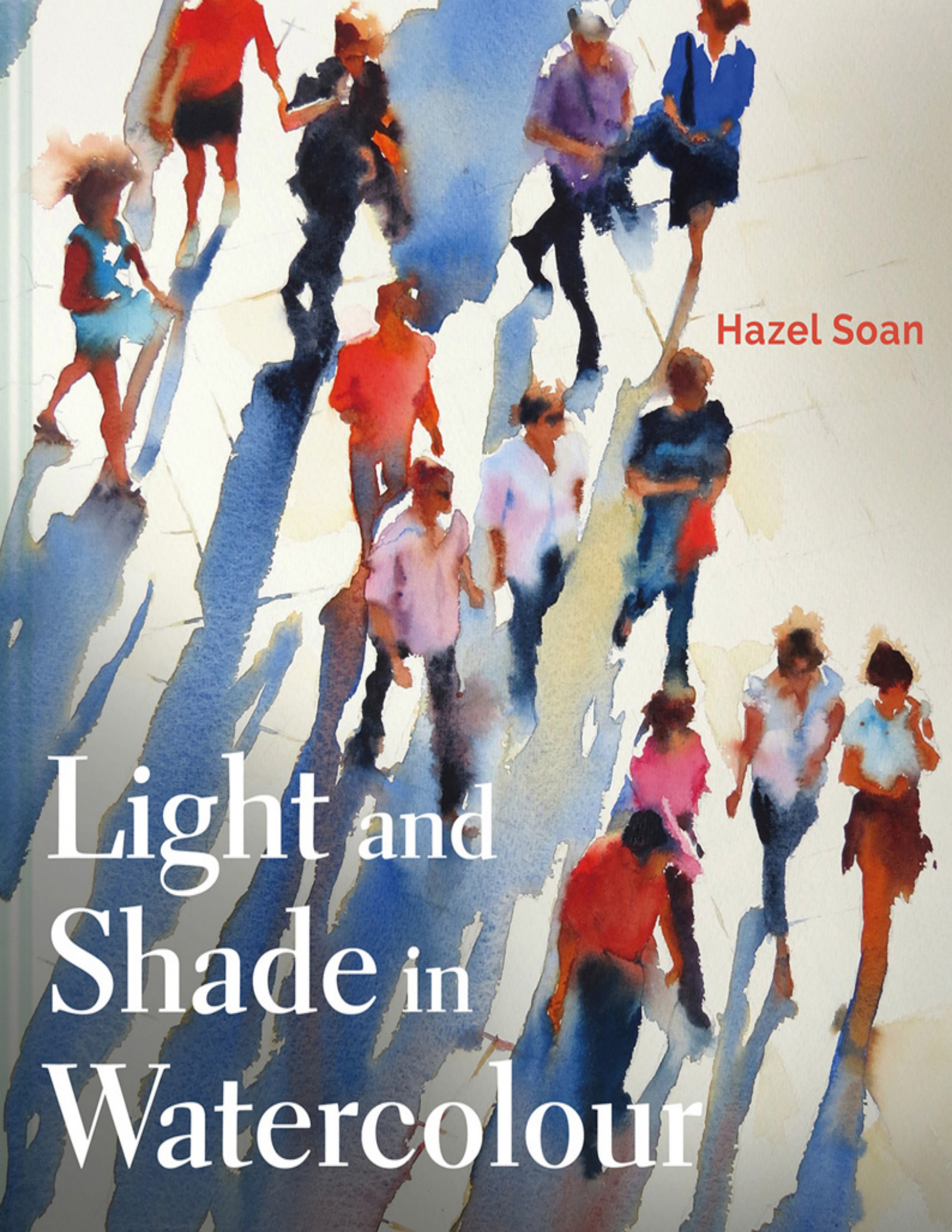
