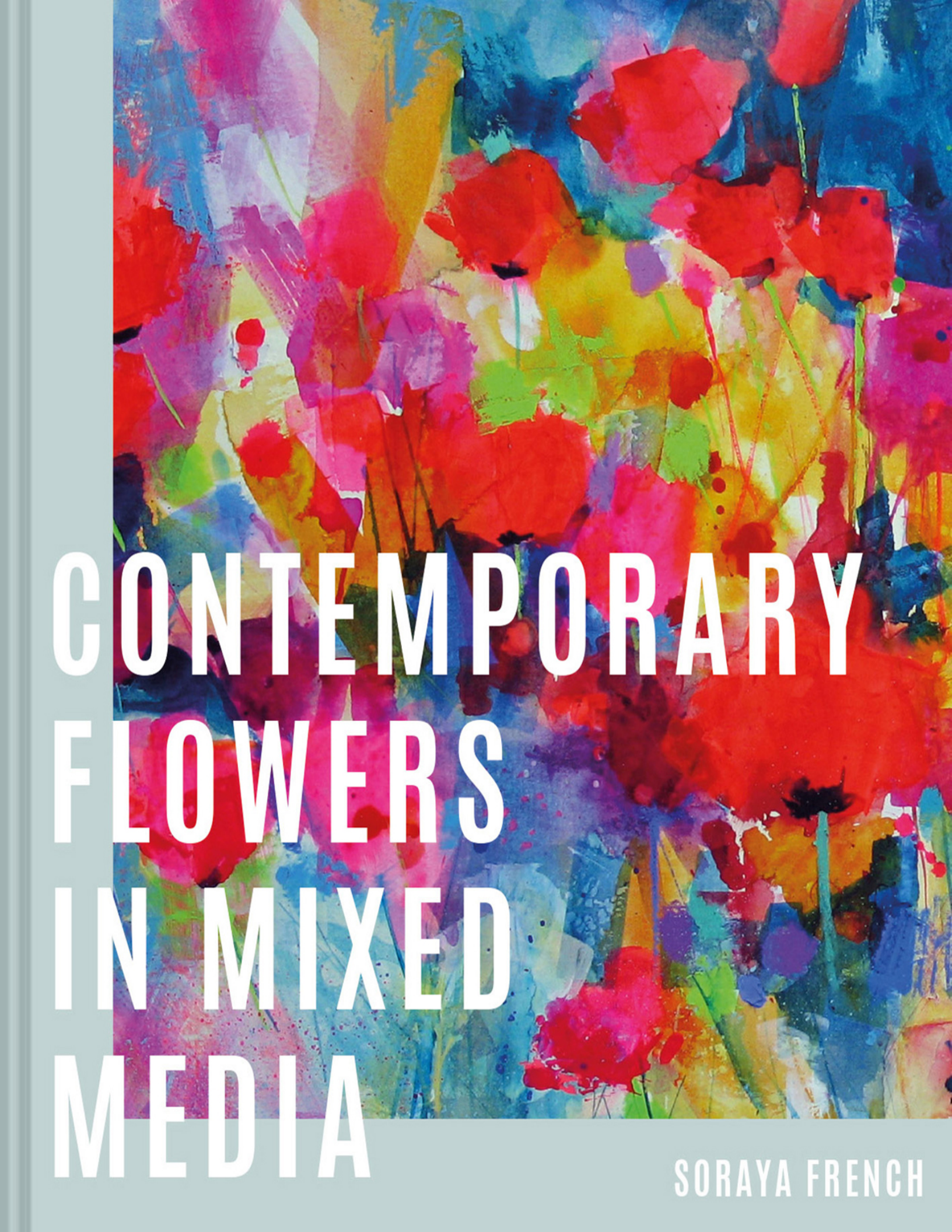
