

## Free art history courses



During the depths of last year's winter lockdown, I decided to amuse myself with an online art history course. Being too mean to spend money unnecessarily, I searched online for free courses and was amazed to find what good quality free resources were out there.

**My first course on Dutch painting of the Golden Age was provided by the Open University**, which offers a number of free courses on a variety of subjects. For art history just go to [www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue) and browse through the section on History & The Arts. I found the course I did well - organised and informative and ideally suited to self-study, if a little narrow in its teaching style.

**My next attempt was a course run by MoMA, the Museum of Modern Art in New York.** Entitled In the Studio: Post-war Abstract Painting, this was not only on a very different subject but had quite a different teaching style including videos and studio exercises to try yourself. I have to confess to doing only a couple of the studio exercises, but I found the course very stimulating and finished with a much better understanding of abstract

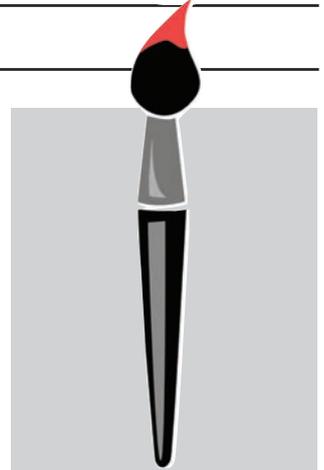
painting. To try this for yourself, go to [www.coursera.org/learn/painting](http://www.coursera.org/learn/painting) On hearing what I'd been up to, some old friends expressed an interest in doing something similar, and as we were all "locked down" and unable to meet up socially, it seemed a good idea for the five of us to do something together online.

**The course I found at Annenberg Learner (under Classroom Resources!) was called Art Through Time: A Global View** and consisted of 13 units which did indeed cover art across the globe and through the ages. It was extremely wide ranging, introducing us to many new ideas and art forms and structured in such a way that we had plenty to talk about at our weekly Zoom sessions. Having all watched the video and read the supplementary text each week, we dipped into as many extra sections as we had time for on individual objects. On Zoom we then took turns to present the "specialist" area we had researched further. It was so much fun that we are about to have another go, this time with a series of 11 short art history courses validated by the Sorbonne (at <https://academy.artexplora.org/en/>).



### Face to face!

Juliette Dodd's session on portraits on March 17th will give you the opportunity to both watch her at work and have a go yourself. Then our Saturday workshop with a life model on April 2nd will give you the time to develop your newly acquired skills further.



## TIP OF THE MONTH



Do you ever find yourself mid-painting with a handful of brushes and nowhere to put them? Two of our most experienced members have found their own solutions. John Hamilton recommends the use of Oasis (usually used for flower arranging!). A few holes can easily be pushed into this to make the ideal brush stand. Graham Lock has made himself 2 simple brush stands by drilling holes into blocks of wood – one for clean brushes and one for brushes already in use. SIMPLE!



# Dreaming of sunshine...

## ALL CHANGE!



There was much disappointment, when we had to cancel our Play with Clay session due to high Covid numbers. However, when we had to fill another slot at short notice when Pat Lock was unfortunately unable to present her planned session, it was the obvious replacement. Numbers attending were low, and none of us had ever tried modelling a figure in clay before, but it was great fun! In fact, we were so sorry to have to stop at 9 that we have asked Clive Dand to run a 4 hour workshop on clay modelling with a life model next year.



## ART ON THE RADIO!

You might think the last place you'd find a good art programme would be on the radio, but you'd be wrong! Radio 4's Moving Pictures takes a fresh look as some of our best known works of art. The series is still available online and you can follow the links to images of the painting under discussion in each episode. The attention to detail is fascinating.



In the end only four of us went to Crete, and we were all rather apprehensive of the covid regime we would have to face but in the end all went well and the tests were fairly easy to obtain and did not cost too much. .

