

Web Show — April, 2023

The following 26 artists, who are members of the Appalachian Pastel Society, participated in this virtual group activity. The artwork they created is shared here. Hugs and best wishes to all.

APS Adventures in Pastel C-4 “Limited Strokes”

Welcome to the fourth Adventure in this series! In this Adventure the challenge is to produce a painting using only 100 Strokes. I hear several artists saying, “but that’s impossible!”

It is definitely a challenge, but not impossible. It will be a stretch from what most of us typically do in our painting but there is the real Adventure!

Before going further, let’s define a stroke. One stroke is when you apply the pastel stick to the paper and continues until you lift that stick up from the surface. In other words, it would be possible to cover the entire surface of your paper in ONE stroke as long as you do not lift the stick from the surface.

Please see the illustrations below to see how an apple was created in 20 strokes for demonstration purposes.

You may still be asking why limit the work to 100 strokes. There are many reasons for attempting this particular Adventure, but the simplest one is this: We all need help in being pushed out of our comfort zones! And this is the Adventure to do just that. Too often our comfort zone becomes a rut and soon we are stuck and don’t really understand why. This is your opportunity to think and plan your painting in an entirely different frame of mind.

Composition, value, colors are all still important but now the critical element is the stroke count. Relax, take a breath and have fun!

The best way to count your strokes is to have a paper nearby where you can make a tick mark every time you put down a pastel stick.

Step 1: Consider what subject you want to attempt, especially how complex do you want to try. The color palette and surface are all up to you. Make sure you have a paper nearby to keep track of your strokes.

Step 2: Making your large shapes with one stroke will require some preplanning. You may want to experiment several times just to get the feel of keeping your pastel on the surface longer than usual. You might find your hand twisting in some new and unusual ways.

Step 3: Take a photo of your painting when you have completed the 100 strokes and send this to Kay Gordon (jkaygordon364@gmail.com) by April 26th at 6:00PM. Be sure to include the title, size and any comments you would like to share on how this Adventure impacted your artwork.

Step 4: Remember, this deadline is firm. Nothing can be posted that is received after 6:00PM on April 26th. Do feel free to continue working on your painting after the 100 strokes, but be sure the photo you send in is at the 100 stroke limit!

GET READY, GET SET, PAINT UP TO 100!

Kathy Amspacher, Hendersonville

Here is my quick one stroke pic of my daughter.

Did in 15 minutes. Was fun and thanks for another great one!

Title: Alecia on the Boat

Size 10x10

All regular soft pastels on sanded uart light blue paper



Alecia on the Boat 10 x 10

Claire Benton, Riverview, FL

Poinsettias To Be 6 x 9



"Poinsettias To Be" 6x9 inches on Uart dark 400.

I will probably keep working on this one. Using only 100 strokes establishes a decent starting point. A lot of the strokes were long, wiggly, looping, trailing efforts 😊

