远离家乡的机会，到了南非和法国。这两次出行时间都很短，但对比起来却很有意思，开始让我有所改变，让我重新打量周围的事物。

我历来喜欢回归到使用人物的手法，将人物运用到风景画中，运用在我的“荒原”系列作品里，并希望在这一领域能有所拓展。将来可能的话，到沙漠地区去感受一下那里的光线和气氛。目前，它已经进入我的脑海、我的心间、我的想象当中。

技法

一旦动了念头，灵感出现，我就必须考虑实施的方法，如何才能将构思落实到画纸上：画纸的类型、尺寸和色彩。

画纸

凡是画纸都有其内在的品质，对绘画的最终效果至关重要。我用的纸张有四种基本类型，其中一种是手工制作的。考虑用纸的同时，我也在考虑作画的尺寸，作品的题材可以在这方面起指导作用。

绘画与摄影

使用照片在美术界至今仍会引起非议。我不愿意在这方面谈得太多，

但只想说，我个人认为照相机是一种不可多得的好工具，是我的视觉笔记，这就足够了。它的优点是快捷方便，适用于各种天气条件，而且我可以把照片作为资料保存起来。然后，就可以放手地让景物自己“慢慢发酵”，等待恰当的时机。画家要做的是把照片作为创作的起点，是为达到目的而采用的手段，而画家不能受制于它。照相机不过是画家的另一样工具罢了，如用得巧妙，完全可以解放画家的手脚。

素描

话说回来，无论什么东西都不能取代素描。我作画时，总是以素描开始“搭建脚手架”。素描能让我观察更专注，得以弄清细节，而且素描是防止潦草从事、避免千篇一律的一道防线。世上没有相同的两棵树。素描就是画家此时此地对此物体的描绘，是因人而异、因时而异的行为，是人的参与。素描还意味着：走出房门，到野外去！

画纸一俟选定，我通常在临摹纸上进行构图，找出困难症结。结构布局对画面的动感气势至关重要，留白是一种创造封闭、孤独、宁静抑或是空灵意境的潜在手段。我将心目中的意象描绘到纸上，用淡墨，以后若想变卦就留下更改的余地了。

色彩

这时，我将整张纸面浅浅地敷上一层淡色，以消除白地。假如想保留些白地的话，我当然使用遮盖彩液。在此之前，结构和布局一直是主要的事情，但是到此时，作为情感力量传递要素的色彩终于有了出头之日。

我铺上几层淡淡的透明色，逐渐营造出气氛来，与线条和造型相反，现在需要的是心境和感情。

我确实需要耐下心来了。

这一刻，我经常可以“放手”进入未知世界，让水彩颜料自行其是。要做的事情是跟着色彩走，思想要放开，方法要灵活，见机行事，充分利用妙手偶得的机会。这是水彩画的一大财富——能不拘一格。

此时，即当我对作品不去严加控制的时候，却经常发生最为有趣的事情。我并不知道会发生什么样的事情。我认为，假如我真的知道自己正在做什么、将会得到什么，那么就有可能失掉它，因为最终得到的会变成一种程式化的东西，而不是有创意的作品。当所有的要素集中到一起时，技术因素、情感因素、自我意识都隐退消失了。画作和画家合二为一，具有了生命！我认为这就是创作的关键：要有点儿“闯劲”，敢于一搏。如果成功了，则一切都是值得的，你获得的是活生生的艺术品。假如一切都按部就班，结果也可能是一幅合格的作品，但缺乏灵性。总而言之，这如同一场历险、一段旅程。我必须抱有可能失败的心理准备——有股锐气。

我有一些最好的作品是绝处逢生得来的。面对画纸感到绝望时，干脆放开手脚，泼墨其上，酣畅淋漓中任其流泻，看究竟会是什么结果。这样做有可能柳暗花明，使我跳出窠臼，带来新的希望。出乎意外的结果着实让人感到快乐，让创作的激情历久不竭——但代价是冒全部风险、没有任何保障。

最后，我可以用画笔对细节进行整理，让散乱的要素融为一体。

接下来的事情比较困难：画家要懂得恰如其分、适时罢手。这是最起码的常识！假如不注意适可而止，舍不得放手，弄成画蛇添足，那么作品里的任何灵性都会被扼杀殆尽。

BEGINNINGS

Like all children, I loved to draw and paint. I remember I had a passion for red and yellow; everything had to be red and yellow—houses, aircraft, people, everything. Sadly, this love of drawing and painting is usually knocked out of us as we grow up.

Growing up and reading picture books and comics, and I found I was interested as much in the drawings and how they were done, as well as the words. I started to have favourite comic strip artists, and I would copy them. Thus a process of learning and assimilation began.

Most of us, as we grow-up and mature, pass to other things, but I had encouragement and nurture from my Grandfather. He was an artist in watercolour and oils. As I remember, I can still smell the oil paint, turpentine and linseed oil.