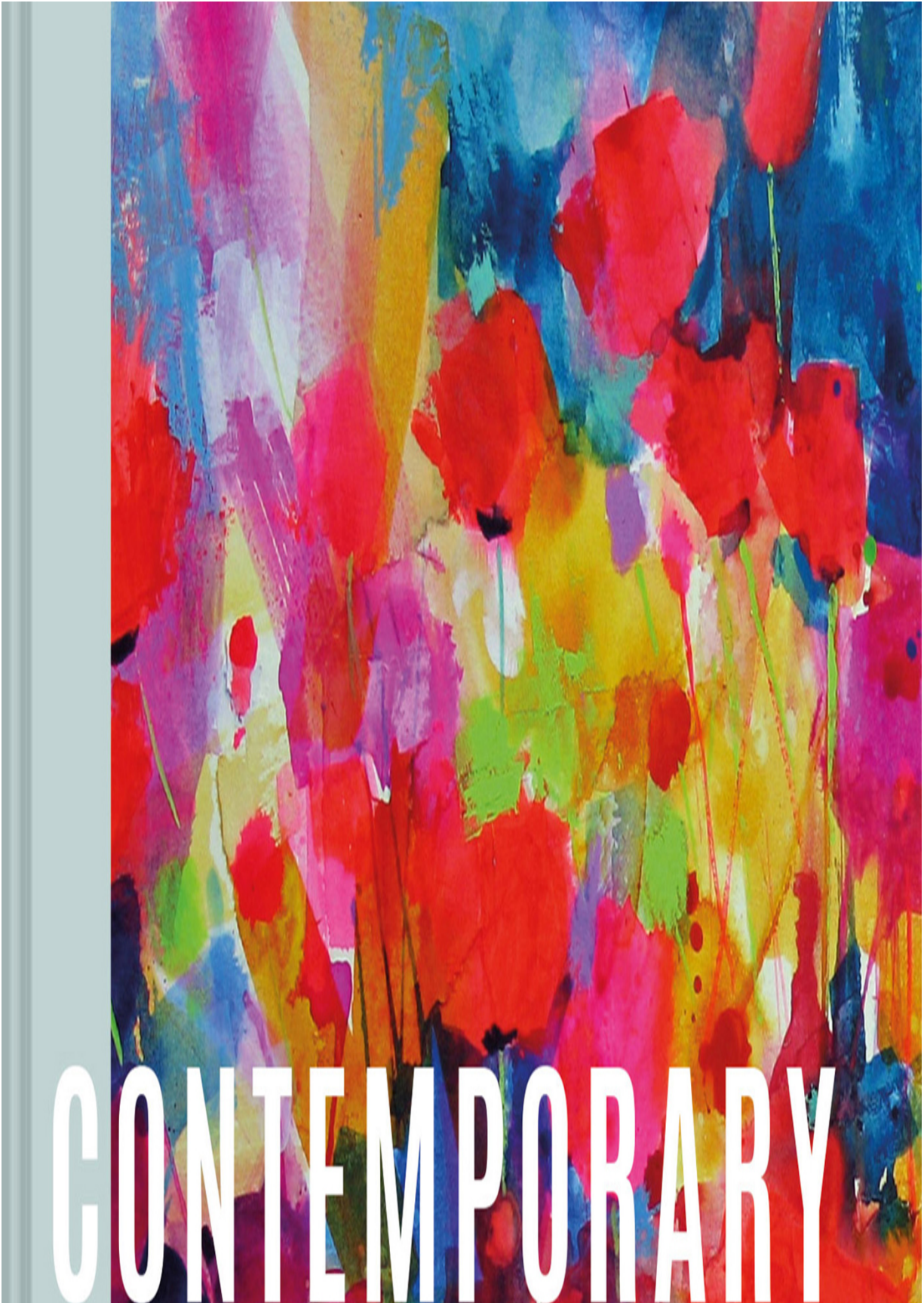




