

Transcription of video interview with Jane Skingley

My name is Jane Skingley and I am an oil painter best known for painting seascapes and landscapes and then more recently I paint with birds and flowers and its all inspired by nature.

My love of the great outdoors walking everyday picking wildflowers on the coast or on a country walk as well as looking at skies have become one of my big things.

Your space is very tranquil. I like walking past it every morning, this is nice and calming.

Thank you, that's fantastic that you say that because that's exactly what I feel when I paint. I started painting 12 - 15 years ago and I just couldn't believe I had found this thing that made me feel so great so relaxed. I would go and start painting and then 3 or 4 hours would pass by and I would then think I would need to go and pick up the children but from that perspective it is the most incredible thing and to have turned it into a business is beyond my wildest dreams.

What drew you to that particular art form?

I really don't know, I don't have any art qualifications, I have to confess to that now. I don't have Art GCSE or A-Level. I did come from a very artistic family my sister went to the Royal College of art and was the arty one in the family so she sort of took that role and I went off and had a career in business and after I had my kids I suddenly felt like I had to paint, I can't describe it, it was a really strong urge and I had a fantastic tutor who taught me a lot. But mainly I just worked and worked every spare moment I would go off to my studio and paint and I had my first breakthrough painting when I started to paint the sea and I think it was because I was brought up sailing by the coast. The sea is in my blood and I just felt that I was really getting somewhere. I sold my first painting to my window cleaner. He was just cleaning my windows and he said 'I really like that painting, how much is that?' and that stage it had never crossed my mind that I could sell my paintings, I was just painting because I loved it and eventually we agreed a price which didn't even cover the costs. It started me thinking, if a window cleaner in Thatcham likes my paintings that other people might do. I put on an exhibition at home and sold everything, the prices were very low then. I got a gallery deal out of that exhibition, once you've got one gallery other galleries are then interested. It's taken time, its taken 10 - 15 years to get to a comfortable financial position with it and it's been hard work but I've loved every minute of it. I feel very lucky.

What inspires you?

This great outdoors we have here. One of the things I love here at Greenham is we have these incredible skies, its flat, we have the airbase where you walk and run on. It's being outdoors, the landscape, the environment, the wild flowers. It's things that people in their busy lives might not look at, they're rushing around. We all do it. I do it myself but when you stop and look at the clouds, or you look at the wild flower, its so beautiful. I just want to capture how these things make you feel.

Why are the visual arts important?

It's a joy, an absolute gift to be able to look at a beautiful picture or sculpture and have those feelings that they might give you. Not every piece of art appeals to everyone. Some stuff leaves me completely cold and I have to confess to not being a massive fan of the

old masters, I much prefer more contemporary art but I should probably study and learn it more. It just enriches our lives, whether it's hanging in a gallery or you are home.

What advice would you have for someone who wants to become an artist?

I would say you've got to work really hard. I don't think a lot of artists realise is that probably a third of my time is spent on desk work, so that's dealing with galleries, managing my own website, email enquires, photographing your work. You have got to be prepared for that aspect of it, I actually quite like that aspect as much as the painting. If you think you are going to go to a studio and only paint, which you can do. If you want to make some kind of living and pay for itself then you are going to have to be prepared to do that admin or desk work and keep on top of it.

Finally, what are you working on at the moment?

I am actually working on. The way I work is actually sort of jump between paintings. I'll do some seascapes and when I've done them for a few days I might want a break for a few days and then I'll paint some flowers. This morning I've been painting some really beautiful flowers, they are remnants of flowers so they are the sort of dried up wild flowers. The dandelions heads, they are quite architectural. I am also working on a series of landscape paintings for a gallery in Oxford of this area in Oxford called Port Meadow, where during lockdown everyone in Oxford apparently it was like their garden, it was so popular. It's got the Thames going through it and they asked me if I would do a series of paintings on Port Meadow, so that's going to go into their November exhibition I think.