

## Blackies Patch

(watercolour on stretched hot pressed paper)

I developed this composition from a old black and white photograph I had taken, adding more pots of plants and wild flowers for interest. I was attracted to the viewpoint looking up the steps at the same level as the cat, who has a big walled garden to explore.

As you can see I drew in a good deal of the foliage first and worked out my shadow areas on the steps.



The colour balance was very important in this garden scene where there was to be a predominance of green foliage. So I started with the pots and flowers, then chose a warm sandstone tone for the steps, adding the shadows which brought the steps to life. The violet pansies were chosen with the intention of them complementing the yellow-greens yet to be painted. I enjoy building colour relationships as I go in this way.

I masked off some foreground grasses and stray stems on the path.



The mass of foliage on the left was developed, with light to dark layering in and around the leaves, with deep shadows around the shrub trunks to give the picture needed depth. Softer foliage and dappled shading completes the screen of green at the top right, which gently fades away.

I selected a vivid warm blue for the foreground pot, intended to be a focal point to guide the viewers attention to the cat.



Then came the foreground where I removed the masking fluid, painting in the grasses and ferns. The ivy clad wall was firstly treated with wet into wet washes, then I worked into the leaves. Deep shadows were vital behind the foxgloves and fern in this area for depth and to bring the chimney pot towards the viewer.

I kept areas of the right bottom corner unpainted for a more vignetted effect, not wanting to fill all the corners with colour, which might have been a little overwhelmingly green.



Finally the cat was painted in acrylic inks which I find more effective than watercolour in rendering blacks, being able also to introduce opaque sheen onto the fur.

Choosing a predominantly black cat was vital, as a lighter colouring would not have stood out in the painting effectively enough. The part white face shows the facial features more clearly.