CONTEMPORARY FLOWERS IN MIXED MEDIA

SORAYA FRENCH



An abstract mixed media artwork featuring vibrant, layered colors including red, blue, green, and yellow. The composition includes soft, painterly textures and sharp, splattered edges, with some areas resembling floral shapes. The artwork is set against a light grey background.

FLOWERS IN MIXED MEDIA

SORAYA FRENCH

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BATSFORD

To my beloved trio, Tim, Yasmin and Saasha, whose mixture of gentle encouragement and brutally honest criticism motivates me to try harder. Without their help and support none of this would be possible. xxx

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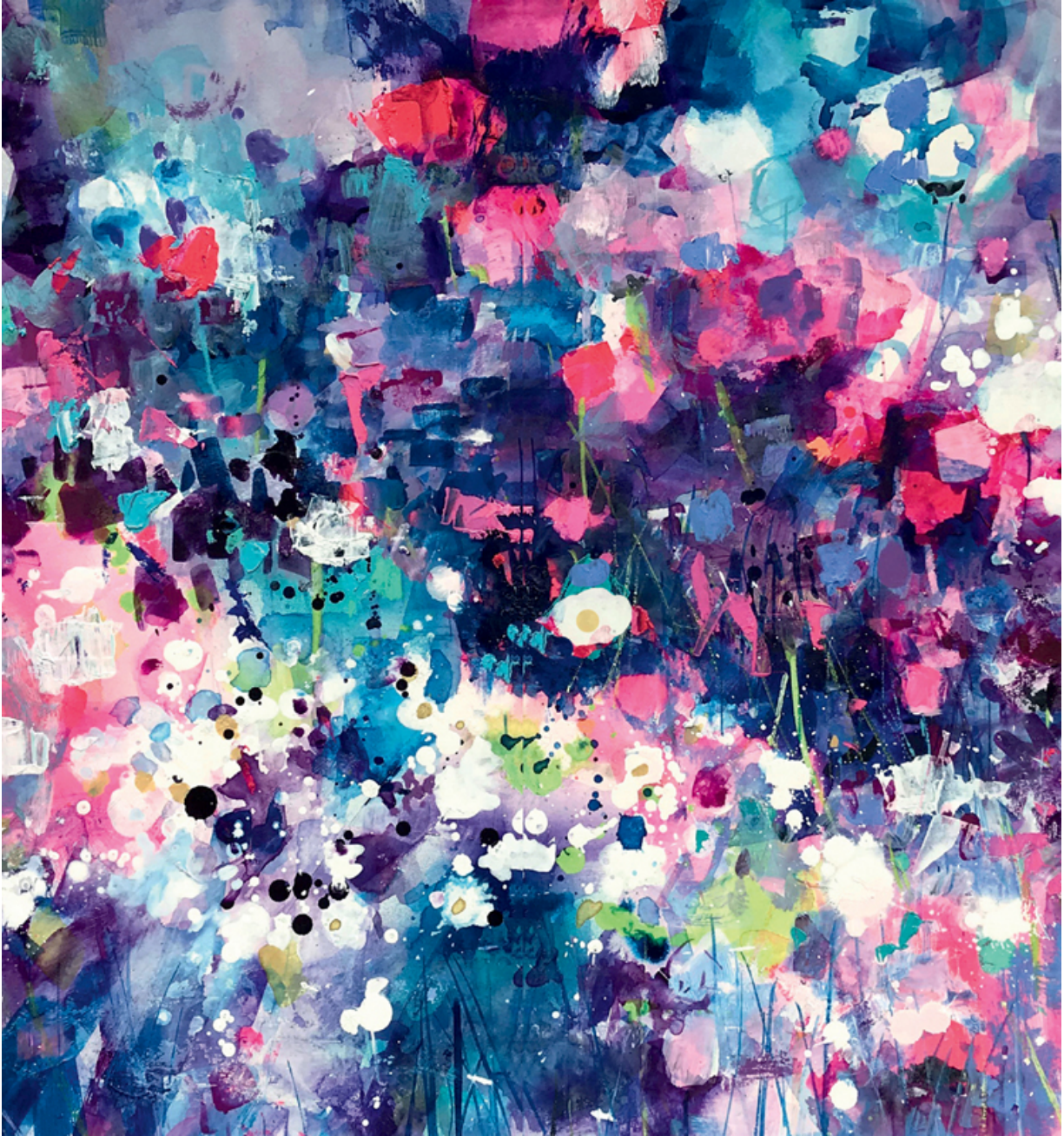
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WELCOME

Painting flowers in mixed media presents the artist with the opportunity to combine exquisite transparent washes of inks and watercolours with the vivid colours of opaque wet and dry media to interpret the stunning colours of nature.

