

The impasto of oil paintings, the ethereality of watercolor.

Pastel World

Pastel Art Forum

Art Education Vision

Art Garden

Exhibition & Competition

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Desmond O'Hagan

I have been a professional artist for 35 years and painted with a variety of media during my career. Pastels and oils are my primary media which I work with equally. At the University of New Mexico, I began studying architecture, but after a couple years, I changed schools to study graphic design. I worked for an advertising agency for three years after graduation.

In the late 1980's, I decided to take the leap into fine art. My graphic design/marketing training was crucial to my success as a fine artist. This training gave me an appreciation for self-promotion/marketing and designing my business identity through business cards, show invitations, and promotional flyers. I started working with local galleries and shows and progressively worked with national and international galleries and exhibits.

My career has had many ups and downs but has been creatively enriching and very satisfying. When painting, I gravitate towards a variety of subject matter which includes figurative, urban scenes, still lifes, interiors, and landscapes. This keeps me engaged and enthusiastic. I do work on themes like street scenes or interiors for extended periods, but when finished, I need to change subjects to allow for experimentation and growth.

What I mostly enjoy about pastels is the purity of color and spontaneity of the medium. These qualities have been influential when I paint in oils as I strive

for that purity of color when mixing paint. My approach to creating art is based on the bold, direct application of color with detail only loosely implied. I prefer the viewer's eye to make up that detail through flicks and edges of color. This approach can be applied to explore a variety of subjects and a variety of painting sizes. I use the sides of the pastels to apply color much like using a large flat brush in oils.

My artistic influences are many of the late 1800's painters including Joaquin Sorolla, John Singer Sargent, Anders Zorn, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, and the mid 1900's painters including Franz Kline, Wayne Thiebaud, and Mary Abbott. All of these painters contributed to developing my style and technique in painting. I never tire of studying their art, taking in subject choice, themes and brush strokes, and use of color and light expressed in their own unique language.

Around 1999, I was contacted by the Northwest Pastel Society with an offer to teach a 3-day workshop. At that point in my career, I had not taught a workshop before but was intrigued. My research included consulting with other artists who had teaching experience. I found my first workshop challenging but very enjoyable in connecting with other artists. I've continued to teach ever since, however, it's still secondary to my studio and plein air paintings. I devote the majority of my time to creating art for national and international exhibits



Desmond O'Hagan

Desmond O'Hagan has achieved "Eminent Pastelist" status with the International Association of Pastel Societies and is a Member of their "Masters Circle." He is also a Master Pastelist with the Pastel Society of America and is listed in Who's Who in American Art. O'Hagan has won several awards in national and international exhibits including IAPS convention exhibit's Prix'd Pastel Award and "Southwest Art" magazine's Award of Excellence (twice) at the "Windows to the Divine" Exhibitions in Denver, CO. He has also won the George Innes, Jr. Memorial Award from the Salmagundi Club in New York City. His paintings have been the subject of feature articles in numerous national and international magazines, and his art is in public and private collections, and museums in the U.S., Europe, Canada, and China.



Title: Urban Lights, Parisian Bridge Size: 16"×20"

and furnishing paintings to the galleries that represent my art. I do feel it's beneficial to be a practicing professional artist if you plan to teach.

One of the benefits of teaching for me is leaving my studio to experience other artist's work, and to offer advice and instruction in advancing their approach to painting. Being a professional artist is a solitary career, so interacting with other artists can be very rewarding. Having a perpetual student's view has been essential for me personally to discover new directions and avenues to art that will enhance my own painting technique. Teaching art does come with challenges as students have a variety of levels of expertise, so I work individually with each student during a workshop to address their interests. My general approach to art instruction is to emphasize values and shapes in a painting. Identifying shapes and establishing correct color values is essential for a successful painting but can be difficult to achieve. A

main goal of my workshops is to help students understand and appreciate the importance of these elements in their paintings.

