



Martin Dexter

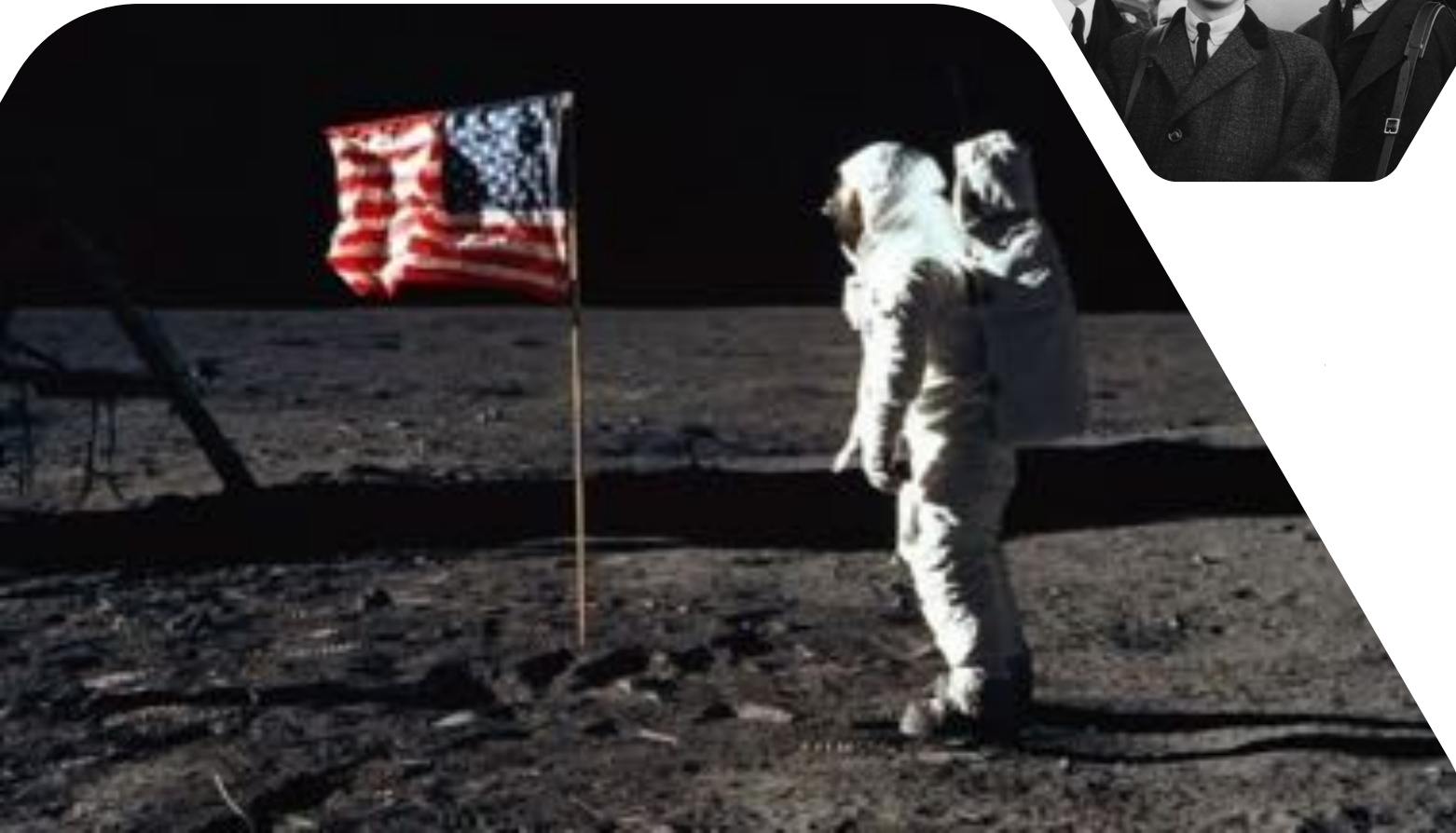
An Artist Career Journey



One Small Step

- I was born in March 1957.
- Sputnik is in earth's orbit and has started the space race.
- The Asian Flu Pandemic is sweeping the world causing over a million deaths.
- Elvis Presley is 'All Shook Up' in the charts.
- Harold Macmillan led the Government.
- There are very few cars on the roads.





A Great Time

- I had an amazing childhood and think that I am very lucky growing up in the 60s, 70s and 80s.
- Everything was so exciting and the music scene left me with a big love of music.
- I saw Jimi Hendrix on the Old Grey Whistle Test and he is still my hero.
- I vividly remember as a family huddled around our tiny TV watching the moon Landing.



Foundations

- At an early age I poured over my dad's National Geographic collection and dreamed of far-off remote places.
- I also had my own books on nature and loved being outside studying insects, wildlife, plants and trees.
- I started to dream of South America.