His house was full of his pictures on the walls, and there were books to look at, and a willing, enthusiastic Grandfather talking and explaining about pictures and painting. He introduced me to books not only for the content but for the actual feel of a book, its smell, weight and binding; instilling a love for them in me.

We would go walks together and he taught me the names of the trees and the cloud formations. I suppose he just taught me to look at the world intently and to open my eyes and just look. Being a Victorian he was steeped in it, and he introduced me to what I thought was the mysterious, magical and romantic world of the Pre-Raphaelites. All that detail and colour! He also encouraged me in drawing and painting. He never criticised. But kept showing me how and why, and helped me to keep trying when inevitable discouragement came. After all, "A man's reach should exceed his grasp".

I had guidance and encouragement when young; We all need this, and so I owe my Grandfather a big thank you for his generous, giving spirit in my formative years. When it came to a career, he supported me in going to Art College.

Art School meant horizons broadened and techniques to be explored; It was all new and fresh. Drawing seemed to take precedence, and the early influences and the love of illustrated books led me into illustration.

INFLUENCES

Early influences were the great Edwardian book illustrators such as Arthur Rackham. I loved his sinuous, gothic creations and Japanese influenced muted tones.

Later, other artists came to be admired, assimilated and absorbed, such as the Romantic wild west paintings of Frederick Remington; Caspar David Friedrich for his German mystical landscapes, and Andrew Wyeth. The subject matter of Friedrich and Wyeth was the fascination, as well as their marvellous technique. When I first saw their work it was such a thrill. It was like a blow to the heart and spirit, like a shot of adrenaline. I have also grown to love Rembrandt more and more for his depth and humanity, and Vermeer for his perfect stillness.

EARLY WATERCOLOURS

I didn't find illustration satisfactory artistically or financially, so I started to experiment with ink, watercolour and watercolour papers.

At this time, I had married and my wife and I lived in London; and so I taught for a few years. This time was very frustrating for me, but my wife, Anne, came to my rescue, as she often does, and released me from teaching by becoming the income earner, giving me the time to find my way.

At first I did romantic style Frederick Remington paintings, first on illustration board, and then, as I evolved and learnt watercolour, on watercolour

paper. I mixed pen and ink with broad washes, and gradually, as I found not only a style but a voice of my own, the work became more painterly and less derivative. How all this takes time and support!

When we moved from London to Worcestershire, and withdrew away from illustration, I continued to evolve my watercolour style as I started to look at landscape. My old source of inspiration had been literary, and now it became the landscape I lived in.

THEMES AND CREATION

Light

Light and times of day have been a constant source of inspiration, dusk especially, and even moonlight. English light is not full of strong contrasts normally, as in sunnier climes. English light is about subtle hues and tonal graduations. It is that point when, at dusk, the light is about to go. The fleeting moment, caught between seeing and not seeing, that is what is so exciting to try and capture. It is this transient, transforming quality of the fading light that is so emotionally powerful, illusive, intangible, sometimes melancholy and yet very beautiful. Light, or the lack of it, is the great transformer.

It also holds out the challenge, technically, as well as emotionally, to see how far watercolour, and I, can go. I believe the watercolour medium can be more than broad washes, wet on wet and colour laid on. It can be deeper. It can rival oil paint! I am not after spontaneity, which watercolour certainly can have as one of its joys, but mood, depth and atmosphere.

Evocation Of Mood And Colour

I try to hold on, maybe "freeze" the emotional moment. This links with colour and its use. I tend to use a limited colour range as a means to express simply my emotional response; and I liken it to one of my favourite musical forms, the string quartet. The tonal ranges are limited, but within its limits how much can be expressed! The potential is enormous. The limitation is the challenge. The best paintings for me have been the most simple and most direct.

It seems to be a two sided thing for me; Lyrical and hard-edged. The lyrical comes out in evocative use of light in landscape, and the other aspect is to do with my love of drawing objects in the landscape. Both, however, have to do with the passage of time and the transience of things in this temporal world. That is what makes things so precious, it's impermanence. It makes me look to the eternal. I love things caught in time, frozen and still—this is creation's beauty.

Structures

I love structures in the landscape; barns, old trucks, relics, farmhouses, ridges of trees; the man-made marks on the land. Again it has all the hallmarks of constant change in it. The creative process often starts with that emotional response to a shape seen, an abstract flash; the shape of something that excites. One example is the old Scammell truck. It was the nose that I liked. It seemed to be lurking; it was ugly, a brute, and yet beautiful and a delight to draw.

Another time it could be the textures, colour or weathering on a barn that triggers me off.

Old oaks and all trees are just a joy to draw and paint. They are marvellous sentinels and witnesses to the passage of time.

Location of Work

Most of my work has been within my local area. I haven't travelled far and wide for subject matter, but have stayed close to where I live for my inspiration.

