

## FEATURED ARTIST: NICHOLAS PALMER



My name is Nicholas Palmer, I am an abstract and multi media artist. I moved to Devon about eight years ago to a hamlet near Broadwoodwidge. I joined Drawn to the Valley in 2017 and held my first Open Studios in 2018. As of September 2018 I became a Committee member, I am also on the programming sub-committee for the Tavistock Group of Artists.

I grew up in the Surrey countryside during the 1960's spending a lot of my time cycling and walking around the North Downs. I have always had a love of nature and the world around me. I lived near to an entomologist who worked at the Natural History Museum and thoroughly enjoyed checking moth traps with him at weekends.

I always appreciated art and was fascinated with how artists achieved different effects in their work. I also enjoyed the art and craft lessons at my first school. I never showed any real inclination to art but enjoyed colouring and creating patterns on squared maths paper.

At technical college I was responsible for a display on evolution for an open day and created many drawings with my team to illustrate the exhibit. I started pen and ink drawing seriously and continuously when I was about 14 years old. To start with I just doodled and saw shapes developing before me and then created detailed drawings. These were mainly fantasy and abstract drawings most of which came straight from my imagination. Most of my work today comes from my head and usually develops as I go from a very rough sketch.

Right: **Metallic Bonanza**, blown acrylic paint on a stretched canvas (14" x 11")

Below left: **The Conversation**, pen and ink drawing in a mount

I hold an earth science degree, a teaching certificate (post compulsory education) and a diploma in online learning. I have worked in many industries as an IT Manager, Training Manager and Project Manager. As such I travelled a lot and spent most of my evenings in hotels creating pen and ink drawings. I use water colour paper a lot in my drawings for the texture and bleed effects. I tried drawing on canvas whilst the result looked good however I managed to kill about five pens in the process.

When I moved to Devon I joined the art group at Bratton Clovelly and it was at this point that I seriously started learning about and using colour. I dabbled with water colours and gouache and then discovered acrylic paints. So I have developed my skills through sessions held by professional artists, books, videos and workshops.

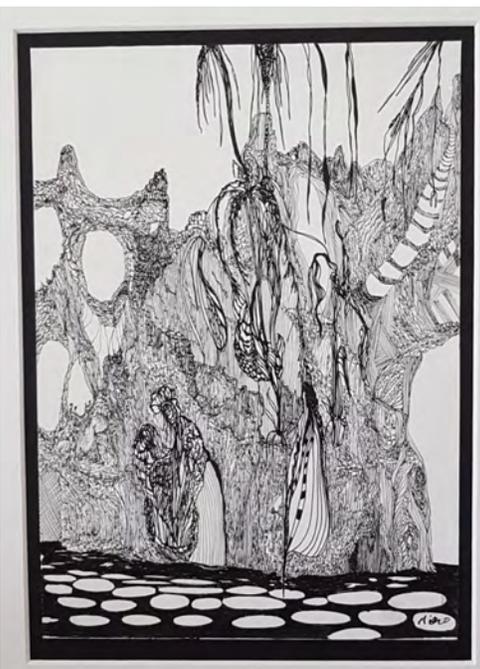
### ASK THE ARTIST

#### What's the best work related thing you have done recently?

I recently held an open day up at the Art and Framing Centre in Kelly Bray in order to interest people in some workshops that I will be running on Tuesdays starting the 23rd of April on Abstract Art and Associated Techniques. I did not know what to expect and met some lovely people who were interesting and showed me a few things.

#### What irritates you?

Excruciatingly slow broadband in the Devon countryside





Above: **Helter Skelter Landscape**,  
Mounted pen and ink

My artistic inspiration has come from artists such as Robert Delauney, August Macke, the Cubists and the Surrealists and physically the Earth itself in the form of Geology, Palaeontology and Mineralogy.

Today most of my work is done in Acrylic ink or paint. I am fascinated by shapes as well as colours. I find the veins in insects a rich source of material especially if colour is included.

Slices of rock seen under a microscope can again produce really interesting cells and colours. I spent some time working on "dirty" pour painting and again there is the page two of two amalgamation of colour and cells. A lot of my work is created using palette knives. I love the way I can mix lovely rich thick colours on the canvas and obtain some great textures. I also use many acrylic media including gel paste, paper paste, crackle paste and modelling paste. Some really wonderful textures and effects can be created with these particularly when looking at rock formations and crystals.

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I currently have two projects in the pipeline, the first is a series of workshops in which artists will be able to explore abstract techniques within their own projects. I will be travelling around Devon and Cornwall and exploring the beaches or industrial heritage of the two counties and creating

artwork based around what I see and feel. I will also be incorporating geology maps in some pictures for a textual and colourful focus.

### What motivates and inspires you?

This wonderful world of ours from the large scale formation of mountains and islands to rock faces and rocks. The evidence of previous life in the form of micro and macro fossils, the minerals, soils, and the flora and fauna. Art helps me make sense of the world, I would be very confused without it.

### What is your favourite place?

Rather than a favourite place I have a favourite environment which is tropical and subtropical forests in all its forms along with the smells and textures and the plants and creatures that inhabit it.

### Who do you most admire?

M.C. Escher, it was his works that really fired my imagination and inspired my drawing. Also outside of art, William Dampier who was known as a pirate naturalist and wrote about travel and nature.

### What's your favourite book and film?

I have read a Rabble in Arms by Kenneth Roberts at least 25 times. I am fascinated by the Napoleonic campaigns and love the novels by Bernard Cornwell following the exploits of Richard Sharpe. As far as a film is concerned Top Gun, Goodbye Mr Chips and Paint your Wagon would be fairly high on the list.

### Who would you most like to meet?

Alfred Russell Wallace, Charles Darwin, Richard Spruce, Henry Bates and Marianne North preferably together. They were acquaintances and in their own ways achieved great things in extremely difficult environments. In some cases their health suffered considerably as a result of their travels.

Below: **Puma Constellation**, a "dirty" acrylic pour on a stretched canvas (16" x 20"), named by my wife

