

Your Letters...

ART OF DARKNESS

RE: *Controlling Your Tones*, Issue 334



I read Martin Kinnear's article in the January issue with great

interest, particularly because it was illustrated with work by my favourite artists, Hammershøi and Rembrandt. The article really made me think that I should do more tonal exercises to sharpen up my observation.

The recent inclement weather presented me with an opportunity that was not exactly welcome, but that needed to be taken advantage of: my village suffered a power cut for 10 hours.

I had planned to paint that evening but without my daylight bulbs this was out of the question. As I sat by the glowing fire with candles spread along the hearth, I started looking around the room at the various objects scattered about the fireplace and mantelpiece. My eye fell upon a small arrangement of old ceramic inkwells and a mustard pot, lit from below by candles.

I found my sketchpad and hooked a small LED torch to my jumper to shine onto the paper and began the study. The temptation to put in lines and edges that I really could not see was great but I made a concerted effort to really look and concentrate on the tonal values of what I was seeing. I spent the next hour or so blissfully engaged in a very rewarding exercise. Who would of thought it – get rid of the lights so you can really see better!

Glynn Bulman, via email



THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

RE: *The Healing Power of Art*, Issue 334

The best things I read over the Christmas holiday both came from the January issue of *Artists & Illustrators*. I chose to buy the magazine when looking for some inspiration to get me watercolour painting again.

Six months ago I was put onto the lung transplant list due to respiratory failure caused by cystic fibrosis. Until recently, I was still able to follow my main hobby of wildlife and landscape photography. In the last two months, however, I have become too unwell to continue, so I thought about returning to painting – a hobby I had in my late teens.

I bought three art magazines, but discovered your article on Andrew Marr's return to painting post-stroke, along with the article about Barbara Price's visual diary idea that helped her come to terms with being diagnosed with cancer, to be hugely inspirational. Well done on covering this vital, if perhaps slightly unexpected, link between art and serious illness in such a positive light. There was lots of good material in your magazine to give me food for thought in the coming weeks.

The disappointment of having to give up photography has already been lessened by the relaxing benefits of painting and reflecting on the beautiful subjects I like to paint, which also give pleasure to my wife, family and friends around me. Keep up the good work with your great magazine!

Dom Kavanagh, via email

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

RE: *New Year, New Project*, Issue 334

I wanted to let you know how the January 2014 issue has inspired me. After reading the article by Frances Hatch I am using her ideas to prepare for a retreat pilgrimage to Jerusalem in June. I have already begun my

blog using Wordpress as she recommended and created sketchbook diaries on paper and my iPad. Her approach to funding has informed my applications for bursaries and encouraged me to think beyond my usual boundaries as to how I will use my experiences on this exciting journey.

Julie Burnett-Kirk, www.julieburnettkirk.com

A CONFIDENT SWITCH

I felt I had to write to thank you for giving me the confidence to put myself forward for a commission to be done in watercolour. For years I have worked quite successfully in oils, while watercolour was just for fun and occasional sketches. Although I have been buying your magazine for years, it is only recently that I have really concentrated on articles related to this difficult medium. The work, pictured, was for a Christmas card based on my client's building in Glasgow.

Robert Young, Newmains, Lanarkshire



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