

The dog in art

Nick Waters



The observations of Martial Robin

Every once in a while an artist comes along whose style, creativity and powers of observation puts them above their contemporaries. Those who ventured to the extremities of Hall 1 at Crufts were able to enjoy the work of one such artist,



Martial Robin, who was exhibiting in the UK for the first time.

His work is already in collections in well over 20 countries and hangs in galleries

in Australia, Finland and his native France but his first exhibition at a dog show was at the World Show last year. The passion and individuality he brings to his art will earn him many more admirers in the years to come.

In common with so many artists Martial cannot remember a time when he was not drawing but it was only some ten years ago that he took lessons, studying under Françoise Petard who took a few pupils. He says he is not a colourist, even though he has painted some very evocative still lifes, land and seascapes.

Martial experiments a lot with his art, he works on paper or wooden panels, his mediums are chalks, pencils, pastels and acrylics, and his palette a collection of the subtle colours of nature. He works quickly with up to five paintings on the go at once.

He describes himself as a 'portraitist' and for the last ten years has concentrated his art mainly on horses, which have always played a major part in his life, and his beloved dogs.

Many of the principles Martial adopts when breeding a litter apply equally to his art. Observe, reflect, use the eye, the brain and the heart.

More recently there have been monkeys which fascinate him and he equates many of their ways to the ways of humans. Not surprisingly sighthounds are major players in his art, for he has been a successful breeder of Afghans for the last 25 plus years. His Bel/Fr/Lux/Int. Ch Capucine du Mennel Galopin also has her UK title and won the hound group at WELKS last year.

Martial describes his work as expressive. He concentrates first on getting what are for him the defining features of the animal he is painting, be it a look in the eye, the way it moves, or from more deeply searching within its soul. Then with a few strong brush strokes, wet paint loosely applied, or a few flicks of the pencil the subject is brought to life. "Too much detail destroys the essentials" says Martial.

Many of the principles Martial adopts when breeding a litter apply equally to his art. Observe, reflect, use the eye, the brain and the heart. There is little difference between the concept of the next litter and its arrival, or the

realisation of the finished picture, evaluating its potential and the pleasure it will give to others.

The art of Martial Robin can be seen at www.martialrobin.fr ■

