

The following 29 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 D-2 “Eggs Optional”

Welcome to our second Adventure in Series “D”. This challenge is to explore the possibilities of an ordinary yet remarkable natural object “The Birdnest!”

Every species of bird has developed its own unique specifications over time. A penguin hollows out a space on a rocky beach. A hummingbird weaves its minuscule nest out of thin grass held together with spider webs. Some birds simply add their eggs to another bird’s nest and move on.

Over time, bird nests have been the subject of many artists, either alone or as part of an elaborate still life.

Van Gogh sketched and painted several bird nests in his short troubled life.

Step 1: Decide on the bird nest(s) you want to paint, select a style, such as realistic or abstract, and then develop your composition. Remember eggs are optional!

Step 2: Create a painting that is the main focus, celebrating the colors and textures of this natural object.

Step 3: **Take a photo** of your inspiration and the painting you created and send it to Kay Gordon (jkaygordon364@gmail.com) by **August 23rd at 6:00PM**. Be sure to include the **title and size** of your painting. Also, please feel free to share any comments you have about doing this particular Adventure. Your sharing is a valuable part of each and every Adventure!

Step 4: Remember this deadline is firm and nothing is posted that is received after 6:00pm on **August 23rd**. Note that your artwork does not need to be in its final form. The Adventures are provided so we can explore painting with pastels together and share what we learn as we grow in our experience and expertise. So enjoy the process and jump in!

Kathy Amspacher, Hendersonville

I decided to use a painting of sunflowers I was working on to use as a setting for my birds nest! I was a little short of time. The nest photo is public domain stock photo and the photo of sunflowers is my own.

I used Tom Christopher's method for painting the sunflowers and then added the nest at the end. It is located on the right side in the painting. The woods are off my upper deck where I originally had the sunflowers sitting.

I hope this qualifies for the D-2. The nest and Mother feeding are from memories of birds in the marsh nests on the east S.C. coast.

prepped gatorboard with Golden pastel ground

board splattered with acrylic house paint and Golden ground overlaid to accept pastel

Used soft pastels and prismacolors for the birds nest and birds.

Was fun and thank you again for this adventure!



Hidden in Full View

12 x 24

Catharin McCarthy Banta, Hendersonville



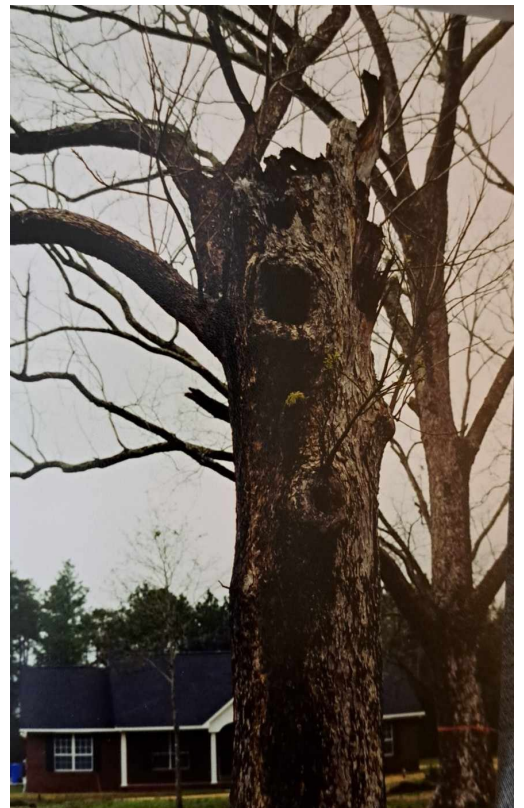
Sweet Bluebird Nest
9 x 12

brown Uart Paper

I currently volunteer as a bluebird monitor in our local park. They are very dear to me, and I really enjoyed this challenge. Bluebirds usually make their nest with Pine needles and grasses. This nest actually had five eggs and one had hatched, but I did not want to attempt to draw the baby bird! I also tried out a different color of paper which added a bit more depth to things .

Thank you for a fun challenge!