Spontaneity, versatility and unpredictability are at the core of painting contemporary semi-abstract flowers in mixed media, but it is the degree of control that is the most appealing feature of working in this expressive and exciting way – decisions can be made and remade numerous times to allow a painting to evolve and find its natural flow and rhythm in a more unrestrained manner than can result from a laborious and tentative process.



Tulip Fusion

76 × 56 cm (30 × 22 in)

Mixed media on watercolour paper

ABOUT THIS BOOK

If you are reading this book then I hope you are ready to take a leap of faith and step into the complex but fascinating world of painting semi-abstract flowers in mixed media. There is no competing with mother nature, the greatest artist of all, so this book is my attempt to encourage you not to recreate, but to interpret the incredible amount of inspiring visual information flowers offer as a subject, in the most unique and individual way to you.

This versatile and transformative form of expression encompasses a broad range of disciplines and means something different to each individual artist. The ethos behind this book is to explore the subject's many possibilities in a way that is most relevant to your personal approach to painting. Ultimately I hope the ideas inspire you to adapt a more expressive yet relaxed, intuitive and fluid attitude to your creative process.

Painting the most striking and flamboyant offerings of nature in mixed media is such an immersive and engaging experience. Creating art presents, of course, its own kind of stresses and dilemmas, but these are not bad stresses, and with an open mind, imagination and a variety of media and techniques, you should always be able to find new solutions and let your creativity transport you to a happy place.

I started and completed this book in 2020, during the most challenging of times for the human race, and it is testimony to the therapeutic magic of creativity. It has truly sustained me throughout this difficult time and I hope the joy I took

in writing this book resonates with you and motivates you to pick up your brushes and immerse yourself in the joy of creation.

In this book you will find comprehensive information regarding different media. This is not to encourage you to buy more art supplies, but to help you make informed choices. You'll also discover demonstrations and projects to guide you through negative shape painting, colour relationships, combining media and colour mixing.

Unless otherwise stated, all the acrylics, QoR watercolours and Williamsburg oil paints are manufactured by Golden Artist Colors. Oil pastels and crayons are from Caran d'Ache, soft pastels are by Sennelier, Unison and Jackson's, watercolour papers are by St Cuthbert's Mill, and FW inks, mount boards and Langton paper are by Daler-Rowney. There are equivalent brands available for some of the products.



Pink and White Lilies

51 × 41cm (20 × 16in)

Mixed media on watercolour paper

A PERSONAL NOTE

I don't really have a profound reason for my love of painting flowers other than that their dazzling colours and spectacular shapes suit my colourful and contemporary approach to painting. I paint flowers when I am happy or sad; it is the subject I turn to when inspiration runs dry. Painting them in mixed media keeps creative boredom at bay as the infinite combination of materials presents fresh surprises and exciting possibilities. It really suits impatient, expressive and spontaneous artists who thrive on working organically and enjoy taking risks without the fear of failure.

My painting process has always been intuitive, but I have learnt to analyze it more in order to teach and write about it. When working on personal projects I am careful not to let the analytical side stifle the intuitive process, and successful pieces are the ones where I get the balance right.

Writing this note a few years ago would have sounded very different indeed. Each year of walking along the creative path brings more 'Aha' moments, and with them comes not only a greater understanding of the reasons for painting in the first place but, better still, a more fluid and relaxed attitude towards the process of creating art. Right now enjoying the process and experiencing the therapeutic and meditative effect of painting is at the top of my list, and success of any kind along the way is the cherry on the cake.

