

Honesty

Acrylic on canvas 40.5 by 40.5cm

Inspiration for this painting comes from the vibrantly changing colours and textures which honesty seedheads go through in their transition towards releasing their seeds.

The ground shading was established first, using a light yellow green tone over the whole of the canvas. Then other tones were scumbled on top, using a flat hogs hair brush in a scrubbing action, dark over light and light over dark.

This scrubbing action was fresh and exciting for me, being rarely used in watercolour work. I painted a sharp edged contrast shaping in the bottom left area thinking of hard and soft edges I might want to play with later on.



A close up of the top left to show the scumbling.



Next I wanted to draw my design on top, so chose pastel pencils to do this, changing the shades to show up against the light and dark of the varied tonal background.

The pastel has the advantage of being easily brushed off, as opposed to pencil or charcoal which would leave a muddy residue.

This is a close up of the drawing, which is to be a layering of seed head stems.



Starting in the bottom left corner I started painting in the seed heads and stems, working some seed heads to completion, and blocking in the others in preparation for the details. It was exciting to see the colour relationships starting to evolve against the ground - a key aim of this painting, with plenty of room for experimentation.



The finished result.

I found the idea of using hard and soft edges unworkable in practice, so I compromised by leaving some of the background seedheads as bold flat shapes. These are some of my favourite areas of the painting now.



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