Another important goal is showing students how to portray the effects of light. This is a consistent theme in all my paintings. Whether it's sunlight, streetlights, interior lights, or sunsets, all present challenges in portraying a realistic effect. There are many ways to paint light and we explore specific techniques in the workshops. I always encourage experimentation when teaching. Trying new combinations of pastel colors in overlapping or slight blending can give a painting such a unique twist. As with oil painting, I work from dark to light in pastels forming shapes and edges and applying limited detail towards the end of the painting. I feel these techniques were very important in the growth of my style. Subject matter is secondary to shapes, values, and light. When one has a firm grasp of these concepts, any



Title: Late Winter, Denver Size: 9"×12"

subject should be able attainable. I teach a limited number of workshops throughout the year. Information is available on my website www.desmondhagan.com.

I continue to strive for new ways to apply pastels and oils by consistent exposure to inspiring art. I find wandering through museums and art galleries is a never-ending education. Recently, I had an art show in Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the Sugarman Peterson Gallery titled "The Contemporary New Mexico Landscape." In this show, I explored a more expressionist view of the landscape. Through the use of shapes and color, I experimented with less traditional views. The New Mexico landscape is quite rugged and was perfect for paintings with varying texture and unique color. I lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for ten years as a teenager and spent much of my time in the hills and mountains around the city. Along with the famous New Mexico sunsets, the color of the landscape during varying times of the day can be very captivating. I continue to paint these landscapes as there is much more to explore.

Another favorite theme is urbanscapes. My son and I visited Paris and Bordeaux, France last July, and I returned with hundreds of digital images for painting reference. I love the combination of architecture, people, and light effects in the urban scenes.



Title: Dublin Market, Ireland Size: 18"×24"



Title: Glasgow Pub Size: 9"×12"



Title: Midday Coffee Size: 16"×20"

It doesn't get much better than central Paris for spectacular architecture. I've been to Europe several times and always find new unique images to paint along with the bonus of all the great museums to visit. I am currently working on these paintings along with some of my local themes of Denver, Colorado.

A couple of years ago, I was

asked by the Jack Richeson & Co. to create a pastel box using their signature pastels. After researching and evaluating the colors I most use, I developed a 40-pastel box set titled "Desmond O'Hagan Essential Pastels." Although I've painted with several different brands of pastels over the years including Unison, Rembrandt, and Sennelier, I'm currently painting only with this set. For

more information, please go to www.judsonsart.com or www.dakotapastels.com. This set allows me to paint any scene due to the assortment of colors including warm/cool, muted/pure, and darks/mediums/lights, that can be used to overlap and blend in a more painterly way. I treat my pastel palette like an oil painter's relying on a combination of colors to achieve a wide variety of



