

"Best Foot Forward" by Michelle Hewitt

# The natural world

Inspiration can be found in many places – Tim Saunders finds out what led wildlife artist Michelle Hewitt to create her stunning artwork



**S**cottish wildlife captures the imagination of Michelle Hewitt from Fife, who is well known for her detailed pastel drawings of animals.

Stags, deer, red squirrels, seals, kingfishers and damselflies have all received her painstakingly detailed treatment, sometimes with a cheeky element that never fails to raise a smile. For instance, her 'Best Foot Forward' picture of a puffin.

"I have always been interested in the natural world," she reveals, adding that she was introduced to Albrecht Dürer's (1471 to 1528) Young Hare study from 1502 at a young age. This is a watercolour and bodycolour painting. She puts her passion for drawing and painting animals from a young age down to seeing this masterpiece.

Albrecht Dürer was a German painter, printmaker, and theorist of the German



Renaissance. He was born in Nuremberg and when he was in his 20s, his high-quality woodcut prints forged his reputation and influence throughout Europe.

"The portraits by Peter Paul Rubens (1577 to 1640) are also influential to me; the way the eyes seem to follow the viewer round the room."

Rubens produced altarpieces, portraits, landscapes, and history paintings of mythological and allegorical subjects where a character is used to deliver a message.

He is famous for his inventive and dynamic paintings of religious subjects. A prolific painter who produced more than 1,400 paintings in his lifetime, he is known for his 1610 work, Elevation of the Cross, and The Descent from the Cross in 1614. He is regarded as one of the greatest

painters of the 17th-century Baroque period. He was also a prolific designer of cartoons for the Flemish tapestry workshops and of frontispieces for publishers in Antwerp.

"Eyes are the most important part of any painting to me," says Michelle, who, perhaps surprisingly, will complete them fully before working on the rest of a picture. "Soft pastels are my favourite medium as they don't require any drying time and offer a soft definition ideal for fur and feathers," adds Michelle, who lives and works in the East Neuk of Fife.

These strange times have seen Michelle embrace the internet as a way of boosting her profile when galleries are only just reopening. Her work is available through both Artfinder and Amazon.

"I hope to participate in more physical exhibitions again," she says, adding that her first exhibition since lockdown took place at independent booksellers J & G Innes on South Street in St Andrews at the end of May, with two other artists.

Michelle's work has grown in popularity and can be found in private collections worldwide. **See more of Michelle's work at [www.scottishwildlifeartist.com](http://www.scottishwildlifeartist.com)**

