



Master Painters of the World

United Kingdom

OIL

Natalie Toplass



Blush, oil on box canvas, 50 x 50 inches

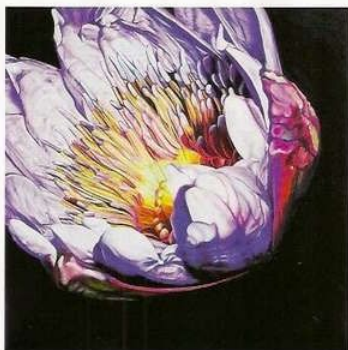
How I paint

The scale of my work is very important to me. By enlarging the scale, the nature of the subject is intensified, and enables the viewer to be enveloped and to be surrounded by colour.

I work from photos, which is a never-ending search as I'm terrible at photography. I take hundreds, looking for the right response, the right feel, then take a pencil sketch from the selected one. At this point I work out the composition, turning it round, cutting areas off until I'm happy with the result. I then scale up my sketch onto the canvas; this is an important part of the process as it enables me to get a feeling for the physical structure of the flower, fine tuning alterations and composition.

The flower itself is just the starting point for an abstract study of transparency, colour and form. The effects of sunlight and shadows are having an increasing effect on my work. The subtlety of colours and textures is incredibly inspiring, changing throughout the day with the light.

Each bloom is so different, offering delicacy and detail, but also strength and amazing vibrancy. It's these differences that fascinate me and I try to capture that essence in my work.



Waterlily, oil on box canvas, 30 x 30 inches



Bearded Iris, oil on box canvas, 50 x 50 inches



Two Red Tulips, oil on box canvas, 30 x 30 inches

my art in the making Chiaroscuro



STAGE 1 First flower complete

I tend to work left to right so I don't lean on any fresh paint.

STAGE 2 A perfect fit

I move the canvas around to fit me rather than altering my painting position. This also enhances the painting process by removing the principal of a 'right way up.'



STAGE 3 Onto the second one

Completing the second flower.



STAGE 4 Highlights

Just starting the highlights for the stem and leaves.

For this painting

I chose a 50 x 50" box canvas, giving it a strong physical presence. I use refined linseed oil with Winsor & Newton oil colours, building up layers of colour. In this case I used Titanium White, Cadmium Yellow Pale hue, Permanent Crimson Lake, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Raw Umber, Chrome Green hue, Terre Verte hue, Phthalo Blue and Ivory Black. Painstakingly mixing and blending for each brushstroke, I then spend hours taking it off with a number of dry brushes from sizes 4 to 10 to achieve a more delicate, translucent appearance. This process may happen up to three times to gain the depth and intensity of colour I'm looking for. I also work in very clear sections, ensuring that I complete a whole section in one day, as I find the paint too dry to work with the following day. When the painting is complete I tend to use a simple black or white as a background, so the focus is entirely on the flower, ensuring a strong impact.



STAGE 5 Leaves & background

Completing the leaves and background.



about the artist

Since studying painting at Lancashire University, Natalie has been inspired by the different qualities of light and texture in nature. More predominantly, she has been studying flowers and seeds, bringing a fresh perspective to a beautiful and delicate subject. Natalie's paintings are meticulously detailed and often painted on a large scale, taking weeks to complete.

Growing up with her parents running a floristry business, meant being surrounded with beautiful flowers with never-ending variations of colour, shape and size. She drew them from an early age using coloured pencil and an A4 sketch pad. Through her college years she moved away from detailed work and threw herself into abstract large scale figurative work.

When Natalie moved to Shropshire in 2003 she was approached to produce paintings for Camden market, including painting flowers. The excitement flooded back to her and she hasn't looked back since, continuing to be inspired.

Her work is available through her website at www.natalietoplass.com where she also has limited edition prints, mounted and framed available. Commissions are available on request.

Natalie exhibits regularly at Artgallery.co.uk and through them at the Tetbury Gallery and also the Knapp gallery in Regents Park, London. Also at the Judith Blacklock Gallery and Floristry school in Knightsbridge, London.