Looking at my brightly coloured paintings you will never guess that I am mostly attracted to paintings with much more sophisticated and understated colour schemes. To

remain true to myself, however, I hope to continue painting with these unapologetically vibrant colours for as long as I can. I am full of gratitude to have my work and most treasured pastime merge so seamlessly together and never a day goes by when I take this privilege for granted.



Birthday flowers

51 × 51 cm (20 × 20 in)

Mixed media on mount board.

CULTIVATING YOUR UNIQUE VISUAL VOICE



A Touch of Spring

79 × 56 cm (31 × 22 in)

Mixed media on mount board

The art world is overflowing with talented artists; it is your authenticity and individuality that will help you thrive in this competitive arena. Cultivating your own voice needs internal focus while progressing with the technical aspects of your painting. It is through frequent practice and by closely observing and studying the repeated patterns in your own work that you get to know who you are as an artist and what makes you tick.

If you are just starting out and dabbling in different subjects and media, pick out the few that get your heart racing and make you rush to pick up your brushes. Working

in a series of your most stimulating subjects creates a body of work with a common thread rather than numerous paintings each singing a different tune. Limiting external influences to a few you truly admire helps focus your mind, and always analyze and study rather than copy. Use inspiration like the spices in your kitchen: a little sprinkle to add that extra touch of magic but not to overshadow your own individuality.

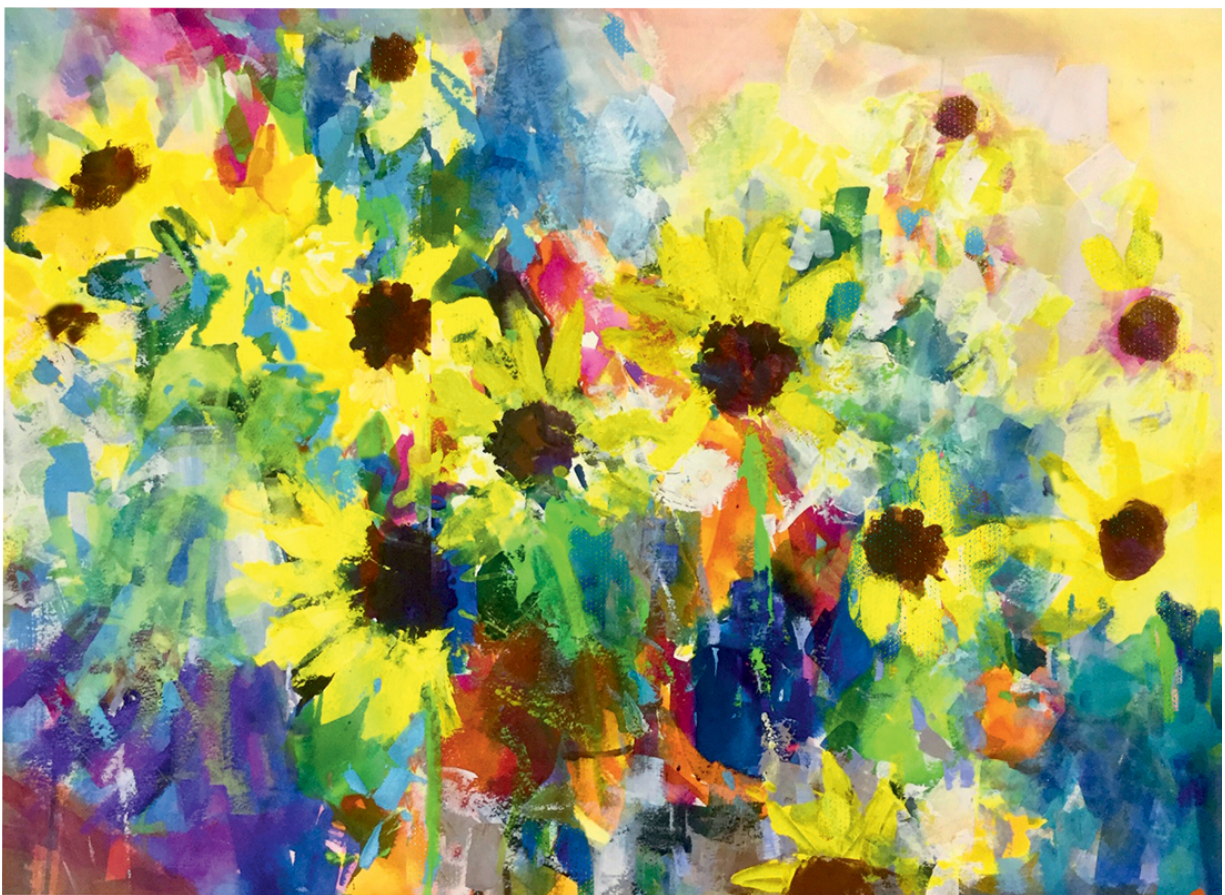
Be savvy when browsing art websites: you want to access their positive aspects without the negative distractions. Connecting with other artists globally through social media can be a positive experience, but on the flip side, being bombarded with imagery when scrolling these sites for long periods can be confusing and even promote feelings of inadequacy. Above all, it takes precious time and energy that can be spent more positively in your own creative space.

