## GENERAL NOTES FOR WORKING WITH PASTELS:

- Never sketch with a lead or a pencil crayon type pencil as the pastel will not adhere to it, resulting in the sketch lines showing through on your picture.

- Unless otherwise stated all colours referred to in the demo are of the Rembrandt make. This is the most common make available with a wide range of colours. Other makes I've used are Venus and Rowney.

- For a fixative used for pastel or charcoal, an inexpensive alternative is "Fiesta hairspray". Don't overspray as this destroys the tooth of the paper making it difficult to apply the pastel. Spraying with a fixative enables an under painting to be fixed to facilitate working on top of it without the first colour mixing with the one you are layering over it. The final application should not be sprayed as it darkens the pastel resulting in the loss of the vibrancy of the medium.

- Canson pastel paper is recommended. However I work on Daler Crescent acid free mount board as I find that the first mentioned, although more easier to work with because of a stronger paper tooth, it is subject to cockling in moist conditions and is easier to crease. Here I have used an "Horizon Blue" colour. Canson has a lovely light blue equivalent which is ideal for this exercise. You will find that the papers come in an array of colours and different shades. Whatever colour you choose will directly effect the overall hue and mood of the picture. You will come to learn to use the different ones to enhance your picture by way of using it to incorporate your background colours or else to create a warm or a cool piece. After you have done this demo, try it again on a different colour paper and you will be amazed at how different the picture will be! In this demo the light blue serves a two fold purpose, firstly, to set the overall tone of the sky and, secondly, the warm colours of the landscape on top of the blue has the effect of complimentary colours working together to enhance one another. If you can't lay your hands on any pastel paper you could use a piece of watercolour paper and apply a light wash in the colour recommended with any water based medium. Paper must be affixed to a smooth surfaced backing by using Press Stik for mount board and masking tape stuck all round for pastel paper.

- It is recommended you work in a upright position. This allows excess pastel to fall off the paper without having to blow it off and run the danger of spittle landing on your artwork.

- Try and learn to work with the palm of your hand away from the surface and avoid baggy long sleeves as a smudged artwork can result.

- Remember the detail is in the silhouette!!
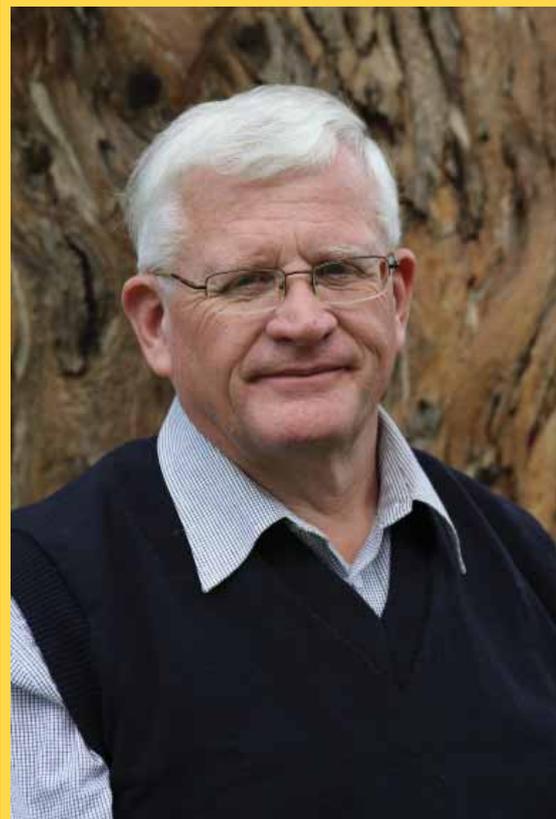
ABOUT DAVID JOHNSON:

David Johnson is regarded as one of South Africa's most popular chalk pastel artists. He is known for his evocative bushveld scenes and wildlife paintings.

In 1987, at the age of 35, he started out as a self-taught artist and is now a full-time professional. His work is admired by the public and he is regarded by his peers as a master in the pastel medium.

Born in 1953, his childhood years were spent on a sugar cane farm estate near Mtubatuba in the heart of Zululand. His love for nature was encouraged by his father who taught him to appreciate and respect its beauty.

David is well known for his tree and dry-river bed studies but he is capable of any subject matter. He regularly receives commissions as a result of his ability to accurately render the details of buildings; farmsteads, game farms, pets, even that prize bull or herd of cattle.

