

Special Competition Issue: 100 Prize-Winning Pastels Inside

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And the Awards Go To...

Dawn Emerson
Don Rantz
Kim Lordier
Terry Donahue
Wende Caporale
Paul Murray
Sam Goodsell
Matthew J. Rezac
Robert Jessel
Lori Frazier
And Many More!

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Self-Portrait With Avignon II (detail; 25 1/2 x 19 1/2) by Wende Caporale

Second Place

Jennifer Gardner

By her own admission, Jennifer Gardner (jennifergardner.com) became “totally obsessed with pastels” when she began classes with a local pastelist. Previously a lawyer in the U.K., Gardner moved to Florida with her husband and found that re-qualifying to be a U.S. attorney didn’t interest her. Instead, she decided to take up painting and hasn’t looked back since.

Her teacher, pastelist Linda Obremski, introduced her to an impressionist style. “That really lit my candle,” recalls Gardner. Although she still works in an impressionist style, she has also developed a more abstract way of painting that’s all her own. “Sometimes you just need to push yourself in areas that aren’t familiar and see what happens. Perhaps I would never have gone down this route had I continued using the paper I was using,” Gardner says. “When I switched to Sennelier La Carte, I found I could get these really light, interesting effects, which was not a way I painted before. So I thought I could do something more abstract with this.”

For her abstract paintings, Gardner often begins with subjects that she has already painted impressionistically, such as poppy fields, vineyards or orange groves. This way, the images are in her mind and she isn’t hindered in expression by the photographic references she finds useful for her other work. “Most of my paintings of orange groves were impressionistic, but then I decided to do a red and orange series to explore how far I could push the use of a pretty monochromatic palette,” she says.

When she began working on *Orange Grove II*, Gardner knew there was going to be a horizon, a sky, a fore-, middle and background. “I began by running all over the paper with different shades of colors that were roughly in areas where I thought the various elements of the landscape were going to be,” she says. “I put reds in the fore- and middle-grounds and used lighter, paler colors in the areas I wanted to recede



Orange Grove II
(24x18)

into the background. The first layer was applied very lightly using Schmincke and Moun Vision pastels on their sides.”

Gardner then applied heavier layers where she wanted greater emphasis, using different values and hues, carving out a more organized pattern of shapes. Sometimes she exploited these emerging shapes to represent something, a tree, for example. In that case, she sketched around them lightly and intermittently with a Nupastel in a different color to reinforce them. Occasionally, she went inside the edge of that outline, enhancing it with shading.

Gardner often finishes a painting the same day it began, but she’s a careful artist. “I’m very cautious to not go too far—just a few extra strokes are enough to ruin what I’ve done,” she says.