A Budding Entomologist

- Me and my mate Robbie would pool our pocket money and buy Silk moth eggs.
- I used to breed these in the attic using a bulb, thermostat and big toffee jars.
- It was amazing when they hatched out having these giant moths fluttering around and breeding.



Fleet Air Arm Test

- I left school at 16 and you either got a menial job or became a Trade apprentice and studied at College.
- Even though I had Asthma I really fancied being a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm so went and sat their exam.
- I was borderline so I would go in as a Tiff and train up but I decided not to bother.





Aero Technician

- I sat a test at British Aerospace in Chadderton and got something like 95% so they offered me a job as an Aero Technician, and I was well excited.
- My brother Tony, who was an engineer/draughtsman told me not to take it as the engineering industry was dying.



Apprentice Joiner Search

- So my next plan was to look at the phone directory for local joiners' shops and hop on a bus to go cold calling.
- This paid off because at George Dews Head Office the training officer was amazed at my self-motivation and offered me an apprenticeship on the spot.
- I did have a criteria of becoming a high-class joiner learning every aspect of Carpentry and Joinery and not to be stood next to a machine all day.
- I was the last to come through a 4-year Carpentry and Joinery Apprenticeship.



Being an Apprentice

- Herman Anton Fredrick Wagler was ex-Military Police and to be my main Joiner for the next four years. He was the best Joiner that I have ever come across and over time passed on all his knowledge and skills which ensured that I became a high-end joiner.
- Herman and the other Joiners used to say that you know you are a joiner when you can put your boo boos right immediately which took me some time to understand?
- I also learnt that you can never get perfection so have to set a high benchmark for your finishing, which is something I love to do.

Oldham College

- I hated school but quite liked Oldham College perhaps because I got on with the teachers.
- I studied for my Craft Certificate and City and Guilds in Carpentry and Joinery But at the same time studied for Technicians Certificates and my ONC.
- I really enjoyed this but eventually my asthma got the best of me as I get stressed with exams and I stopped.

On Being a Bench Joiner

- I had served my time as a bench hand Joiner and most of the joinery had an handmade element as we only had basic machinery in the workshop.
- I have probably cut thousands of dovetails by hand.
- Even today I still find it easier to use hand tools apart from the cordless drill.
- In work we have festool setup.
- At home I must go and find my electric tools and set them up and by that time it could have been completed by hand.
- I was often asked that it must be nice to be a joiner and yes, it is but the deadlines have always been brutal.



A Love of Watercolors

- In my early twenties I started to draw insects in pen and ink and my mum pestered me to start coloring them as she was studying art at evening class.
- So this is the time that I dabbled and fell in love with watercolor which I still love today. I also love pastels and drawing with an ink pen.
- I will be showing and talking about some of my watercolors in a little while
- I have changed the spelling of watercolour to suit the powerpoint spelling.



A New Path

- I was always dreaming and talking of back packing to exotic remote locations and the joiners used to call me Walter Mitty.
- I asked my bosses if I could have a month's holiday the following year and they agreed. We used to get two weeks holiday, and this was called the Oldham Wakes.
- So I booked my adventure to Kenya and in those days, it was two weeks in Spain for most people.
- Come the Friday I am due to finish I get a brown envelope and I knew what this was..... the start of a new path for me.

My Dream Starts

- At this period, a lad had been chatting to me in my local pub called Norman and wanted good finishing joiners for his new building Company and asked me every Friday if I would join him.
- So when I got back from Kenya, I got my 715/ticket and went self employed as a joinery sub-contractor.
- Laying me off was the best thing they could have done for me and even though they spent the next three years pleading for me to go back I was living my dream.




Gangs of the Wild West

- I thought that the Joiners shop was the Wild West but building site made it look like a walk in the park.
- I had to toughen up fast and on top of this the building trade was only second to the mining industry regarding deaths. Health and Safety was nonexistent all the time that I was working on Site.
- Some of the building trades seemed to hate each other which I never got my head around they almost behaved like gangs.
- Now when I am filling out Risk Assessments, I think of the old days when I was knocking on heaven's door.