CONTACT DAVID:

email: davidjohnson@metroweb.co.za

Website: http://www.davidjohnsonart.com

Tel: 011 972 0032 or cell: 083 878 5588 / 072 453 1345

STEP 1

Apply colours as follows (watch out for pieces of grit in the pastel that can scratch the paper):
Top left of sky: Ultramarine Deep No 506,10, 9 or any equivalent in Pthalo or Cobalt blue. Center top white clouds and bottom of sky line, bordering on mountains to come: Burnt sienna 411,9 or the lightest in a Burnt Umber or Gold Ochre equivalent. Base of clouds: 'Venus' Blue Grey 628/ or light Blue Grey equivalent. Dark Clouds: any mid-range Blue Grey. Note: With skies, always be wary of the very dark colours. Rather start slightly lighter and then darken afterwards. Also, the purer the colour the more vibrant it is! Main Foreground: Light Orange 236,9.

STEP 2

Bottom Foreground: Gold Ochre 231,3. Now with your fingertips rub pastel into the tooth of the paper until the surface is completely covered. The grass foreground to be rubbed in a vertical and the sky in a circular motion, but all the time preserving the integrity of the colour in the position where you placed it. Avoid making a mud bath. With bigger expanses of colour you can use the palm of your hand to get the job done quicker. You will note here that we are playing with complimentary colours, one along side each other, to create a vibrant picture. We now start shaping the clouds by way of highlights and re-emphasing hard edges. With Ultramarine Deep 506,7 we create a slight gradation of the blue by gently layering over the light blue already applied, stronger at the top and reducing as one descends, and then blend the two. Mountains: With the mid Blue Grey and holding a broken off piece on its side, in an upright position, colour in the mountains and rub pastel into the paper but being careful to preserve the sharpness of the top of the ridge. Drag the Blue grey down from the base of the clouds down over the top of the mountain to create a shower of rain using a gentle downward rub/smudge motion (for delicate jobs like this I usually use the outside end of my pinkie). White clouds: Apply white to the clouds facing the light source which in this case will be from the left.

STEP 3
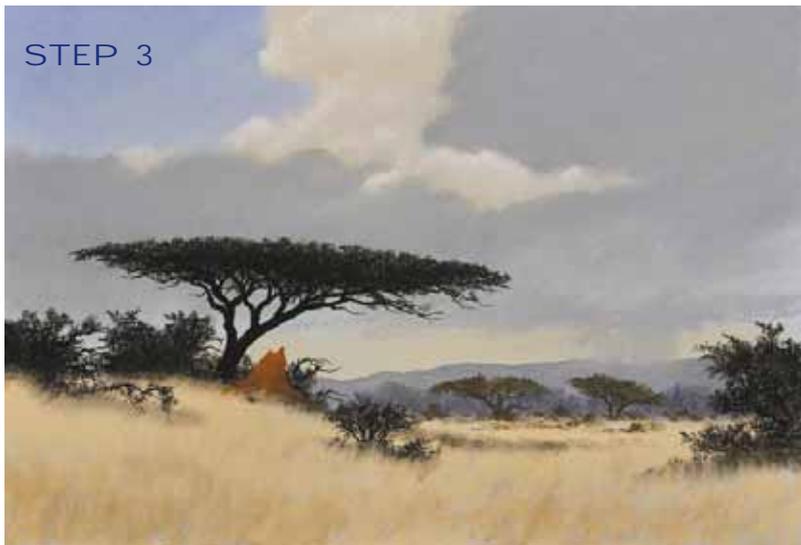
Tree and foreground bushes – the darkest of any Burnt Umber. It's always a good idea to initially draw the branches and foliage silhouette a little smaller than what you envisage and to flesh out later. Shade in grass: Raw Umber 408,3. Ant heap: Burnt Sienna 411,8. Bush line: Venus Mouse Grey 637. Intermediate bush: Venus Raw Umber 307. Gently smudge texture out of distant bush to achieve a hazy effect, thus enhancing effect of distance.

Fixative: Apply minimal fixative to your picture. Just sufficient to layer the next colour without the first colour blending with the second. Wait until dry.

