



WINNING WAYS

Discover the techniques of award-winning artworks

DAVID WHITTAKER

The Hovering (Avon), oil and acrylic on canvas, 160x160cm

Winner, National Open Art Competition 2011

Like most of my work, *The Hovering* is based on a head, with images inside. In my 'painful' head, I put a landscape and it seemed to ease the pain. It gave it a calm and peaceful quality.

"The painting is not about what the head is thinking; it's more about showing a window into a strange humanity. I have gender dysphoria – it's when you feel you are born in the wrong body. I always knew this conflict existed since I was a child and it's been in my work all along.

"I look for imagery that sparks me off. I saw this image in a fishing magazine. It was a small

bridge over the River Avon, poetic and gothic.

I liked the photograph for its Englishness and its romance. I get lots of magazines, about canal boats, the avant-garde, hunting and interiors.

"I blew the image up, took small elements, drew them onto the canvas and blocked them in with colour. I like to get the scale perfect before I begin the painting. The painting started at the centre, the landscape area. I work with a combination of acrylics, oils and Liquin glaze.

I work with a very strict palette of nine colours."

The 15th National Open Art Exhibition runs from 9–29 December at the Minerva Theatre, Chichester

DAVID'S ADVICE

• David believes that all artworks should be personal:

"I think it's up to artists individually to find out what they are about, but they must find themselves on their own."

• *The Hovering* was a large-scale painting and David likes to determine the size of a work early on. **"Get your scale right first, then paint."**

• Artists should always **learn to appreciate the properties of different mediums**. "I use Winsor & Newton's Galeria acrylics and Artists' Quality oils. The oil gives the painting a passion and finish."