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Front cover and 12 page feature article
for **Acrylic Artist magazine - Fall issue 2015**



FALL 2015
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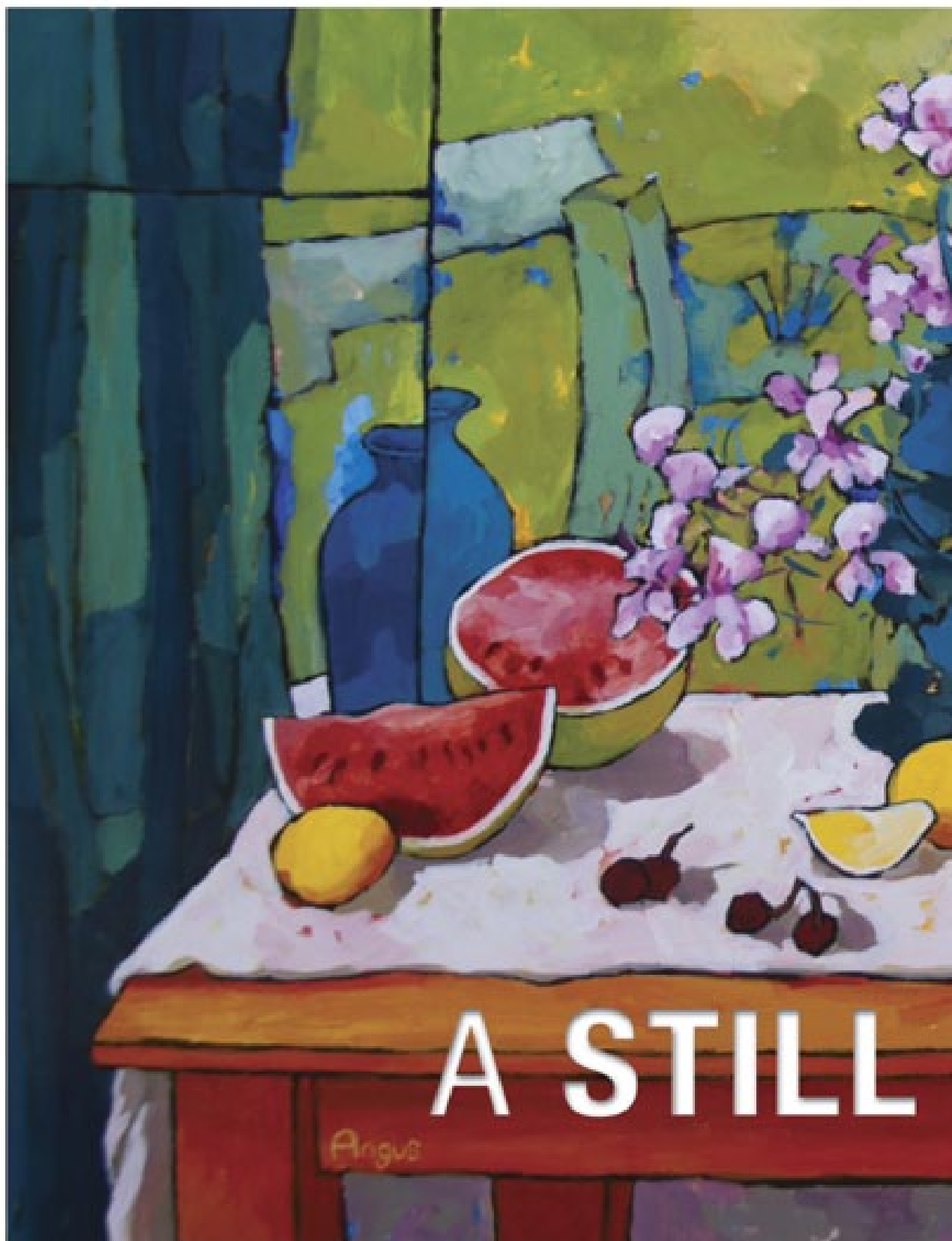
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A STILL



Angus Wilson's fragmented and vibrantly colored acrylic work has an impromptu air that belies a deliberate approach.

By Lisa Dolan

LIFE DIVIDED



IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT WITHIN ANGUS WILSON'S WORK, THERE ARE NO shrinking violets, or reticent reds or bashful blues for that matter. Vibrant, bold hues are the calling card of his still lifes, which might appear leisurely crafted, yet are the result of careful planning.

His process has been likened to a swan on a pond. The surface is all grace and elegance, but underneath, he says, "the legs are thrashing around like nobody's business. I want my work to appear effortless and passionate, but under the hood I'm doing an awful lot of thinking and planning," he explains.

The spontaneous, impasto appearance of his work is attributable in part to fragmenting lines, the result of Cubist influence and a happy accident early in his artistic career. A little more than 10 years ago, he'd been working on a traditional still life that was particularly challenging and just before stopping for a break, he impulsively painted segmented square shapes across the canvas. It was such a departure from his previous work, he wasn't sure what to make of it and set it aside for several months.

