

The following 28 artists, who are members of the Appalachian Pastel Society, participated in this virtual group activity while “Sheltering-in-Place” at their homes. The artwork they created is shared here. Hugs and best wishes to all until we can meet together safely.

APS Adventures in Pastel Adventure AAAA-4: “Backlighting”

Welcome to our FOURTH Pastel Adventure in Series AAAA called “Backlighting.” In this adventure, the challenge will be to use backlighting as a prominent feature in your painting. Here’s how it will work:

Step 1: The light source is important in a painting. It can come from above, below, the sides...at various angles. There can be one source or many...strong or weak...point source or broad flood source. And, of course, the color of the light can vary.

Step 2: For this challenge, we are going to explore the dramatic use of backlighting.

Step 3: Have the light come from directly behind your subject. It could be shining through someone’s hair, a bird’s feathers, tree leaves, clouds, etc... creating a glowing effect. (If the light is intense, capture a reference image with a camera. Don’t look at the sun, or other very bright light.)

Step 4: Any subject and style are acceptable.

Step 5: Send **the photo of your artwork, reference photo (if you used one), your comments, and the title and size** of your painting to Kay Gordon (jkaygordon364@gmail.com) by **April 27th** at 6 PM.

Step 6: Remember, this deadline is firm and nothing can be posted that is received after 6 PM on **April 27th**. Your painting does not need to be in its finished form. The adventure is so we can be painting together. This means exploring and experimenting with new ideas and techniques using pastels.

On your mark; use your camera; but **DON’T LOOK AT THE SUN!**

Anne Allen, Hendersonville

When Light Plays Music in the Garden



Pastel on 400-grit UArt
sanded pastel paper

Early morning and late afternoon light make gardens sing. Notes of color, notes of shadow, and notes of light are music to a gardener.

One bright morning, light from behind a flowering quince created golden crowns on vibrant blooms. Plump buds cluster tightly on long thornless branches opening to the red-orange flowers. Mid-morning light created my favorite view of this Asian shrub of the rose family.

Kathy Amspacher, Hendersonville

Under the wire! I am happy to be painting again. Just completed 2 cataract surgeries and I can't believe the difference in seeing color. Everything was tea stained before. 4th day of recovery. The eyedrops added to my blurry sunrays.

The painting was of a squirrel in our back yard on the "feeding stump". No underpainting, TL pastels. This was my first painting of sunrays. I really liked the painting better with the rays.

First swipe across the painting was unnerving even though this is just a study. Found out that a light hand is better. Thank you all again for putting together this fun challenge for our group

Morning in the Sanctuary 8 x 10



Sawyer Bear, Cape Coral, FL

Pastel on UArt 600-grit sanded pastel paper

When I was doing a Horse Lesson in art, I went to visit horse-back riding stables. I used to ride horses there when I was younger, and when we visited, we saw many interesting horses. This one horse was one my favorites. Some of the caretakers braided her hair, and it got curly when they took it out. I had a few ideas for this Adventure, but this was my favorite one.



