

Mark Sheeky Artist's Statement

As a child I began computer programming and this world was my life for many decades. I fell out of this and fell in love with oil painting in my 30s. I've been a full time freelance artist ever since. I love painting partly because it is not computing, because it's organic, solid, can't be sequenced or automated; because it is a raw form of expression. I love oil paint above all media because of the natural beauty of the paint, and the flexibility and immense subtlety of the medium; any of a million possibilities and visual effects can be achieved.

I also love oil painting because it is difficult. I constantly battle to push beyond my abilities. Each painting is an experiment and a lesson because, for me, art is about exploring the unknown, the undiscovered, the new. A life of art is, therefore, one of constant learning, and each artwork should be better than the one before. There are no limits, there is no summit, each ceiling is an illusory sky to be pushed beyond.

I typically paint in thin layers of paint and aim for a smooth finish. I like to use three paint layers; a coloured ground (imprimatura), an opaque 'underpainting', which uses Earth colours and a high level of detail in itself, then one or more glaze layers in increasingly transparent and more vibrant hues. I use amber in my glazing medium, and usually paint on rigid surfaces for maximum stability over the centuries in which my paintings will endure.

In subjects, I paint ideas and feelings. From the outset of my painting my art was described as surrealist, a term which conveys a certain type of dream-like and eccentric image. For that reason of succinct description I don't object to my work being described as surrealist, but I don't adhere to or care about the principles of that 1930s group. For me, I'm trying to represent the maximum gamut of feeling and concept.

Mark Sheeky, 27 July 2024