Jane Best, Morganton

Mid Eighties

8 x 10

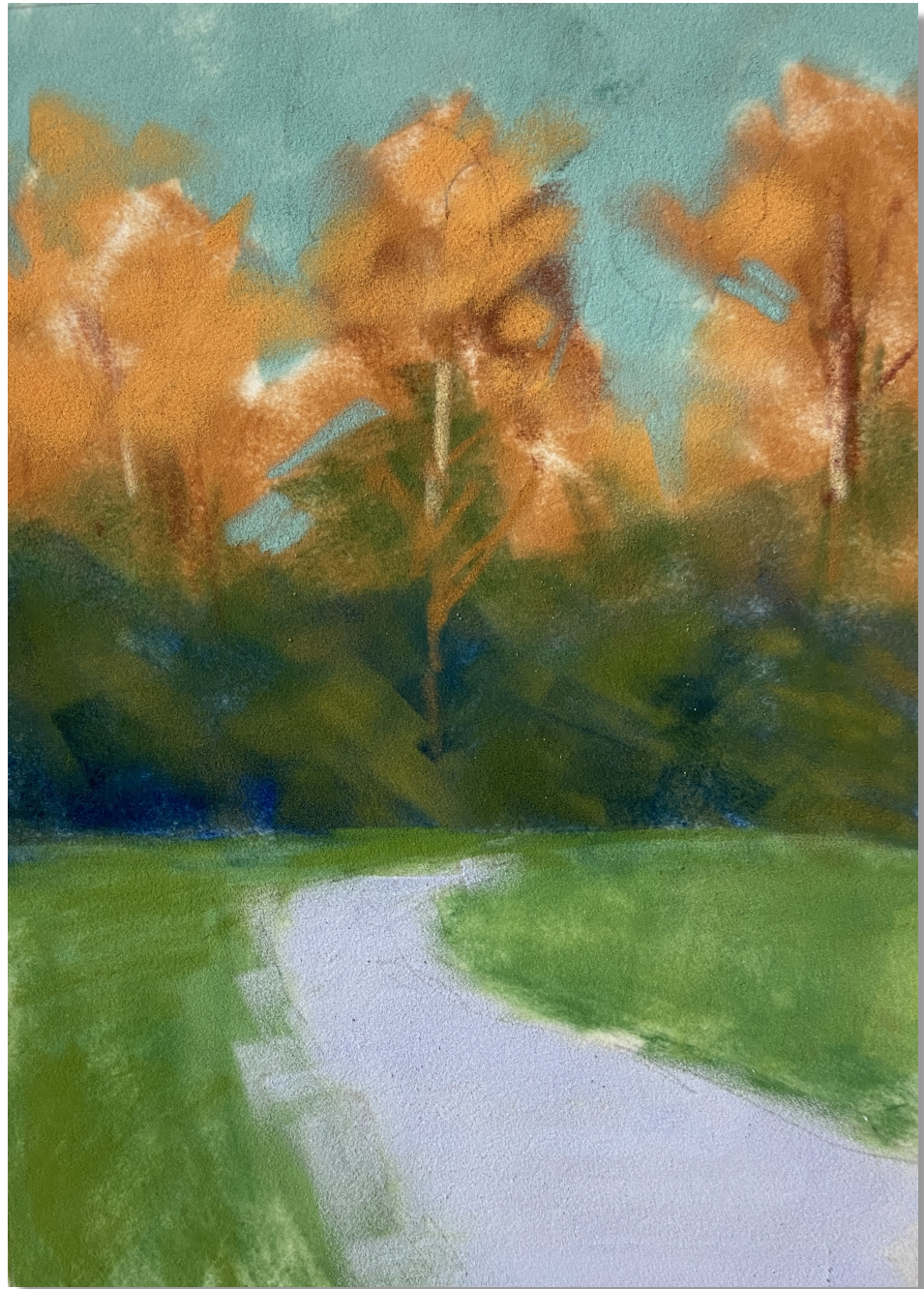


This was a very interesting challenge and learning experience. Number of strokes? Mid eighties. Mostly Terry ludwig as I was able to make wide strokes and cover the larger areas of sky, grayish bldgs, and water without picking up the pastel. When I got into the smaller areas, I tried many twists and turns with pastels including turning the painting upside down and sideways several times. Then I got too carried away with doing details. The more details I added, the worse the picture looked so I stopped in the mid 80s. I started another painting but was running out of time and reached 100 not even close to a finished piece so I decided to send this one in and work on the other one later.

Daphne Boder, Charleston, SC

Early Evening

7 x 5



I am attaching the photo of the latest challenge, 100 strokes.

The challenge was challenging!

This is 5 x 7 and I used velour paper which really grabs the pastel which makes it a bit easier for coverage.

Chris Carroll, New Bern, NC

Evening Walk in East Park

9 x 12



This was a real project and I did 100 strokes and a few more. Thanks I had fun!!

Karen Chambers, Candler, NC



Peace in the Mountains

12 x 9

9 x 12 on Art Spectrum Colourfix elephant gray. My palette is below...