Claire Benton, Riverview, FL



Haunted Woodpecker Condo
9 x 4.5 Uart

Daphne Boder, Pittsboro, NC

Here is my painting of a nest. I went looking in my bluebird houses for a nest from this summer's nesting season. This nest was in one of those houses and I noticed a blue feather sticking up. I found 3 dead little birds in the nest almost grown. So sad and I have no idea what happened.

This little painting is 5 x 7 on anthracite Pastelmat. And it's called "Failed Nest."



Failed Nest

7 x 5

Karen Chambers, Candler, NC



End of Season, 14" x 12", Canson board

Deborah Chase, Rutherfordton, NC



Hidden There

7.5 x 9.5

Here is my entry for the bird's nest. I was tempted to paint the propane tank cap with a few twigs sticking out for a wren's nest but finally found one in a forsythia bush.

Nancy Clausen, Swannanoa, NC

I named it A Tree House for a Bird.

It still needs some work, but basically it's done. It's done on a 6 ½ x 8 1/2 sample of La Carte paper. I'm not sure if I like the paper or not. Sometimes I seem to be fighting to put color down and other times it was fine. I thought I'd have time to try another support, to see how that worked. I will try this again on maybe an Ampersand bord.

I used a variety of pastels. I used Great American, Gerault, Paul deMarrias and whatever else I had that I thought would work. I did use a Holbein to start the drawing.

I liked the challenge and will do some other bird nest's.



A Tree House for a Bird 6.5 x 8.5

Claire Crook, Hensersonville, NC

Architectural Delight 9 x 12



Here is my nest. Its on 9x12 Art Spectrum paper. I used new pastels, pastel pencils, and some Terry Ludwig soft pastels. I enjoyed capturing the light on branches and twigs

Diane de Grasse, Black Mountain

Since we have Robins in our porch fern every year, it was easy to find a photo and I'd previously painted the nest in gouache, so I knew it well. Maybe too well, because I couldn't view it abstractly.

It's painted on black ArtSpectrum paper with a mix of pastels, mostly soft. Thanks to the black background it came together quickly while I enjoyed swiping marks for the fibers.

Thanks again for the inspiration!



Our Nest

12 x 9

Jennifer Donolo, Burlington, ON, Canada

Pastel on paper (Art Spectrum Colourfix Aubergine)

I used Unison, Terry Ludwig and Rembrandt Pastels, and some pastel pencils

A good exercise in mark making and the use of neutral colours. Such precious things that fall out of trees in the yard. We found this nest in the grass. It must have fallen or been blown from the tree way up high. It was in perfect, sculpted condition, created with materials from all over—twigs, pine needles, old leaves, moss, and Mother Bird Magic.

Thank you for a great Adventure!



Treasures in the Yard

9 x 12

Terrilynn Dubreuil, Asheville, NC

I love the osprey nests .. so many here in Maine .. in the most precarious spots. On top of old telephone poles, dead tree trunks, chimneys, airport runway-entrance lights that sit in the bay.

These magnificent birds are beautiful to watch when they go fishing. They hover in the air for minutes, then dive straight down for their prey. Magnificent. From below they are light (to blend with the sky and hide) and from above they're dark so they can hide on the nest from predators. My painting is a combination of 3 different photos and a lot of what's in my memory. My intent was to minimize and blur the birds and highlight out that beautiful nest made from branches and small logs and tons of twigs.

I'd say about half the sticks I used on this are my homemade pastels. Contrast and complementary colors help bring the nest to focus.

Then, as I was typing in the title to the email I realized .. "OOoooooh! Eggs-optional ... like exceptional!" HA!



Osprey Nest
10 x 8

Will Evans, Fairview

My submission, Eggs Optional. 8x10 on Black Uart 400.

Title "Hope" from a photo.

What caught my eye was how the builder (no idea type of bird) incorporated leaves and grasses into the nest which dried in an range of orange and moss green.

Thanks for another terrific Adventure Challenge



Hope

10 x 8

Pat Fenda, Tampa, FL



Blue Bird Nest of Happiness

9.5 x 9.5

My Mom always spoke of the blue bird of happiness. She had 3 children, so I put us all in the nest!