Clive had been to Vamos before and knew the lie of the land so we got our hire car and made our way to the hotel. It was an easy drive and quite scenic. The hotel was small and very friendly with a lovely pool. Just up my street. Vamos town had no shortage of restaurants so we were all catered for on that front.

We had already discussed an itinerary which basically entailed breakfast followed by short drive to a painting location, 4 hours of painting followed by lunch in a local taverna, followed by sleep, followed by swim in pool, followed by dinner followed by sleep. Not bad, eh! We had a few adventures too. It makes me giggle every time I think of this: According to Clive, we had to take a short walk down a footpath to a very paintable church cut into the rock. It was like walking down a vertical dry stream bed - full of boulders and

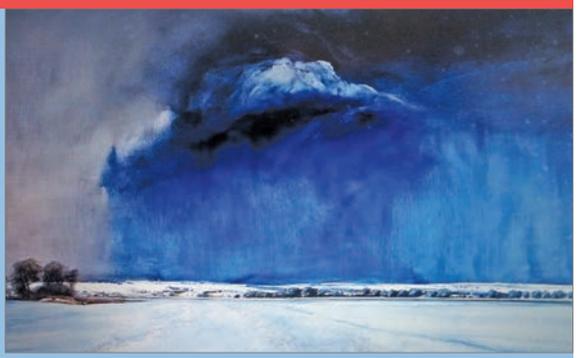
stones. My friend had brought along trolley to carry her equipment, and it still makes me laugh thinking of her face as she negotiated the route.

The beach was lovely as was the sea. I did endless watercolour studies of the sea - all the same. I really enjoyed the oil painting we did, and although it was hot, we did manage to find shade. It was interesting to learn from each other. There were great open landscapes to paint as well as historic buildings and pastoral scenes.

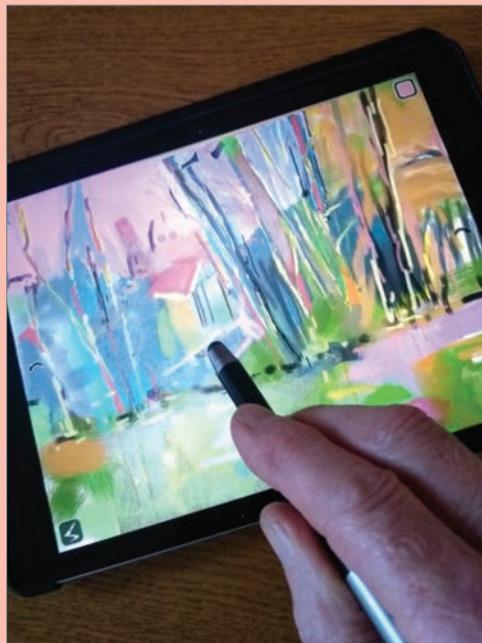
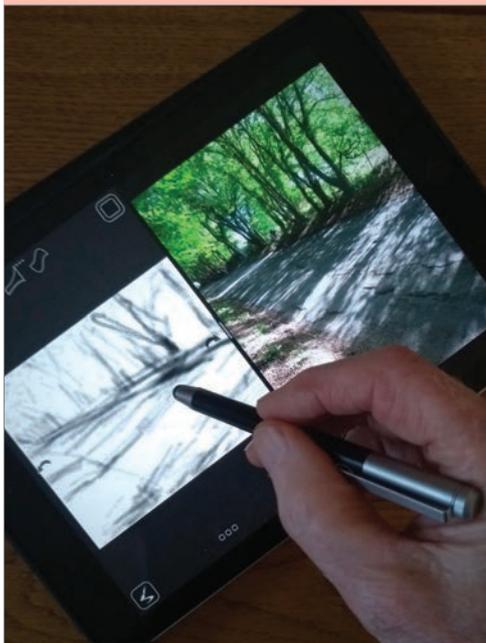
The best thing though was perhaps bringing these unfinished works home and spending the winter working on them and thinking of those hot sunny days. You can see two versions of the same thing here. I think you will agree version two is better. It's great to keep going on a painting without worrying about ruining it. Looking back now, I can't believe it was so hot. Crete is a lovely island for painting, but I would encourage everyone to get out painting wherever they can. Once we restart our summer programme of outdoor painting, we can imagine we are in Crete despite the cold.