Deborah Chase, Rutherfordton, NC

Planting Needs

12 x 12



I practiced before painting and decided to start with a charcoal sketch so I wouldn't waste strokes making corrections.

I also used frottage to create texture without having to use individual strokes.

Keeping continuous contact with the paper made me think of Etch a Sketch. The hardest part was remembering to stop and record the stroke.

Interesting Adventure!

Nancy Clausen, Swannanoa, NC

Here is my painting of a Dogwood blossom. Wayne and I cut it off our tree before the wind and rain came which has decimated all the flowers.

I think having to do a painting in ½ hour helped me with this. It took 79 strokes to complete.

The painting was done on 7 ½ x 7 ½ Art Spectrum paper. I used mostly Great American Pastels and Rembrandt.

I enjoyed the exercise.



Spring Blossom

7.5 x 7.5

Ruth Crowe, Matthews, NC

Thanks once again for the adventure series. I chose a landscape since I had done fruit in a workshop. I did a 5" x 7" piece of 400 uart in beige color. I also made a grid of 100 small squares and as I made a stroke I made a mark with my pastel on the grid. If I made multiple marks with one pastel—I marked the number of boxes on the grid to match the number of strokes I made.

I did a notan and picked my pastel colors before I started. I used about 90 strokes and came back the next day to complete the 100 strokes. Needless to say, I will probably add some more strokes to "Finish off" the painting at a later date.



5 x 7

Jennifer Donolo, Burlington, ON, Canada

Please find my submission for “Limited Strokes” attached. Thank you for this great Adventure. It really makes one be prepared and to think about each stroke.

Miniature Carved Decoy

In 99 Pastel Strokes

From Life

Pastel on Paper (Pastelmat, brown)

9.5 x 11.5 inches



Miniature Carved Decoy 9.5 x 11

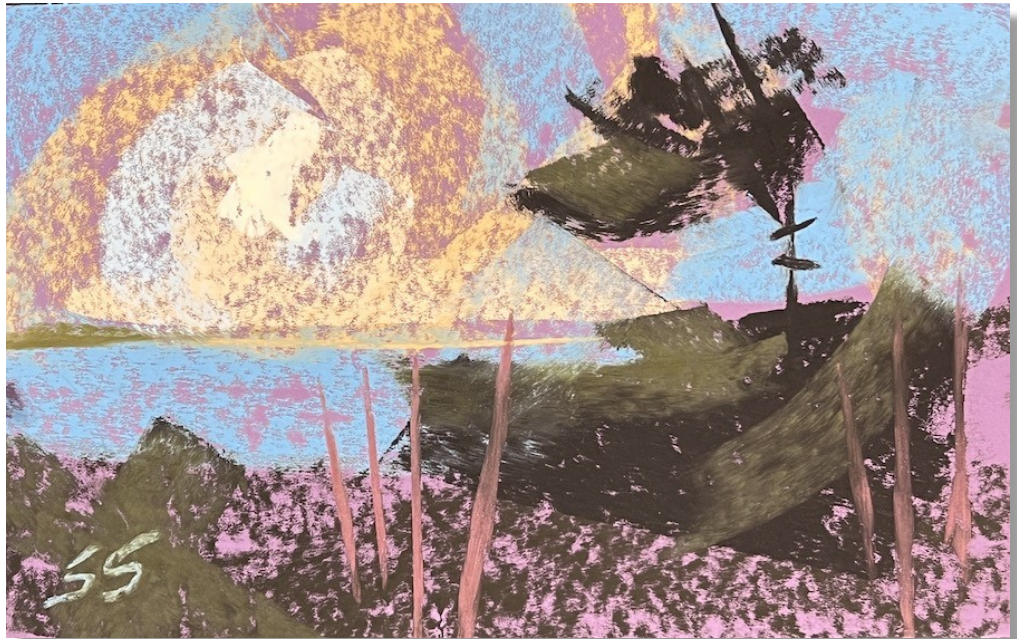
Terrilynn Dubreuil, Asheville

What a great challenge! And it is so interesting that I had JUST done "limited strokes" with my Patreon group for April.