MaryAnn Grib, Gray, TN

Sending this a bit early as I'll be flying out tomorrow for Alaska. Looking forward to the cool temps and beautiful and inspiring landscape.

I really enjoyed this challenge because it pushed you to use your imagination and create something unique. I decided to play with color on this one and worked on a black background to give it more drama (8x10 multi media paper primed with clear gesso). I started with pastel pencils and liked how it was working so I continued with them. I will work on this some more when I get back but I like where it's going

(untitled)

8 x 10



Alec Hall, Hendersonville

Title: "Lichen, Moss, and Spider Webs

Support: UART 500 grit

Size: 8" x 6"

Pastels: Rembrandt;
Carb-Othello Pastel Pencils



We have a small flock of hummingbirds around our house every summer and I always find these tiny creatures very intriguing.

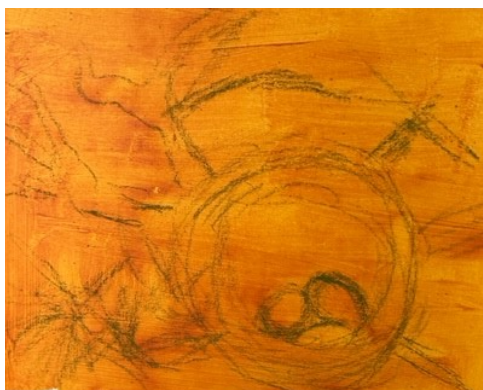
Thus, I thought it would be fun and interesting to paint one on her nest, which she so meticulously builds out of lichen and spider webs, and then lines with soft moss and an occasional found breast feather or down from other birds.

I tried to paint her life-size, thus using a support that is 8" x 6". I may add a few additional small branches to the foreground to give the painting a little more depth.

Thanks for another fun challenge!



Anne Hudson, Lexington, KY



Good evening. "Three Little Birds to Be" completed this afternoon. 8x10" on a scrap of Uart 500 sanded paper with gold acrylic paint. Then a quick composition sketch, followed by pastel/ alcohol road map underpainting, and lastly various layers of soft pastels in blues, greens, orange/red and gray.

I struggled with the nest of various twig shapes. I had to make myself quit overworking. I love the pale blue speckled eggs. They are the story. I wonder when they will hatch?

Thank you for all these challenges that inspire and encourage. I am so grateful. Cheers and blessings to all who love the joy of painting!

Kathy Hutchinson, Rutherfordton, NC

Title: "Can You See Me Now?"

Size: 5" x 7" on Art Spectrum sand

Using various pastels.

I am enjoying all the hummers at my feeders this summer. This little girl seemed a good one to attempt. I did not have a photograph that I took but I have found hummingbird nests. I used them as examples for the nest as well several pictures of birds from the net.

My background could use more work but time is almost up!

What great challenges y'all think up for us. A great big thank you!





This is a robin I think. I found the free photo on the internet.

Drawing a nest was a challenge, but I found if I concentrated on the darks and lights I could pull it off!

I used my new set of Unison pastels. I love the colors! I experimented with a blue sky colored, lightly sanded Canson pastel paper.



Karen Knaub, Lake Lure

Thank you for another challenge.

I chose to do a Robins nest because I wanted the eggs and sky to match.

This was difficult for me to get the depth and twiggy look that you would find in a nest.

All Nestled In

12 x 12



Cindy Lidd, Garner, NC

Attached are two small paintings done on Uart 400 along the theme of "birdhouses". They are both 9"x6". The birdhouse is one that I purchased for bluebirds.



Birdhouse

12 x 9

I put it up fairly late (May), but did have a pair of bluebirds take residence. They had two broods, first one with 4 chicks, and the second with three. I was surprised that they had a second brood as it was so hot during that time.

The second painting is of their last chick out of the house. It seemed like it was never going to leave the nest. The mom probably thought the same thing. Anyway, it was fun to watch. Thanks.

