

## Stewart Lowdon

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Born in 1932, Stewart Lowdon trained in Edinburgh from 1950-1955, specialising in Drawing and Painting and associated complimentary studies at Edinburgh College of Art.

His family background was Law and Medicine, one or other of which he was expected to follow but, perhaps disappointingly for his parents, Art chose him, rather than the other way round! (He had joined an outdoor sketching club when he was twelve, and it was at the suggestion of two of the senior members that he sent a drawing to the Society of Scottish Artists exhibition when he was sixteen ... and had it accepted, after which art seemed the natural route to take.)

By mere good fortune, as a result of a life-changing experience in his second year at college, he became a painter, as opposed to an illustrator or designer. He became 'addicted' to colour, rhythm and tone. Picture *'making'* was out: *'painting'* was in. Over the years, too, he has become convinced that painting is a passive, not an active process. You can't preconceive or design a painting cynically as you would a tourist gewgaw. Nor is a real painting a cloned version of other people's work, just because you think it fashionable and that it might sell.

Escaping the bounds of illustration and narration is not easy for any artist, especially when painting landscapes and still lifes directly from the subject in watercolour – a medium about which there are a lot of misguided presuppositions as to its speed of handling, and the doubtful lightfastness of the colours and papers. In fact, modern pigments and supports are very durable.

So, where are we? A painting, is not a pre-planned production. I don't draw and fill in; I work in splashes of colour, and success or failure can depend on the first few brushstrokes on the bare paper. Every picture is original and new because I only paint directly from my subjects, and they are never the same two days running.