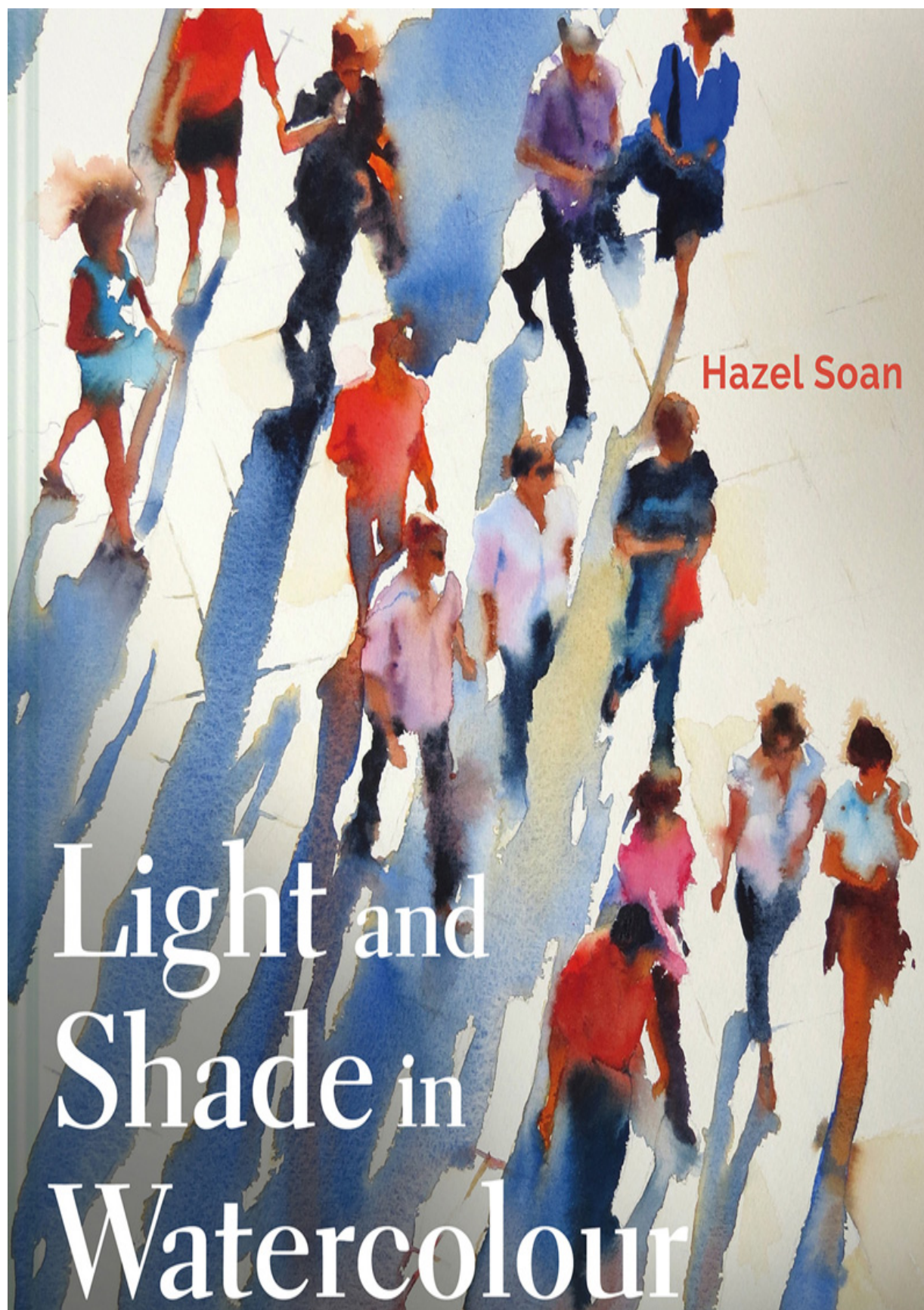