It may sound like a cliché, but ultimately it is the deep and genuine connection with your subject that will resonate with the viewer. Practice and perseverance are the two key ingredients that will help you emerge as an artist with a unique visual voice.

EXPLORING THE MEDIA

The synergy between the individual mediums combined together in one painting is at the heart of using mixed media. With no particular rule book on how to make them work well together, your knowledge of each medium is paramount. Ultimately, the aesthetic success and longevity of a painting depends on the compatibility of the materials coming together in a logical sequence.

In this chapter we shall be looking at a selection of mediums and their idiosyncrasies, and the ways in which they can be a worthwhile contributor to your mixed media art. Getting to know each medium intimately means that you can judge where and how you can incorporate it, not only to enjoy a more liberating art-making process but also to add excitement to your paintings.



Facing the Sun

72 × 53 cm (28½ × 21 in)

Mixed media on watercolour paper

THE ROMANCE OF WATERCOLOURS

Light reflected through translucent washes of watercolour creates visual sensations unmatched by any other medium. Modern watercolours with strong, vibrant pigments and better quality binders have changed the sometimes wishy-washy image of this most challenging medium of all. Working on good quality paper will allow for lifting and washing out of colours and will help you to be more daring with this amazing medium. Primers such as Golden watercolour ground will give you the ability to make exciting and contemporary watercolours on canvases and artist's panels or to eliminate unwanted areas for correction. The light dimensional ground and cold press ground manufactured by Golden give you more opportunities to explore innovative and exciting textural approaches in your watercolour flower paintings.

The magical medium of watercolour is a great contributor to a mixed media art box, either in early washes of wet-into-wet or for glazing over acrylics to recede an area or change the tone of a colour. It can be applied for tinting a wet and dry artist's quality sandpaper or a NOT surface watercolour paper to make a tinted base for a pastel painting. So many factors come into making a successful watercolour – the quality of your paint, your surface, the brushes you use – but ultimately you, the artist, are the game-changer in the way you can stretch this medium way beyond its limited traditional image.



Posy with Himalayan Blue Poppies

28 × 24 cm (11 × 9½ in)

Watercolour on paper

A pocket-sized field watercolour box is the perfect bit of equipment to take out for quick sketches in the garden or days spent painting on location. These quick studies make great reference materials for larger future paintings.



Poppies and Daisies

53 x 53 cm (21 x 21 in)

Watercolour on paper

Knowledge of colour relationships and pigment characteristics is crucial to avoid making muddy colours and keeping your colours clean and vibrant, especially in semi-abstract styles such as mine where there are a lot of layered colours and overlapping passages. The ability to lift colour is a very appealing feature of working in watercolours for me, whether to reveal the white of the paper or a ghost of the more staining colours left behind. Above all, the luminosity of colours against the white of the paper is why watercolour is still one of the most popular mediums with artists around the world. I use Saunders Waterford High White paper for my watercolours to gain the crisp white contrast against the darker values. I love the soft edges of wet-into-wet washes against the hard