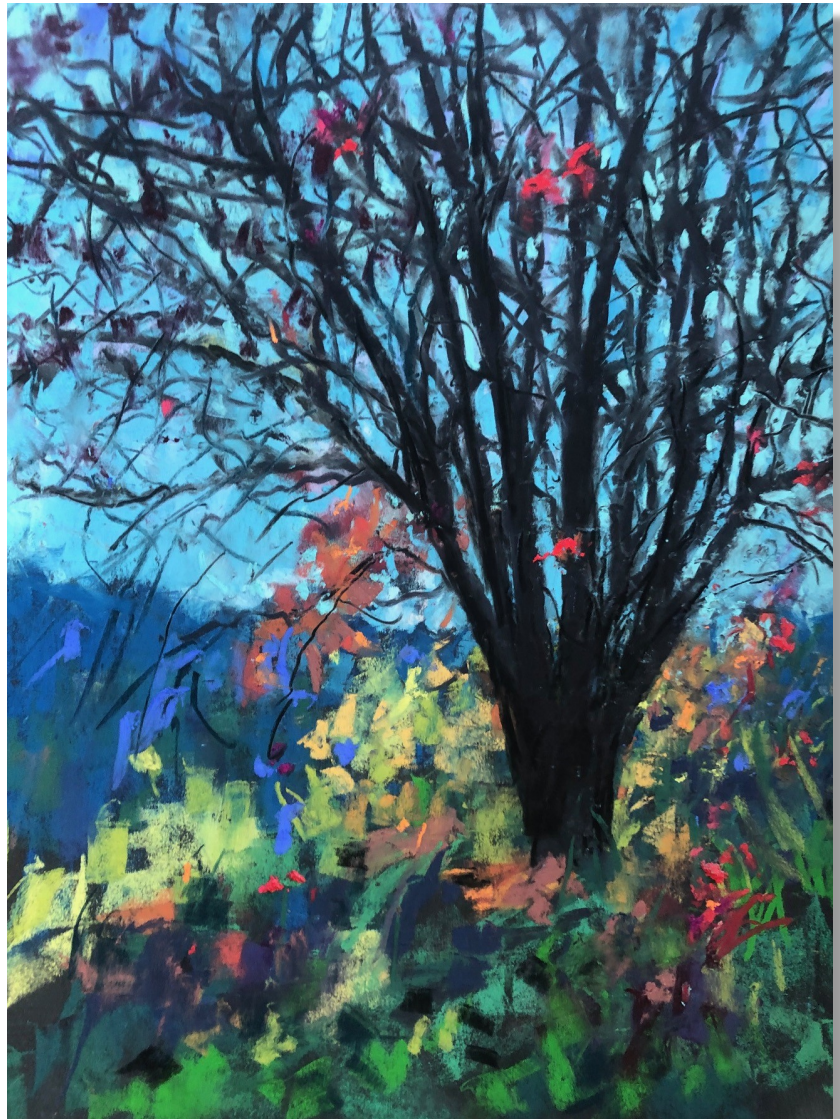
Bouffant Betty 13 x 12



Jane Best, Morganton

Evening Glow

9 x 12



Based on a crop from a photograph I took a few years ago late one fall afternoon in Caldwell County, NC.

I liked the way the the backlight illuminated the few remaining leaves on the trees.

Enjoyed this challenge!

Beryl Bradley, Brevard, NC

While I started using a reference photo of a picture I took at Jupiter Inlet in FL, this ended up not looking at all like the photo but I hope I captured the essence of the sun peeping through the clouds.

9x12 black sanded paper and a variety of soft pastels were used.

Thank you!