## Take a look at...

the Scottish artist James Morrison. Born and trained in Glasgow he spent most of his life painting the dramatic skies and landscape of the West coast of Scotland. A recent documentary about him entitled 'The Eye of the Storm' won a BAFTA and is still available to view on BBC iplayer. It shows how he worked, and the close relationship he had with the Scottish landscape, working en plein air on his dramatic local and Arctic landscapes right up to his death in 2020 at the age of 88.



# Experiments with my iPad



Colourful Sketch from Cornwall

Painting and drawing Apps were being introduced in around 2010 and I thought they would be very useful when I was travelling around. I could “produce” sketches and paintings with virtually no equipment!

In 2012 the RA put on a show by David Hockney and I was very impressed by his iPad paintings of the Yorkshire Wolds. He used an app called Brushes which was quite good but more suited to watercolour. After a little research I found an app called Inspire Pro which was aimed at oil painting, pastels and drawing. The main feature was the ability to blend the colours on the screen. My other purchase was a stylus which is much better than your fingers for drawing/painting on the screen.

Inspire Pro is quite complicated so needs a few hours of practice when you start but the controls are fairly intuitive and you probably will only ever use 10% of the “tools”. These include 10 types of brushes, palette knives, 10 different pencils, 10 airbrushes, 5 soft and 5 hard pastels, rubbers, shapes and dry brushes (for blending). All the tools

are available in any size.

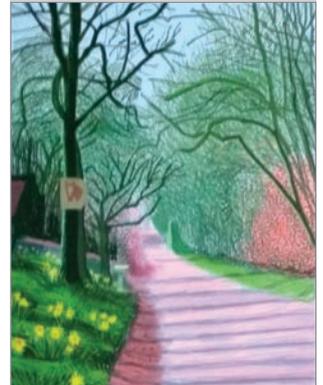
Colour wheels and pallets give infinite choice. And you can even match the colours you have already used. There are 7 type of stroke with varying pressure, transparency, taper, angle etc. There are undo and redo buttons so you can try things out and go back several stages if you want to! Another useful feature is split screen so you can have a photo one side which you want to copy.

I have found that there are far too many options and choosing everything distracts from the joy of painting. So I have limited the options I use and created my own colour palettes which greatly speeds up the process. I also found that quality large prints are very expensive especially if you want to print onto canvas.

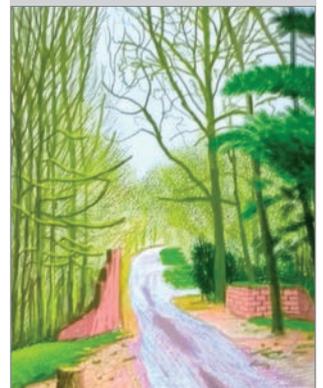
There are lots of apps to choose from and lots of online reviews giving pros and cons of them all. It’s certainly fun to try them, especially when travelling, so get out your tablets iPads and give it a go! If anyone wants any more information, please do contact me.

John Hamilton  
j.hamilton007@yahoo.com

## DAVID HOCKNEY IPAD PAINTINGS



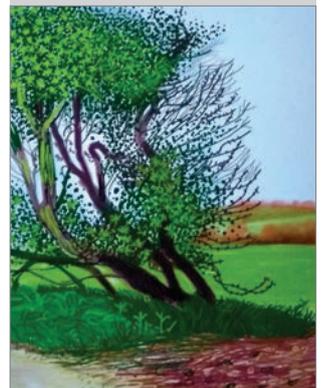
119.20 25 MARCH



119.21 30 MARCH



119.22 1 APRIL



119.22 12 APRIL