



**DERWENT**

DRAWN TO PERFECTION

# KICK STARTING CREATIVITY

with Inktense Blocks  
By Lindsay Pritchard

So we're in the middle of the virus lockdown and the artist in me is shouting 'why aren't you using all this free time to do nothing but create?' The simple answer is that I've been distracted doing all the odd jobs around the house that have been crying out for attention for years and to be honest, I don't think I'm alone in this.

But having almost got to the end of this lengthy list my thoughts have been drawn back to the creative ideas that have been bubbling away in the back of my mind.

The timing then was perfect for a parcel to drop through the letterbox. I set about experimenting to see what these delicious little blocks of pigment could do.

My mind was drawn to thoughts of summer and how it would differ this year and I realised that, despite the challenges we are facing, the natural world around us will carry on as normal.



A favourite summer flower of mine is the Buddleia due to its irresistible attraction to butterflies. Often found growing wild, its rampant growth often results in a mass of pendulous flowers where a variety of our native butterflies can be found bathing in the summer sun. Having often sketched these flowers in the past, it seemed a natural choice for me to focus on them when trying out my lovely Inktense Blocks.



### STEP 1

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Firstly I decided to create a textured background and so unearthed a piece of polystyrene packaging that I thought would suit the purpose well. Choosing the long edge of the turquoise block, I rubbed it over the polystyrene leaving a good coating of pigment that I brushed over with water. I turned the polystyrene over and pressed it firmly onto the watercolour paper, leaving a mottled pale blue print behind. Perfect.



### STEP 2

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Then, using the end of a block, I firmly applied dots of colour in the area that I wanted the head of the Buddleia to be. Working 3 colours from light to dark, I created highlights and shadows along the edges to give the flower head form



and tone. I followed this by spraying over the dots with water, dispersing the pigment, and agitated it with a small flat brush to create soft petal like marks.

### STEP 3



I wanted to give the impression of the flower head shaking in the breeze, scattering its scent to attract the butterflies, so I used my thumbnail to grate pigment off the block onto the paper. This created small speckles of ink which again I sprayed with water to intensify the colour and disperse them slightly.

### STEP 4

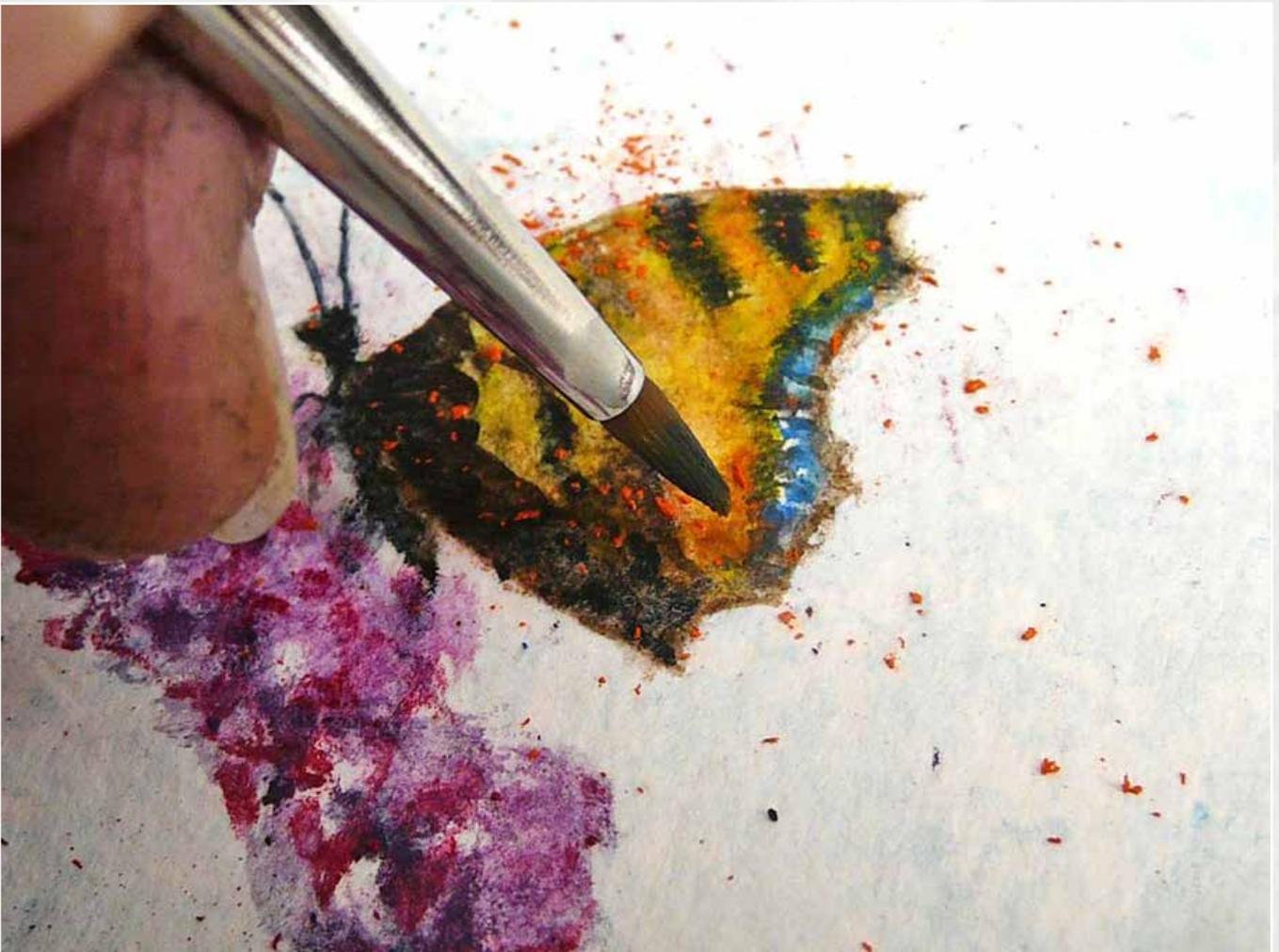


This completed the flower so I turned my attention to the leaves. I chose a pale green block followed by dark green and, using them like crayons, shaped the leaf adding shadow as I went along. To create a smooth leaf like finish, I brushed over with a wet paintbrush blending the colours and flattening much of the texture.

## STEP 5

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It was essential that I added a tiny butterfly to complete my picture. It would have been a challenge to create a small detailed image using a block directly onto the paper so, using a wet paintbrush, I decided to lift the ink straight from the block. Not only did this enable me to paint in greater detail, it resulted in fabulously intense pigments perfect for such a colourful butterfly. I finished it off by grating a few orange flecks around the butterfly.



## STEP 6

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And so my picture was complete.



I've been impressed with the Inktense blocks and have found them very versatile. Using just 8 colours I have printed, grated, drawn, sprayed and brushed them over the page to create an image that will always remind me of summer. I'll definitely be using them again!

*Lindsay Pritchard*

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