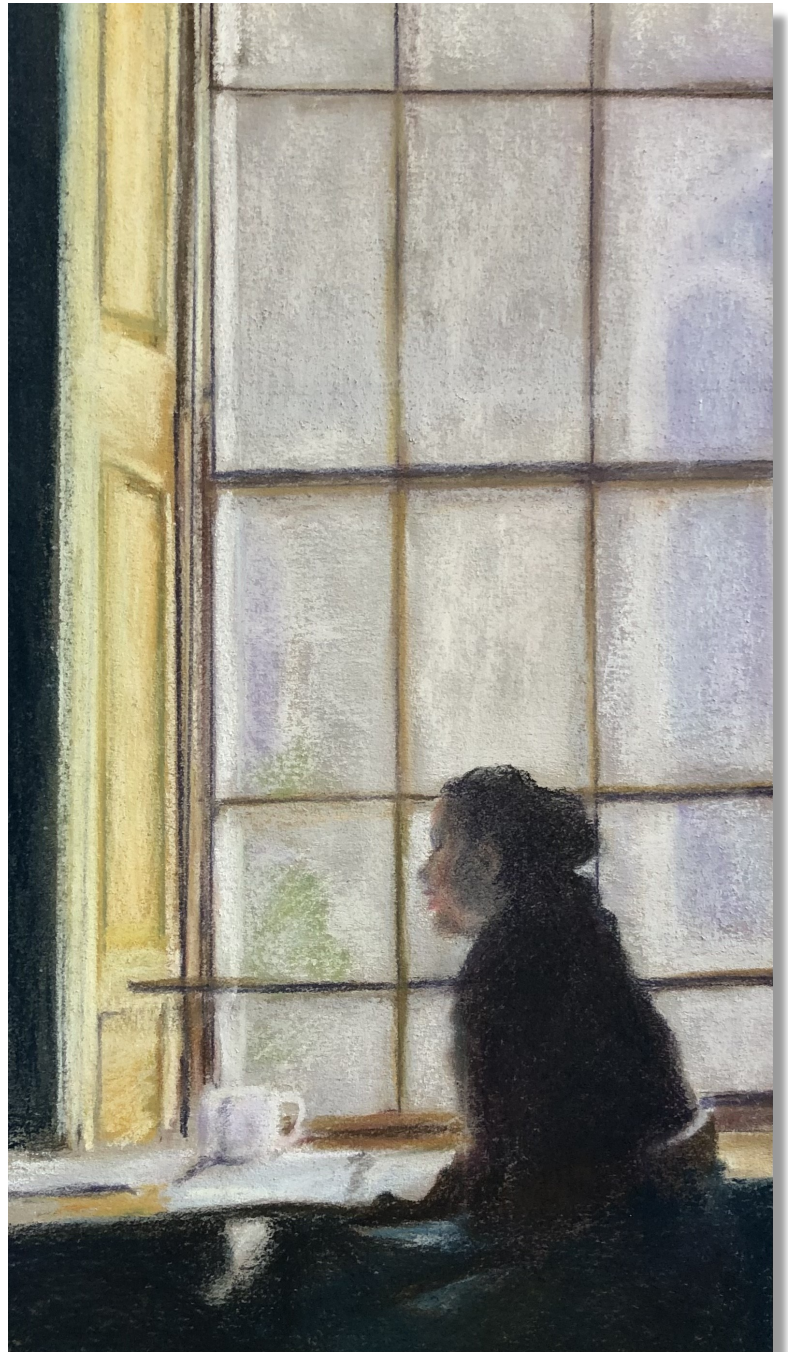
Cloudy Day

9 x 12



Deborah Chase, Hendersonville

Thinking it Over 10 x 5.5



This was an interesting adventure. I have not considered backlighting before. I didn't really get the "glow" but the light is from behind reflecting on the shutters.

The painting is an odd size because after I painted it I decided to crop it for a better center of interest.

Nancy Clausen, Swannanoa

This is only partially finished. I didn't have a lot of time. I really wanted to try the challenge, so here it is so far.

I tried out a new paper. It's called Fischer Pastel Paper. I didn't have it mounted and think it would work better if it was, but I did enjoy working on the surface. It seems to be a smoother paper, but holds a lot of pastel. I did use an alcohol wash as an underpainting. And then used an assortment of pastels mainly Great American.

The painting is from a photo taken out our back window at sunset.

Evening Fire 11 x 14



Diane de Grasse, Black Mountain

Brookside Spring 12.5 x 18.75



Before the AAAA-4 Adventure was announced I already had this painting planned in my head. And by coincidence, it features some backlighting, so here it is.

From my reference photos, on Art Spectrum sanded paper.

I began with hard pastels then added various softer pastels.

This Adventure is also inspiration: I'd like to do another image that exploits the great drama in backlighting.

Thank you again for the idea!

Jennifer Donolo, Burlington, ON, Canada



Florida Evening Sky

7.75 x 9.75

Pastel on paper (Colorfix Pastel Paper, leaf green dark)

I used Nupastels and Rembrandt hard pastels, and Terri Ludwig, Unison, Art Spectrum and other soft pastels.

Sunshine has been scarce in my neck of the woods lately so I used a reference image, below, as well as sketches and memory.

Thank you for this great challenge!



Terrilynn Dubreuil, Asheville

Attached are 2 paintings as I got a bit carried away with the backlighting! (actually did 3 but ... this is enough .. if you'd rather choose just one, that's fine with me).
Thanks.

I've been sitting with these photos for quite a while. I've tried one before but this time with the challenge to have backlighting .. well, it's what made it finally POP! It helps to have ideas that push us past our regular painting approaches into something new .. or at least something we haven't done for a while.

I enjoyed this challenge ... (and yes, I'm in Maine, but we need to paint wherever we are!)

Thanks for the adventure!

Milo Deck Rail 8 x 10



El Window 10 x 8

Will Evans, Fairview

Attached please find my pastel, with photo reference, a San Francisco golf course at the Legion of Honor museum hosting a remarkable Zorn exhibit.

The 12x16 piece is on Art Spectrum Colorfix, elephant color. Title "Sunburst"

Walking up the drive to the museum, this just caught my eye and demanded a photo with the tree's profile and the morning mist rising from the glowing lawn.



