



BATSFORD

Learn to Paint Wildlife *Quickly*

Hazel Soan



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King of the Kalahari

Watercolour on Khadi paper (35.5 x 51cm/14 x 20in)

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Contents

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

How to Paint Wildlife

CHAPTER 2

Techniques for Speed

CHAPTER 3

Pose and Proportion

CHAPTER 4

Surface Detail: Fur, Feathers, Hair and Markings

CHAPTER 5

Light and Colouring

CHAPTER 6

Background and Setting

CHAPTER 7

Back in the Studio

Epilogue:

The Thrill of the Chase

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Painting wildlife has been a passion of mine ever since I first set foot on African soil, and I am delighted to share my experience with you in this book. It is thrilling to paint wildlife in situ, where, as for cheetah, speed is of the essence!

The animals shown here are the ones I have encountered, and hail therefore from Africa, Europe and North America, but the painting advice applies universally.

Wild animals offer less familiar subjects than those we regularly encounter, so one tends to look quite carefully at the shapes, forms and colours and, as these are the elements that make up all paintings, wildlife presents an excellent subject to choose in order to develop your painting skills. The aim of this book is to show you how to paint wildlife, but it will also enable you to paint anything else.



Prairie Dog

Watercolour (20 x 12.5cm/8 x 5in)

Seeing animals in the wild is a privilege, and sketching makes it even more memorable.



Sleeping Lions

Watercolour (56 x 76cm/22 x 30in)

In Africa an abundance of wildlife still lives in its natural habitat and, as this is where most of my wildlife encounters have taken place, I make no apology that there is a predominance of African wildlife roaming the pages of this book!

Chapter 1

How to Paint Wildlife



Being alert

You may think that painting animals in the wild must be difficult because animals are always on the move, but it is more achievable than you might expect. The animals are alert, this is true, watching and listening and ready for action, but they also stand still for prolonged periods and many, especially the big cats, sit or lie down in the shade for hours at a time, offering plenty of opportunity for study, sketching and painting. It is also perfectly possible to paint wild animals on the move.



Kalahari sketches

Watercolour

Meerkats are renowned for their still, sentry-like stance, turning only their head to check for danger, but even when they scamper about it is possible to paint them (and a ground squirrel nearby!).



Approaching the Waterhole

Watercolour (20 x 28cm/8 x 11in)

Animals in a herd offer repeat poses throughout the group – if the one you are painting moves on, another close by will take up the pose for you to continue.

The need for speed

As your subject may alter its pose or disappear from view at any moment, there is, understandably, a need for speedy application. To sketch the shape of an animal, a pencil or pen can do the trick, but painting includes colour, and even background, and for these, watercolour is ideal. Being practical and efficient for painting at speed, most of the paintings in this book are painted with watercolour.



Elk in Yellowstone Park

2B pencil (14 x 28cm/5½ x 11in)

The shapes of the elk are outlined in pencil and the form indicated by hatch-shading.



Impala Alert

Watercolour (20 x 25.5cm/8 x 10in)

With a brush and watercolour the shape can be quickly rendered, with the form and colouring brought in simultaneously.