That moment of impulsivity would end up being a turning point in his career, and the dissecting lines a compositional tool. The fragmenting lines—another





The drapes create a strong vertical backdrop and frame the composition in ***Bringing the Outside Inside*** (previous page; acrylic on wood, 30x48). The tablecloth is anything but white, bouncing a variety of subtle colors.

Color creates a sense of warmth and well-being in ***Tulips Under California Sun*** (opposite, top; acrylic on wood, 22x30).

The change in perspective, this time from above with a whimsical "fish eye" distortion, creates quiet drama in ***Stargazers With Pomegranate on Green Table*** (acrylic on panel, 36x24).

"I love the shape of snapdragons, so in ***Snapdragons and Oranges With Blue Drape*** (opposite, bottom; acrylic on panel, 36x24), I emphasized them by putting a powerful blue into the back drape," says Wilson. "I sympathized that strong color with the soft white shades of the jug and tablecloth."

In *Iris and Yellow Drape* (right; acrylic on panel, 36x24), the smaller flowers serve to direct the viewer's eye to the irises, and the mid-size objects enhance the transition.

"For *Peonies and Peruvian Lilies on Blue Table* (opposite, top; acrylic on wood, 28x48), I placed the peonies centrally and created a triangular composition," says Angus. "The table running lengthwise further accentuates the overall composition."

While the viewer's eye is drawn to the flowers in *Rhododendron Bathed in Summer Warmth* (opposite, bottom; acrylic on panel, 24x18), the Cloisonnism-inspired lines then draw the gaze around the painting and back to the focal point.

Angus says, "There's something magical about a still-life arrangement painted outside; capturing the nuanced shades of sunlight."





trademark of his work—draw attention to specific elements and create a visual stimulus.

A Wealth of Inspiration

Early on, Angus worked to establish a strong, recognizable style. “I spent time trying to find my own aesthetic. I’m always looking at other artists for ideas, taking a little of this and a little of that.”

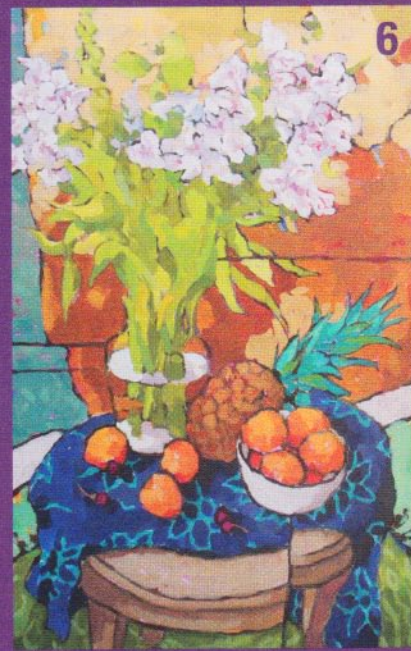
A native of Scotland who now calls California home, Angus lived in various cities across Britain and lost his characteristic brogue. But still with him is the influence of prominent Scottish artists, including Henry Raeburn (1756 -1823), Joan Eardley (1921-1963) and the Glasgow Boys (a collective of 19th- and 20th-century artists).

Perhaps the most obvious of his influences are the post-Impressionist masters Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) and Paul Gauguin (1848-1903). You can see similarities in the vibrant colors and layered application of paint. While his compositions are strikingly similar to those of Cézanne, it’s done subconsciously. “I put elements compositionally where they make sense and somehow, end up following the same basic rules Cézanne was obviously following,” he says.

A more consciously used aspect is the dark, Cloisonnism-inspired outlines that highlight the vivid colors of his subjects. It’s a detail noticeable in the works of artists like Gauguin and van Gogh, who in turn were influenced by Japanese wood block prints, with their flat areas of color and dark contours.



Angus Wilson Demonstrates: *Fruits and Peruvian Lilies Over Blue*



For greater detail on each step of this demonstration go online to artistsnetwork.com/medium/acrylic/angus-wilson.



STEP 1: I begin by drawing the outlines with either charcoal or a watercolor pencil. With a watercolor pencil you can wash the lines away as you paint. Then I paint the Cloisonnism-inspired outlines with a small brush.

STEP 2: Then I paint over the whole canvas with either a large brush or scrub in the color with a paper towel. I block in colors that form my underpainting.

STEP 3: Next I establish final colors and key color relationships, so I've darted around the canvas—back drape, tablecloth, pineapple and foliage now have base colors.

STEP 4: Work has been done with whites for the beginning of the Peruvian lilies. Also, the changed strip of color down the left edge acts as a good transition color for the key blues and greens.

STEP 5: The foliage has been mostly painted in, as well as some of the foreground elements.

STEP 6: All areas of the painting are now covered.

FINAL: Myriad final tweaks are evident in *Fruits and Peruvian Lilies Over Blue* (acrylic on canvas, 36x24): the Cloisonnism-inspired lines are darkened, details are re-toned to the back drape, flowers, foliage and tablecloth pattern. The floor rug is also re-colored and glazed again.

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