



JOHN ATKINSON, Norfolk, *Harbour I (Portofino, Italy)*, oil on canvas, 41 x 51cm (16 x 20")

SENSATION

The most exclusive harbour and resort town in Italy, Portofino is full of the yachts and boats of the wealthy. Little gift shops, boutiques and cafés run along the quay and the buildings are painted pastel shades in the most warming colours. I had decided to call in on this little piece of Italian heaven on my return to England from Tuscany after a touring holiday of Italy. The water, the buildings, the people and the weather were all so visually stunning that I had to paint the scene.

PROCESS

As my time was limited, I made a lot of quick little sketches and took photographs. Back in my studio, the drawings and photographs were pinned out in front of me, and from them I selected the view and composition I wanted. I used an extremely soft pencil to underdraw the scene, then outlined the main areas of the composition with a brush and a very thinly diluted neutral mix of colour — in fact, I used the muck left in the bottom of my turps brush-cleaning jar. For the actual painting, I built the pigment up in layers, working wet-on-wet and not waiting for it to be touch-dry before I proceeded to the next layer. This technique creates a spontaneous blending effect of paint applied on top of another layer of wet paint, giving the resulting hue a depth and freshness that is especially useful when painting water.



PETER TAYLOR, Lancashire, *Soft Sunset*, oil on canvas, 51 x 61cm (20 x 24")

SENSATION

When I lived by the coast I would walk my dog on the beach every day. I always got a great thrill at the first sight of the sea as I crossed the sand hills. Although the area was very flat and the tide went way out, leaving a vast expanse of sand, it was always exciting visually. I developed a great love for the moods of the sky, reflections in the wet sand and the beautiful sunsets. I spend many hours observing sunsets and love the soft light at the end of a hazy day. The sunsets are sometimes stormy and dramatic, sometimes soft and gentle, but always different.

PROCESS

Starting from a photo and working from memory, I used a warm pinkish ground on primed canvas. I established the composition and the darks of the sand hills with acrylics and allowed this to dry so that dirty browns weren't picked up when I painted the sky. I worked from the horizon forward with oils, painting the sky from horizon upwards. I found the values easy to judge because I already had the relatively dark foreground tones in place. The distant sea and wet sands were added, keeping the colours gentle and bringing them far enough down to begin to cover the sand hill darks. Working wet-into-wet using a fairly large synthetic flat brush and plenty of Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna, orange, a little Viridian and the sky colours already mixed on the palette, I painted the sand dunes strongly and confidently, flicking brushstrokes into the sky area to give the impression of grasses.