A watercolor illustration of a diverse group of people walking in various directions. The figures are rendered with soft, blended colors like red, blue, purple, and pink. Long, dark blue and purple shadows are cast across the light-colored ground, suggesting a low sun position. The overall style is artistic and expressive.

Hazel Soan

Light and Shade in Watercolour



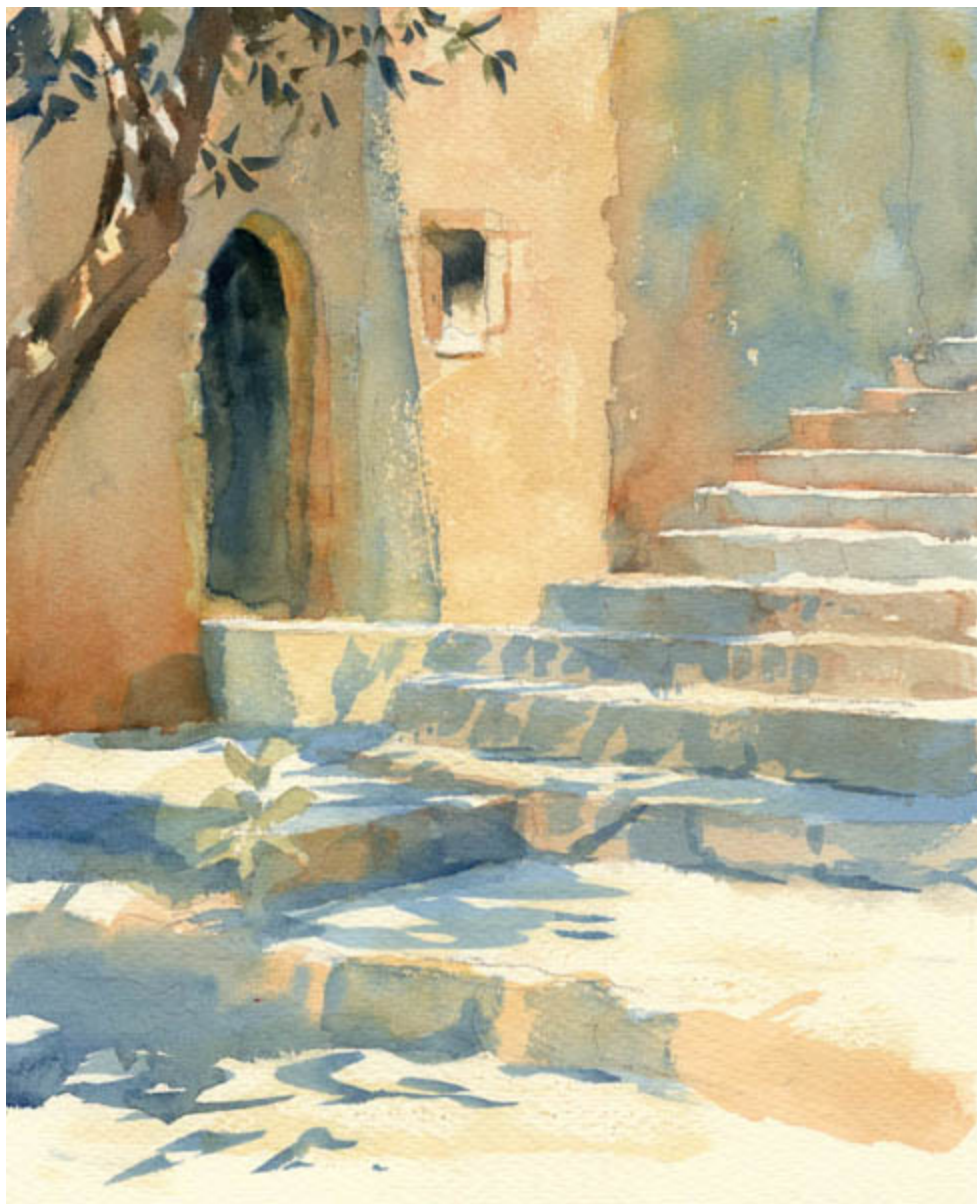
Hazel Soan

Light and Shade in Watercolour



Light and Shade in Watercolour





Corner of Shadows, 38 x 28cm (15 x 11in)

Light and Shade in Watercolour

Hazel Soan

BATSFORD

Dedication:

To the many people who bring light into my life.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to Cathy Gosling and my wonderful publishers for believing in my ideas; to Kristy Richardson, my editor, for making the passage to print so smooth; to Tokiko Morishima for her splendid design; to my family for their support and to my readers for making it all worthwhile.