Having lived in Worcestershire for over twenty years has made me look deeper at familiar places; The farms, fields, the local willow brook, the trees and barns and the set of the land, the bones of it at wintertime. I love the

structure of the trees in winter, getting down to how they grow. My area doesn't have spectacular things in it; I have to look, watch and wait and contemplate it! I have soaked in its atmosphere and absorbed it. All this takes time and patience and a watchful, receptive eye.

I have passed by many places for years, found nothing of interest, and then the emotional, illusive thing happens, and the ordinary becomes extraordinary. For example, the "Fairlight" barn had been passed and observed for years; slowly falling into a state of decrepitude. I watched its doors and roof gradually collapsing, the holes in its structure photographically recorded, and then, after years, it seemed ready to be rendered in picture form. I "moved" a wall out of the way, as well as a cottage, for dramatic effect, and put in the puddles to let in the sky reflected on the ground. The process for "Fairlight" probably took ten years.

Worcestershire and Herefordshire have been the places that have nourished me over the years, and in the looking I have seen the hand of the Great Creator God at work, and have marvelled. The more I look, the more I see, and the stranger and more mysterious it gets.

In the past year or so, I have had the opportunity to go further afield, to South Africa and France. These were brief visits, but the contrast has been interesting and has started to make me change; to make me look anew.

I have enjoyed going back to using figures in landscape, in my "wilderness" paintings and hope to expand in this area, and hopefully travel to some desert areas in the future to experience the light and atmosphere. At the moment this has been in my mind, heart and imagination.

TECHNIQUE

Once the idea, the inspiration comes, I have to consider the practical methods to get it on paper: What types of paper, size and colour.

Paper

All papers have their intrinsic qualities, and can be crucial to the final result. I have about four basic papers that I use, one of them is hand made. Whilst considering the paper, I am also choosing the size to work on. The subjects tend to point the way in this.

Drawing and Photography

The use of photos can still cause a stir and murmurings in the art world. I don't intend to get into this too deeply. Suffice it to say that I personally find the camera an invaluable working tool, my visual note taker. It has the advantage of being fast and portable in all weathers, and I can store away the reference. I am then left free to let things "stew" and wait for the right timing. The thing to do is to use photos as a starting point, a means to an end, and not let them use you. The camera is just another tool of the trade, which can be a liberator if used with wisdom.

Drawing

Nothing, however, replaces drawing and I nearly always start a work with the "scaffolding" of a drawing. Drawing makes me look intently to clarify, and it is a hedge against the dangers of superficiality and formula. No tree is like another. Drawing is relationship with what I am drawing; personal and immediate. It's involvement. Drawing also means being outdoors in the open air!

Once the paper is chosen, I usually work out composition and drawing problems on tracing paper. Placement is crucial for the dynamics of a picture. Space is a potent tool for creating a mood of isolation, claustrophobia, stillness or airiness. I transfer the image onto the paper, lightly, to allow for changes of mind.

Colour

At this point, I put a very light wash over all the paper to get rid of the whiteness. I do use masking fluid if I want to retain any areas of white. Structure and mapping out has been the main thing up to this point, but

now colour comes into its own as the element that conveys the emotional charge.

I gradually build up the atmosphere with pale glazes of wash; its evocation of mood and emotion now, as opposed to line and form.

I really need to be patient now.

At this point I can often "let go" into the unknown and watercolour can have its way. The thing to do is go with it, to be open now and flexible, using any happy technical accidents to advantage. This is watercolours' great asset—its fluidity.

Often the most interesting can happen now, when I'm not in total control. I don't quite know what is going to happen. I believe if I really know what I am doing, where I am going, then I have lost it because the end product is a formula and not a creation. When all the elements come together, the technical and emotional, self consciousness falls away. The work and I become one and it has life! I think this is the creative key; to be on the "edge", to risk it all at this point. When it works, then it is all worth it and you have something with that life in it. If it is all control, I may end up with a competent work, but lack the life it needs. It is, after all, an adventure and a journey. I have to be prepared to have the courage to maybe lose it—that edge.

Some of my best work has come when I have despaired of it, let go, poured a colour all over it, let it run to see what happens. This can open new doors, knock me out of a rut and bring fresh possibilities. It is the surprises that make it fun, keep the creative juices flowing—but the price to pay is to risk all and be vulnerable.

Finally, I might draw with brushes some details to pull disparate elements together.

Then comes that difficult thing to do; knowing when to stop and leave it alone. This is fundamental! Any life can be wrung out of a picture by overworking and fussiness, by not discerning when to stop and leave it.



追 赶 / On the Chase
191 × 279mm 1991



无主的牧场 / Free Range
286 × 381mm 1991



黑 文 / Haven
286 × 381mm 1992



水 盆 / The Water Trough
191 × 279mm 1993



天 光 / Fairlight
330 × 432mm 1993



蛇麻草田 / The Hop Field
191 × 279mm 1993