Painting my favorite little tree (because working with a familiar subject helps us with finding the fewest strokes, the essence, of an image) I did a number of small paintings. I'm including 2 here. The 150 strokes and the 55 strokes.

It is SO tricky trying to count while we are painting. But it does help us really focus and consider that each stroke counts the most it possibly can.

This exercise really made an impact on the next "large" painting I did. Simplifying and contemplating, painting deliberately, to make each stroke really count.



Stalwart Tree 55



Stalwart Tree 150
5 x 7

Will Evans, Fairview

100 stroke challenge, I stopped at 80.

This 5"x5", is on Pastel premiere paper, Italian clay, no underpainting.
I was focused more on the double shadows, but the tomato was fun.



BLT for lunch

5 x 5

Pat Fenda, Tampa, FL

Blue Bird Nest

6 x 8



Here is my 100 Stroke painting. Title :Blue Bird Nest, size 6"x8" on uart 400. I am a new member.
Pat Fenda from Tampa, FL.

This was challenging & fun. I enjoyed counting my strokes & being much more thoughtful of color plus placement.

Have a strictly artful day,

J Kay Gordon, Weaverville

Across Frenchman Bay
(in 94 strokes) 7 x 5

My title sounds like I might have been swimming? ...but not, because the water never got out of the 50's!



I took full advantage of the definition of “stroke,” so that my pastel wiggled around the paper for long periods. For instance, the expanse of the sky was only 5 strokes. All of that grass area at the bottom was only 3 strokes...one for the ground below the grass, one for the lighter grass, one for the more yellow grass. The details of the rocks and the sky-holes in the trees took many strokes as there was no way to maintain contact with the paper between elements.

I can see a true value in this exercise...carefully considering each stroke before taking it. This is something that I do, anyway...some would say that I ponder too long!

I worked on beige UArt 800, and used a variety of soft pastels...avoided the harder ones so that I could get solid coverage with a single application. The softness also encouraged some color mixing and avoided hard edges where I didn't want them.

MaryAnn Grib, Gray, TN



Try some bananas 5 x 7

I have to say this was the most annoying challenge. ☹️ Keeping track of the marks was a real distraction for me and made it difficult to focus on the work.

I first tried a more complicated subject and I realized quickly it wasn't a good one for this challenge. Then I chose something more simple.

"Try some bananas" is on 5x7 multi media paper primed with clear gesso. I counted 73 marks but it could have been a bit more.

Sorry....did my best.

Mona Hearne, Matthews, NC

Amazing, I certainly SEE my mistakes from this 100 stroke exercise.
However, I thoroughly enjoyed this challenge and see how very helpful it is.
I need to do more 100 stroke attempts.
8x8 400 Uart. Sennelier and Ludwig.

The scene is from a magazine cover.

Thanks Kay for all you do.



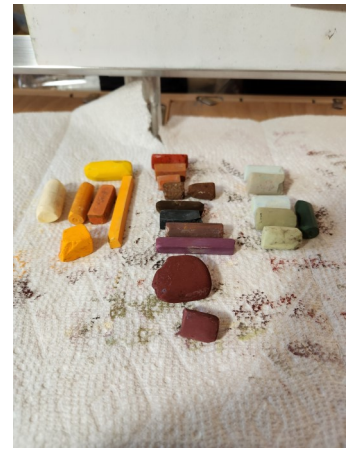
100 strokes Tulips

8 x 8

Anne Hudson, Lexington, KY



Double Oak
At 100 strokes



Wow, this was a real challenge for me.

This painting is a "5 x 7" using Uart 500 sanded paper with an acrylic underpainting, then I added various hard and soft pastels. The gold underpainting was to capture the golden color in the bourbon (technique taught by Rita Kirkland). It didn't turn out like I had hoped. I will call this little painting, "Double Oak" (See photo reference of the Woodford Reserve Bourbon Bottle). I am sharing a picture of the painting at 100 strokes, then another after I finished the painting. I haven't painted glass before and wanted to give it a try. I don't usually paint specific objects either. Usually, I paint vague landscape paintings. The subject was probably too challenging for this adventure. However, it was great fun to give it a try. Tips for painting glass and selecting colors are helpful and appreciated.

