

WELCOME TO HOUSE OF SHORT STORIES. PUBLISHING. & FINE ARTS GALLERY.

MAKING WATERCOLOUR PAINTS, FOR MY BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS & FINE ARTS COMMISSIONS.

I have always made my own paints, even back when I ran the Spud U Like and did all of those children's parties in the eighties. I made all the cakes & pastillage cards from scratch, all handmade & decorated, with plaques painted with food-coloured paints. Even then, I would make my own edible binders and food-coloured paints. It is something that I have always done. Then during lockdown, I actually painted with food colouring as I had no paints and my first painting was the Story board for my Minty books which was the giant painting of 'In The Garden.' Which as you can see on my banner here and on my website, with this little fellow Hoowie Owl living in my giant old oak tree. The colours are vivid and there are many more than the real range of watercolours, and I find it easier to work with them after forty years.

So, it was no different to make my own watercolour paints, as the principle is the same. I use earthy pigment colours for a warm palette, for my Minty Woodland Paintings, now expanding my range to include pastels. I have a dozen colours that I can mix and blend to make at least fifty colours from. Each paint pigment has its own characteristics and behaves in a different way when the binder is added. As I need to have the pigments vivid at their full strength to pop on the page of my stories, I use my illustrations to tell the stories bringing them to life on the page. I make my binders myself, I use a natural Kordofan Acacia Gum Arabic, adding purified boiling water to dissolve the resin. I add in a couple of drops of glycerine as a humectant, otherwise the paints become too dry to quickly and oil of clove, for its natural preservative, and wonderful smell.

This binder makes a very dark glossy thick rich liquid when using the resins natural acacia, with the nature's earthy pigments for our woodland palette, I mull the two creating the most wonderful glossy shiny bright vivid eye-catching colours, some are smoother opaque colours and creamy, a dream to paint with, while others are transparent with a greater luminosity to glaze with. There are the more grainy granulating colours that leave a look that is quite different, they look fabulous in washes as they create a deeper depth of colour. Then you need a selection of watercolour papers to use the different types of paints. I still make the edible binder from powered Gum Acacia which makes a white binder for lighter more pastel watercolour paints.

I then have the paints and a much broader range of colours to bring my paintings alive on the page. Bringing not only the stories to life but also the paints. I use half pans, that I can hold in my hand and using liquid version paint, I can paint quickly. They are thick in the pans, and dry, so you will need to add water to work up a gorgeous thick watercolour on your palette, it covers on the paper well, but my reason for using this dryer version is so that I have an endless supply, but that it is as natural a product as I can make. An Artist Organic Watercolour paint with no fillers, and none of the stickiness that you get from shop brought tubes, which I will never go back to using.

They are creamy and luscious to use and when newly made they are a lot thicker and can be used like oils, painting directly on as coverage without needing any water,

They come into their own when adding more water especially for doing wet in wet paintings, they flow so lovely on the page granulating & sinking so lovely into the paper, creating wonderful effects. I love the chemical compositions, blending and mixing all by hand, I spend hours making just the right shade of green or colour for that particular flower. I use so much paint when doing a detailed wildlife painting that I have to make huge batches of each colour with its alternate dark shadow colour.

I am so confident in my Mischievous Minty Woodland Palette that If I can make enough to use myself and have more made. I had Richard the printer make us point of sale for the paints and packaging, so that I can market them to sell, in our website store and on Etsy, but the larger paintings need a constant supply, and my time is always limited. I make a hundred at a time and always manage to use them all, I always run out of one colour or another. (My 21 colours in a Woodland Palette.) KSJ