Sunburst

16 x 12

J Kay Gordon, Weaverville

I participated in the Weaverville Art Safari this weekend. This was my demo piece that I worked on when not talking to visitors to my studio and gallery.

My reference was a photo I took last fall when we were camped on the edge of Lake Osborne in Lake Worth, FL.

I used a variety of pastels...PanPastels for the sky and water in the foreground, Mount Vision for the dark trees and tree reflections, Terry Ludwig lights and darks for the most intense brights and darks, and more soft pastels (not sure of the brands) for the clouds and calligraphy.

I was working on Uart, 800 grit black paper, and viewed my reference photo on my iPad.



Burning Through 8 x 10

MaryAnn Grib, Gray, TN

I really liked this exercise. I found that I was much more attentive to composition because the lighting really brought it out. It allowed me to feel more creative.

I chose a reference photo of a wooded scene from a plein air session, where the bright morning sun was behind this batch of trees. The light streaming in was just beautiful along with the glow it created.

I also found some iridescent pastel in my collection which added a bit of sparkle.

This is on 6x9 uart 320.



Bright Woods 9 x 6

Alec Hall, Hendersonville

I really enjoyed this Challenge. I love the drama that backlighting brings to a painting. I cropped the image to make it more of a portrait and then I played up the light and enhanced the colors a bit. I also changed the color of the halter from faded red to blue to bring the viewer's attention to the face of the horse. I still have some tweaking to do on this one; I generally like to live with each piece for a week or two before I call it finished. Thanks for another great Challenge!

Happy Spring Everyone!



The Golden Hour
14 x 11
Surface: UART 500 grit



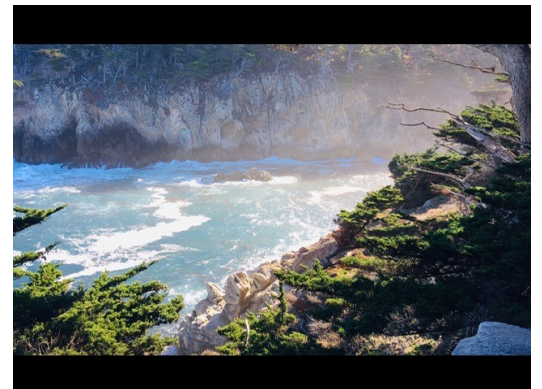
Morning Glow at Point Lobos 6 3/4 x 10 3/4

I chose to do a painting from a photo I took of a magical spot we discovered on an early morning hike at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve outside of Monterey California.

I found it quite a challenge trying to capture the glow of the rising sun from the east and mist from the ocean.

I used cream Mi Tientes touch paper, an alcohol wash over new pastel under painting and then PanPastel and Sennelier.

Thank you for a great challenge! I really enjoyed revisiting this beautiful spot, and would like to try more paintings using backlighting as a subject.



Mona Hearne, Mathews, NC

UArt Ludwig's

Painted from my photo taken several years ago

Julian Price Park Pathway

Sure would like to be at the park today 🚗 🚗 🚗

Thank you

Have a beautiful day, Mona



Julian Price Park Pathway

7 x 6

Kathy Hutchinson, Rutherfordton, NC

This is from a photo I took leaving a family farm in Okeechobee, Florida last August.
It was such a dramatic sky..

Painted on Art Spectrum rose gray



Distant Sunset

6 x 4

Lynn Jackson, Brevard, NC



This is the photo I used for the back light study!

Glowing Petunia Blossom

9 x 12



I really struggled with this challenge.

Started with a calla lily, but couldn't get the light effect I wanted, so tossed it.(the drawing).

Next I tried the petunia. The stem showed the light effect more than the blooms but I was hard pressed for time. The main flower was in such an odd shape that I had a hard time getting it to look like a petunia.

Oh well, I'll "chalk " this one up as a study!

Karen Knaub, Lake Lure

There is a farm not far from our home and they have a camel named Zule. She is friendly and the farmer has a sign up that she likes carrots and apples. We bring the Grands to feed her.

I took a picture of her and The sun was behind her lighting up her hair. I thought she would be fun for this challenge. Hope I made her as sweet as she is.

Thank you for another fun challenge



Zule 16 x 12

Cindy Lidd, Garner, NC



At the Park 12 x 9

Attached is my "At The Park" pastel, on 9 x 12 Uart 500; this is totally not finished, but ran out of time. This is from a photo where the lighting was behind the tree, making the tree appear almost black. Thanks

Margaret V Lyn-Soroken, Black Mountain

Medium: pastels on Mi-Teintes paper

Comment: gee...I see the difference side by side as I stopped looking at photo...