Double Oak
7 x 5



Kathy Hutchinson, Rutherfordton, NC



ONE MORE SUNFLOWER

9 X 8

I used a variety of soft and hard pastels.

This is a painting with which I am familiar since I have painted it in watercolor and designed a watercolor batik from the original.

I expected it to be difficult to complete in 100 strokes or less, but actually accomplished it in around 70. Using a medium grit paper I was able to layer plenty of colors. That helped as I could make multiple connected strokes.

Lynn Jackson, Brevard, NC

I never paid much attention as to how many strokes I used in a painting. I tried to connect large areas with one stroke of color and did contour outline drawing to stretch the amount of strokes I could use to define a shape.

Needless to say I fell short of completing this piece, but I like the unfinished background.

Fun and interesting assignment!

Bearded Iris

12 x 9



Karen Knaub, Lake Lure

Another tough challenge. I am usually very detail oriented so I had to think/choose my subject carefully and plot out the colors.

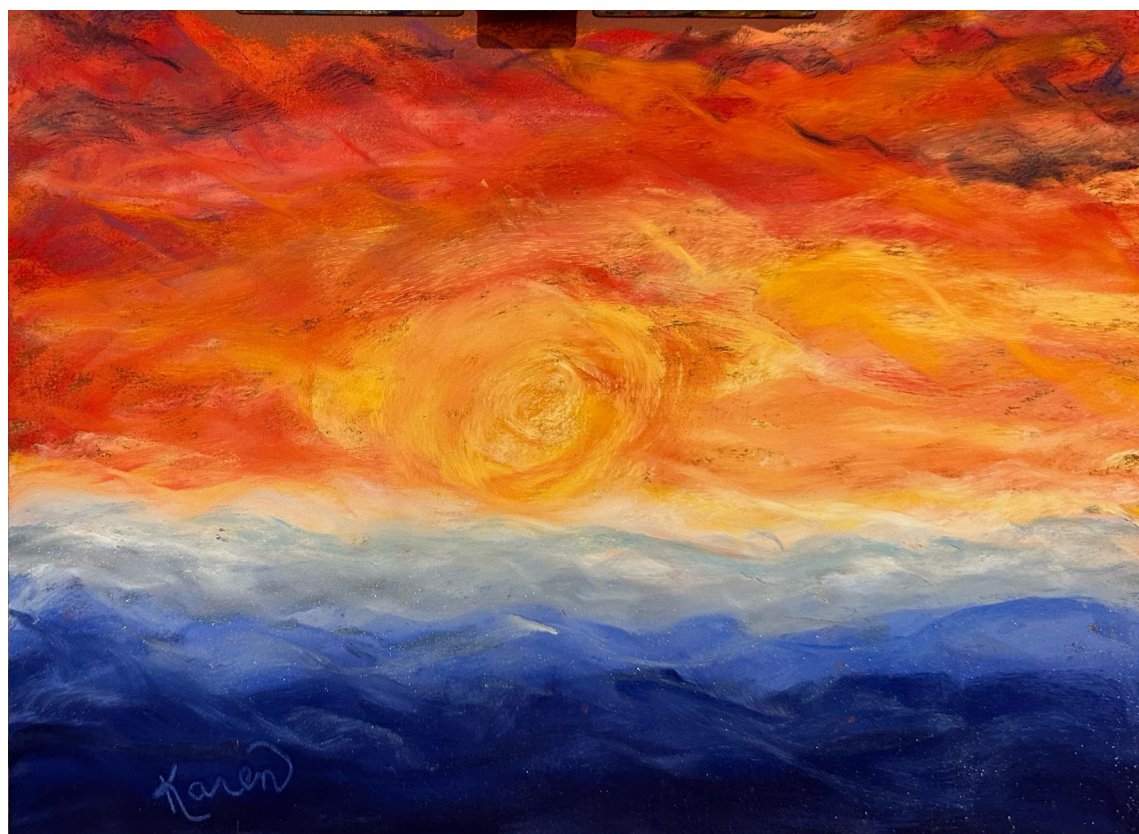
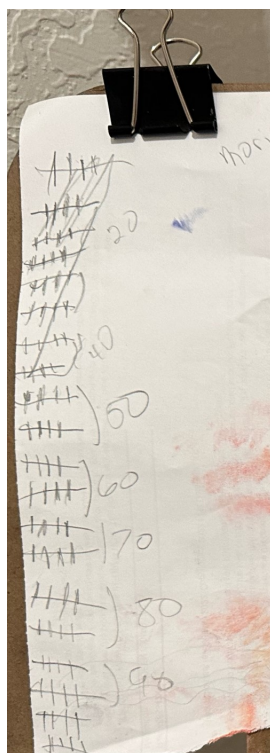
I usually do an under painting but did not want to use up strokes with that so instead I started with terracotta sanded paper.