STEP 4
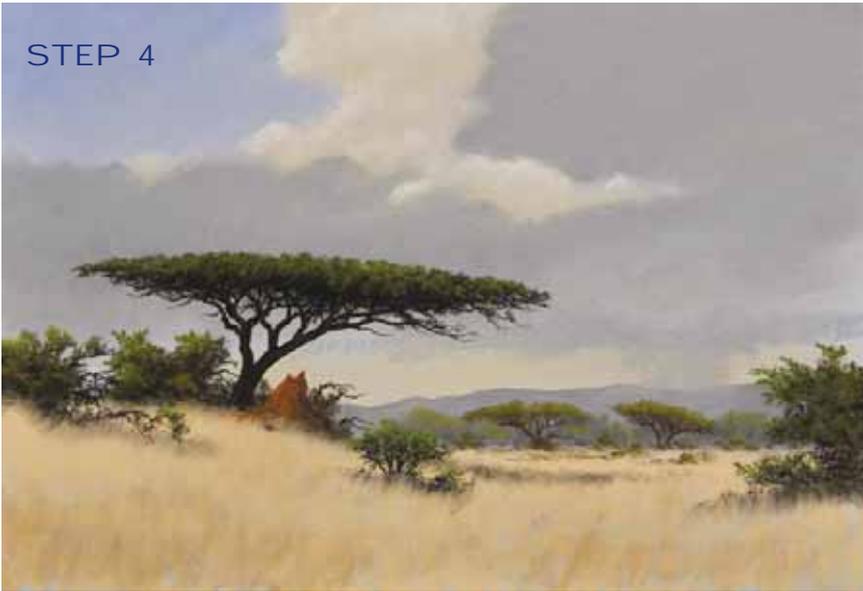
Foreground and intermediate bush foliage colour: Gently drag a Rowney Lizard Green Tint 8 over the Burnt Umber and background bush under painting, making use of the texture created by the pastel and spray fixative, to create a leafy effect. Remember to leave the shadowed foliage untouched. Ant heap shadows: Mouse Grey 637 (Venus).

Tree bark: Gently drag Burnt Sienna 411,8 (same colour used for the antheap) over the branches to create a bark texture (colour of surrounding sand usually found in bark of tree).

Respray branches and ant heap.

STEP 5

Bark highlights: Fluorescent Orange 701 (Venus). Don't respray as it will lose lustre. This an important part of your tree as the highlights start to create the foreshortening of the tree by pushing branches away with highlights fully on the branch, and the branches leaning towards you being in shadow and hence only the slightest of highlights on the side of the branch facing the light source.

STEP 6

Warm up foliage with any yellow/gold colour and Light Orange 236,7. Foreshortening of the tree foliage can be enhanced by creating dead twigs protruding at the ends of the branches (especially in the center of the tree): use Raw Umber 408.10 and Light Orange 236,9. Within the foliage place little specks of the same colour giving the illusion of thorns and bare branches. Use darks and lights to enhance one another. Tidy up the grass with Gold Ochre 231,3 and Light Orange 236,7, to warm up the foreground, and polish off with Light Orange 236,9. Where dark shadows under the bushes and trees exists be sure to place detailed grass silhouetted against the darks. The tree's shadow in the grass can also be softened with Gold Ochre 231,3. General technique used here is a broken off piece of pastel placed horizontally on its side, and flicked in a short upward motion. To define the individual blades of grass, turn the pastel upright at 45% so that the sharp edge of the end of the pastel is in contact with the artwork and resultant up or downward stroke leaves you with the desired effect. Don't make it too busy by overdoing it.

Mountain highlights: Lightly drag a Raw Umber 408.10 over the mountains to give them some shadowed shape. If the mountains had been in full sunlight I would have used the Fluorescent Orange 701 (Venus). Soften the detail in the far bush done by, firstly, applying a mid range Rowney Sap Green and then, secondly, again lightly rubbing/smudging with your finger to take away some textured detail. Note the bush in the right foreground has minimal detail to stop your eye pulling away from the focal point of the Acacia tree, ant heap, bushes, sky and mountain silhouette. Even the foreground grass detail is minimal. Amendments and finishing touches: I felt the light clouds at the top of the picture was too prominent and tended to pull your eye out the picture so softened and 'greyed' it with the mid range blue grey and then re-emphasised the white cloud. Detail of the leaves of the foreground bushes are highlighted. Finally, soften the dark clouds with a little of the light grey.

Picture done! Now sign with a charcoal or pastel black pencil.