Bluebird

6 x 9



Margaret V Lyn-Soroken, Black Mountain

Title: Osprey Nest

Size: 10 x 8

Medium: pastel/color paper

I took this photo in Fl and finally got to try a pastel..photo blur from below so impression....

Margaret Lyn-Soroken



Linda Medders-Jackson, Cross, SC

Title - Wren Nest

soft pastel mix and pastel pencils

4.25 x 4.25

Male wrens build many nests then carry their little girlfriend to visit all of them. She takes a look and decides if she likes this little dude's carpentry or tells him to hit the road. Some of these lil guys can find the weirdest places to build in. This year had one in the saddlebag of my husband's old motorcycle and a stored bag of potting soil that had a small opening left when folded over (his lady liked that one, had 3 eggs they hatched in it).



Meryl Meyer, Weaverville, NC



Wren's Nest

7 x 8

I painted this a couple of years ago and it found a home. It was gifted to someone who loves bird's nests. I was taking Karen Margulis's Patreon course and this was one of the exercises. It was a little bit intimidating at first. I ended up enjoying the process of weaving it together and creating depth.

Wrens are usually not very neat builders and use all sorts of materials working pretty fast. I tried to show the different textures. I would like to try another nest.

I do not expect points as it was painted a couple of years ago but I wanted to submit it for the web show.

Hope that is okay. It was a great exercise when I painted it.

Melissa Noll, Charlotte, NC



Robin's Eggs

4 x 6



Robin's eggs . On u art 400 . Done with Nu Pastel and one turquoise Terry Ludwig pastel stick.

I didn't have any photos of bird's nests but really loved this challenge. My main takeaway was not to copy the photo . I tried to add flowers but it was too busy so I put the photo away. (The beautiful photo was a free photo I googled). What I do know is that birds love to gather human hair , ribbons , plastic bag remnants to build their nest . When my husband and I cut each other's hair , we throw the hair clippings into the bushes for the birds . In honor of this , I added some gray to the mix. Size 4x6.

Thanks for pushing me to do something I never would have done on my own.

Pat Quigley, Norristown, PA

Too busy this week to try a full scale painting – so here’s my small 5x7-ish postcard-sized study of great blue herons in their craggy stick nest, done on a scrap of pastel mat using only hard pastels. It was more fun than I expected and will inspire me to attempt a bird and nest painting in the future, which I would never have done otherwise. So thank you for the idea!

You guys are so organized. And I can’t stop telling my local club friends about your adventure challenge and how fun it is. I think the week deadline is key to promoting the dive in and thinking. No time to fuss or procrastinate.



Penthouse Nursery

7 x 5

Carol Rollick, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

My offerings are both the nest of the Rainbow of Happiness bird. Whimsical idea probably best suited to acrylic or watercolor , but we are supposed to be having fun, right?



#1 was done on homemade substrate, watercolor underpainting, assorted pastels.

16" x 20"

#2 was done on Pastelmat, some alcohol , Pan Pastels and assorted other soft,

16" x 20"



Gary Rupp, Black Mountain, NC

In this Adventure, I sought to combine architectural and natural elements.

I recall a workshop with Doug Dawson where he tried to do this in all of his plein air paintings and that lesson has stuck with me. He also emphasized that having one of these elements being dominant was important to create more interest for the viewer.

In this painting I chose to make the architectural part dominant, allowing the bird's nest to create contrast with all the sharp, straight lines. I felt the colors made for some additional excitement. The square format also added some useful tension.



Empty Nest Syndrome

Andrea Stutesman, Black Mountain

Title: Robin's Nest

Size: 12h x 16w

Paper: Fisher 400 grit

Pastels: Variety of soft and hard

Loved this challenge. Worked on getting the depth in the nest. Hope I succeeded.

Robin's Nest

12 x 16



Ruth Whitaker, Newnan, GA



Feeding the Baby

7 x 5

"Feeding the Baby" 5x7 on Uart 400lb. paper. Assorted soft pastels and pastel pencils.

This was a fun challenge.

I love hummingbirds, so truly enjoyed my subject.

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