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‘Adrift in the Aegean’, Ramparts, Monemvasia, 30 x 28cm (12 x 11in)

Introduction

It's all about light and shade

With the light from white paper reflected back through transparent, see-through films of paint, watercolour is ideally suited to convey light and shade and create paintings full of illumination.

Light is the main character in this book, but without its twin – shade – we cannot show the light, nor paint the form. It is shade that makes the light visible and thus, in painting, light and shade link to become one – and a whole language that painters use to turn patterns and shapes on a flat surface into evocative representations of the three-dimensional world.

The Significance of Light and Shade

Art critics often praise artists for 'painting the light', but in watercolour painting, where white paper represents the light, the artist can only make light appear by painting the shade. The chief challenge of watercolour painting is therefore not to 'paint' the light but to 'retain' the light. A watercolour is created by covering enough of the paper with brushmarks to suggest the visible world, but not so much as to lose the light reflected back from the paper through the translucent films of paint.

To make light visible you must paint the shade.



Listening in the Stillness, 25 x 30cm (10 x 12in)

The light in this watercolour is represented by the patches of unpainted paper and lightly tinted areas.

The Language of Light and Shade

'Light and shade' in painting refers to more than the difference observed between sunlight and shadow – it is about every tonal relationship between things, whatever the light source or intensity. To see your way across a room or down a parade of steps, your eyes perceive subtle differences in tone to discern depth and distance; so too in watercolour. Light and shade are inseparable, referred to by the collective terms, 'tone' and 'value'. These terms describe the quality of a colour, or hue, as modified by degrees of light and shade. The terms are interchangeable, and sometimes linked as 'tonal value'.



Close Encounter, 56 x 71cm (22 x 28in)

This painting exhibits an obvious balance between light and shade, weighted in almost equal proportions between the light of the white paper, the mid-tone background area, and the deeper shade of the approaching elephant.

This Book

Creating a watercolour follows a journey that starts with the eyes, filters through the mind, the heart, the gut and the soul, carries along the arm to the hand, into the brush and onto the palette, ferries to the paper and then returns back to the eyes. The chapters in this book trace a similar route, following the train of thought into practice, establishing first how to see the tonal values exhibited by light and shade, then how to assess and value them, and finally how to respond by turning their pattern into meaningful paintings.



Sketch of a camel trader, 25 x 20cm (10 x 8in)

Sketchbooks are made for watercolour observations. Here, the light and shade playing over the surface of the white tunic and the saffron turban begins the process of assessing whether a colour should be painted lighter or darker than the adjacent feature or background.

Guides for the Journey

Practical research assignments act as guides on the journey to increase your expertise. Confidence is key: if it does go wrong (and it probably will), remember it is only paper – expensive paper but only paper – and, for better or for worse, the best way to learn to paint in watercolour is to cover lots of paper!

Encouraging words and mottos run through my head while I am painting (many are scribbled on my studio walls) so I offer some of these among the pages and whisper the occasional 'aside' to provoke thoughts while painting or boost your confidence. The penultimate chapter offers tips on finding and representing the message of 'light and shade' residing within specific subjects, such as figures, wildlife and architecture. Of course, by then you may not need them ... Enjoy the journey – it is an exciting one!



Pushkar Camel Fair, 25 x 28cm (10 x 11in)

I made several watercolours and many sketches at the Pushkar Camel Fair in India before I felt I had rendered the atmosphere successfully in this one. Familiarity with the subject emboldened a looser rendition.



Standing Out From the Crowd, 76 x 76cm (30 x 30in)

CHAPTER 1

First You Have To See

How to see the values of light and shade through
an artist's eyes

Light makes things visible, and only with light can matter be seen and observed. The different wavelengths of visible light are represented in the colours of the spectrum, and, depending on the wavelengths absorbed and reflected by the matter around us, together with the amount and intensity of the light received, we perceive a whole range of colours and shades. As light and shade swap places during the rotation of the Earth, the change in angle and direction of the light determines that the colours of everything 'under the sun' are subject to constant variation. No colour or shade is therefore absolute.