Need to redo, make changes..thanks for challenge.



Beyond the Trees
10 x 7

Jill Magee, Graceville, QLD, Australia

Adventure backlit entry . if still in time. the lion queen. 11x 14 on pastelmat. just for fun. not interested in competing cheers. jill

The Lion Queen 14 x 11



Chris McGraw, Asheville

Started and (almost) finished on the deadline day. Great adventure.

Thanks to you APS folks that come up with these great ideas!



Rachel and Evan 13 x 9

Meryl Meyer, Weaverville



Rosie on a Bed of Roses

12 x 16



This is my cat, Rosie. She loves to lie on her back and roll back and forth. Now she sleeps a lot these days for 16 years old yet still has a lot of spunk.

I have not been painting much lately due to some physical issues so I am feeling rusty.. I welcome these adventures in painting.

There are some papers I am not used to so that is a challenge for me. I have been wanting to paint this for some years now and love the way the sunlight hits her paws, fur and the quilt. It also captures her personality. The quilt added a level of difficulty. I wanted to make it feel like a quilt and capture the roses on it. It is a work in progress. I also changed the nightstand to a green color to add some discord.

The analogous color wheel comes in handy. I used assorted soft pastels and some pastel pencils for detail.

Frankie Milhorn, Kingsport, TN

This is a painting done from a picture I took in the woods on my property where I live in Tennessee. It was a beautiful snow fall last year. My son was home for Christmas, so my husband, son and I went out to enjoy the beauty of it all. The dog is our black lab, Echo.



Tennessee Snow

11 x 15

Andrea Stutesman, Black Mountain

Pastels: Sennelier, Richeson, Terry Ludwig

Paper: Art Spectrum - Elephant

I took this photo at Williamsburg when it was nearly deserted due to a potential hurricane warning. The lighting in the buildings was minimal and I loved how the exterior light shined inward on and behind the worker. This was the gunsmith shop.

I tried this Art Spectrum paper, new to me. I'm not sure I like it. It does not take as many layers of pastel. I need to continue to work on people. The darks of skin without looking like dirt is difficult for me. I may work on the girl later if I work out the darks.



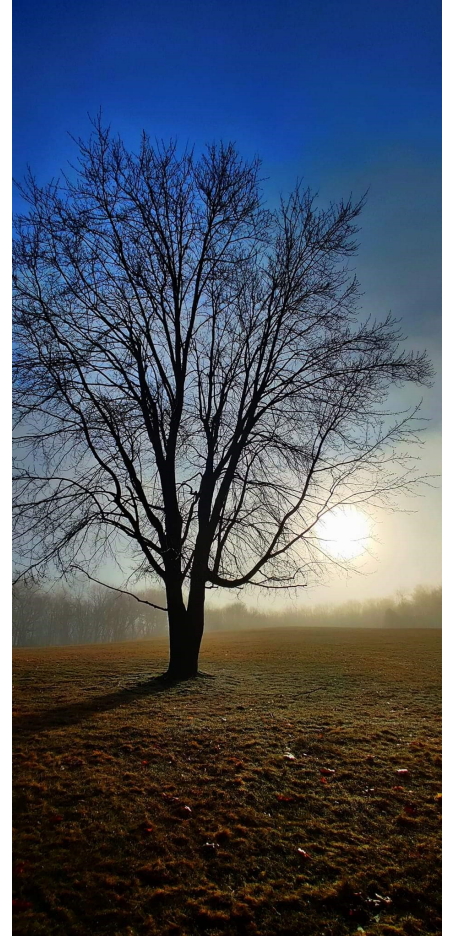
Williamsburg Gunsmith 12 x 9

Ruth Whitaker, Newnan, GA

Assorted pastels on Uart 400lb.



End of a Season 6 x 4



Chris Williams, Newbury Park, CA

Chasing Shadows 9 x 12



Here is the piece I painted today plein aire with some corrections when I go home as the shadows moved!

The sun was higher and out of the picture. I tried to get the back lit leaves but maybe not as successful as needed to be. Hopefully this qualifies.

Much appreciation to all who participated and shared their paintings
and their memories!