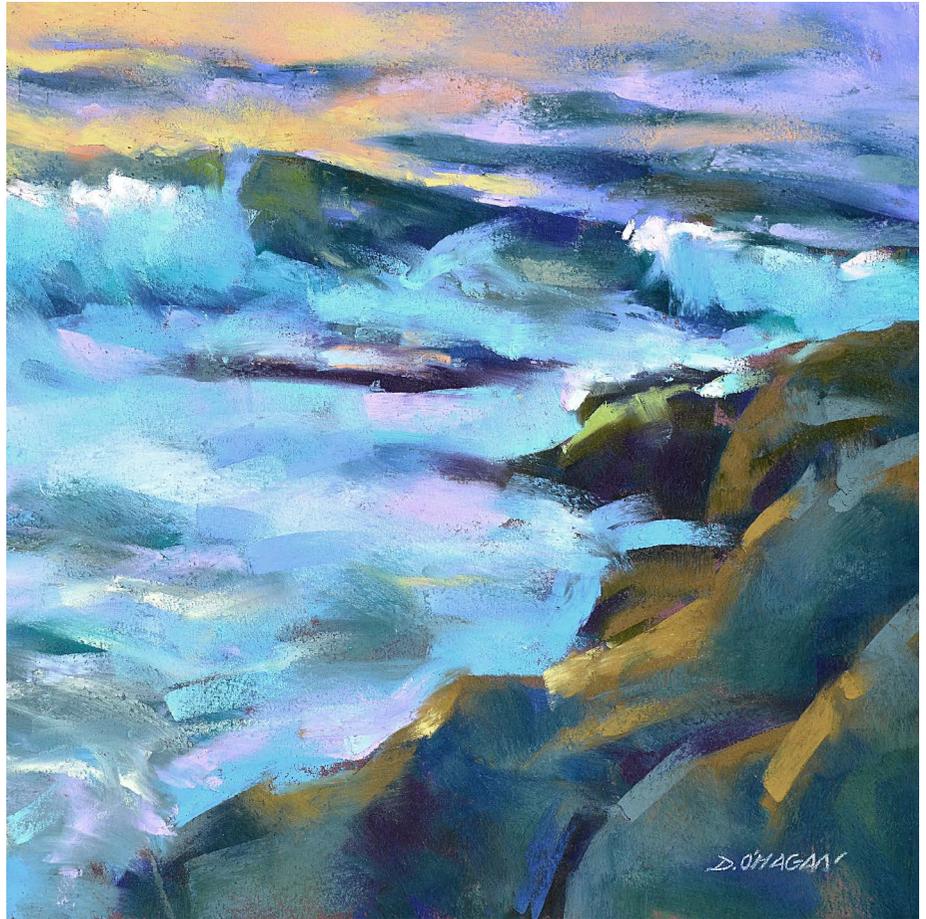
Title: Street Corner, New York City Size: 24"×36"

effects. I've also found that a limited assortment is more manageable for plein air painting. I thoroughly enjoyed developing this set and the process of fine-tuning which exact colors are essential for experimentation. Whether it's landscapes, figurative, still lifes, or cityscapes, I strive for a more painterly spontaneous approach, and pastels are perfect for this.

In 2022, I joined Mastrius.com as a mentoring Master Artist. This is a new unique direction for me that I've thoroughly enjoyed. Since the sessions are via Zoom, I'm in contact with artists across the globe. I discuss a variety of topics and present digital slide shows as well as critique participants' paintings. I meet with the group once a month, and there is a maximum of eight participants. The limited group size offers much opportunity for discussions and personal growth.

Online classes have also become another interesting layer in my teaching experience. During the pandemic, I researched and developed a series of 2-day online workshops which were well-received. These online workshops were ideal for connecting with students across the U.S. and globally. Now that we're in post-pandemic times, I'm planning online workshops once or twice a year.

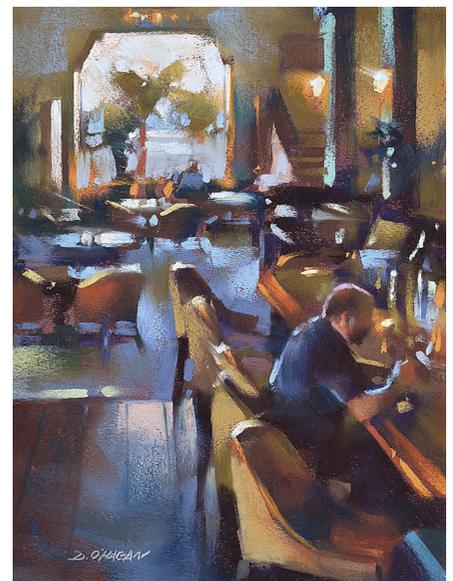
As I continue to move forward in my artist/teacher career, I look forward to discovering new techniques in painting pastels and oils. I also plan to travel and visit and revisit the famous museums around the world. As mentioned earlier, to develop your art, one must always be a student experimenting with new ideas and exploring new concepts that will enrich one's art. 🌍



Title: Ocean Rhythms Number 4 Size: 12"×12"



Title: Night Lights, Charleston Size: 12"×9"



Title: Lobby, Valencia Hotel Size: 12"×9"