

Valley Roads and Mountain Path

These compositions derive from a series of large paint/ pastel drawings completed on site at Tudes, a fantastic hamlet in the foot hills of the Picos de Europa in Andalucía in northern Spain. We made the trip in early autumn 2013.

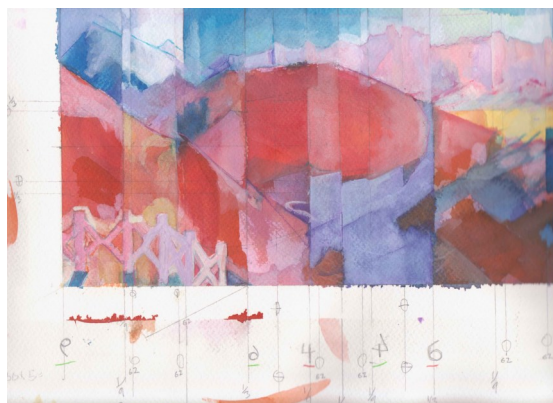


The scale of the landscape was overwhelming and dramatic. Arriving in cloud and mist and exploring for the first day; pleased with the landscape but not overwhelmed until half way through the first drawing I noticed a dark triangle in the sky and realised that all the mountains were shrouded in cloud. And they were really big! Dawn the following morning revealed the whole range bathed in pink light.

I drew and painted from a viewing point just outside the village working from the back of my car or climbed up along a hill behind the village using a wheelbarrow to carry my equipment.



Evening studies followed – the evening light shafting through the layers of mountains and hills. 2 of these pastel/ mixed media pieces were the starting points for the 2 large studio pieces





The aim of these smaller studies was to explore different composition structures. The composition is governed by a grid based on different intervals. In one system the dimensions are divided into 16th the other 9ths

Key points are taken on the 4th, 6th and 9th or in the 16th division the 7th 13th and 16th each of the 4 watercolours explore 1 of these 2 options for both original pastel drawings.

These divisions form points from which diagonals and dynamic lines are projected. These start to form the structure into which the image is integrated.

The rather complex divisions derive from structures developed in the Renaissance by Botticelli and his followers in their attempt to construct compositions that relate to natural rhythms and musical structure and the golden ratio.

The large oil paintings combine the image with the chosen grid to create a composition that shows the landscapes' depth and space and a more abstract rhythm, energy and colour that runs across the surface.

The paintings were first exhibited in 2015 at my open studio show. They then went through a radical process of revision over the course of the year where the initial composition and tonal relationships were refined and developed into the versions that exist today.