This was done with all soft pastels.

100 strokes exactly which included my signature.

Mountain Sunset

9 x 11



Cindy Lidd, Garner, NC

Bowl of Fruit 6 x 9



Attached is my drawing, limited to 20 strokes, done on black Uart 600 paper, 9" x 6", "Bowl of Fruit"

It's probably the quickest drawing I've ever done.

Thanks for the challenge!

Anne Lunney, Melrose, MA

100 strokes was definitely a learning experience. I felt with a 100 strokes it would be quick...and it was, until I started. A few paintings started and kept to the requirement for a short time, but I have a problem stepping away from the pastels, especially when I'm not happy with what I see in front of me, and then it's a matter of tweak, tweak, tweak.

So it was back to the drawing board, and I kept this to under 100 strokes. Do I like it ? ¹⁰⁰ No, but I did twist and turn the pastels. I will probably do an alcohol wash on this, and work on it from there. In hindsight, I wish I had done a landscape with mostly sky; I might have been more satisfied with the result . I still may try that, but I wanted to keep up with the deadline requirement, so I will put that in the #Win column.

Thank you for another great learning opportunity.



*Tulips Emerge
out of a practice exercise
10 x 8 Uart paper*

Margaret V Lyn-Soroken, Black Mountain

Title: Bison

Size: 8x10

Medium: pastels on grey
paper



Comment: this challenge made me realize just how many strokes I actually make..

I counted as I put down strokes, 50 at first, then 8, 30 and I did blend to get rid of wht of paper...wondered if that counted? I practiced on other ideas but settled on simplicity of shapes, unfinished ..give or take some smudges/strokes!

Thanks for challenge

Linda Medders-Jackson, Cross, SC



Lil Chickadee

6 x 4.5

100 strokes (that was hard). Art spectrum sanded paper.
Photo used credit my friend Ann Zentara

Caryn Russ, Asheville and Tampa, FL

As a new APS member, this was my first challenge. I really enjoyed it.

I chose a subject that would allow me to make long, continuous strokes. I knew I could draw the orchid leaves and roots using a lot of zig-zag, back-and-forth movements, so fewer strokes were needed to complete them. I would have normally drawn the glass jar with several concentric circles but decided to freehand the outline in a single stroke to save strokes.

I created the majority of the drawing with Rembrandt soft pastels. I used Nupastels for the finer roots. I tried to save as many strokes as I could for highlights in the glass jar and for creating depth in the orchids and leaves. I had 29 of these strokes left for those final touches and used primarily Sennelier pastels to heighten the effect, particularly with the bright whites.



Orchids in Glass 9 x 11

Andrea Stutesman, Black Mountain

Title: Poppy

UArt Sanded paper - 240 grit

Size: 6" x 6"

Interesting challenge. It kept me loose. I'm going to try not to add to it. Efficiency of stroke is definitely a goal.



Poppy
6 x 6

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