Summer Work Winter Travel

- The work on site was always piece work and therefore I would work as hard as possible for around six months and then go backpacking for six months to off the route remote places.
 - My first adventure was around South America followed by quite a lot of trips to Africa and then Asia.
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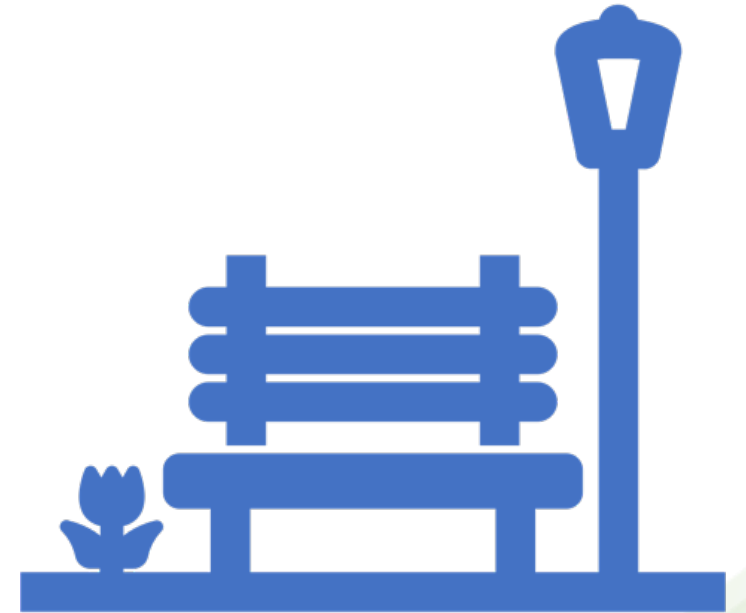
A large, irregular orange watercolor splash shape on the left side of the slide, with some smaller orange dots scattered around it.

A Mortgage and Becoming a Technician

- When I was 30 years old I went to my accountant to get a mortgage for an house and he told me that I would have to get a "real job."
- Under Maggie Thatcher the mortgage interest rates were an eye watering 9.5-15%
- On the way home I bought a MEN paper and saw a Gallery Technicians job at Manchester Polytechnic and thought it sounded cool.
- I sent in my application by post and was invited for an interview.
- Another new adventure is ahead of me.

Interview

- I turned up for my interview covered in dirt and mud as it was a wet, cold winters day on the building site.
- The panel consisted of three academics and the Faculty secretary.
- Everyone in the room was fascinated by my travels, being a watercolorist and an entomologist.
- They offered me the job and asked me to wait outside until they had finished interviewing the rest of the candidates.
- How interviews have changed.



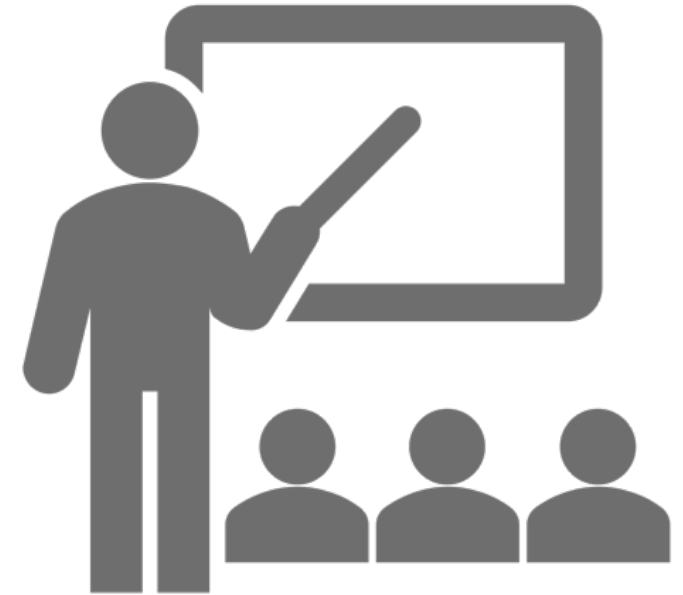


Settling into a New Way of Life

- It took me twelve months to settle into the way of working life coming from building site.
- I absolutely loved the environment in the Arts School and still feel the same way. We are surrounded by so much talent and on top of that I get inspired to do my drawing even though our styles are different.
- I only planned on working at MMU for 6-12 months and that was 33 years ago which tells you a story.

Change

- Over the years the University has gone through many changes which have affected me in a funny sort of way but never the approach to my work ethic.
- In more recent years all the Technicians have had more training and opportunities such as inviting me here today.



Gallery Technician



- I started out as the Gallery Technician but loved working with students so over time created my own little Inductions.
- Over the years the Picture Framing and Presentation Inductions have grown into an Induction which is part of the Art School timetable and I also have an amazing workshop.
- I think as an practicing artist I can offer more to students because I understand the trials and tribulations of exhibiting.

A Landscape Artist and Beyond

- In my early thirties I started to exhibit my paintings which eventually led to exhibitions all over the UK including annual shows in London and one in New York.
- I started out with landscapes and canal boats, but this led to fantasy, astro and aviation art.
- With the introduction of two cats into the house I was inspired to create my quirky cat art.
- I paint for myself and hope that the pictures tell a story.



The Local Paper used to Cover my Art Exhibiting Adventures

The Exhibitions management would contact the local newspapers for coverage.

Print

- I have had quite a lot of work published in magazines books and calendars.
- Some of the publications are as follows,
- A book on Pyramids by Joyce Kilmer and printed by the British Museum.
- Astronomy Now magazine.
- Flight Journal magazine.
- Aviation History magazine.



Home for
Afternoon
Tea

Watercolour



Towards the
Heavens

Watercolour



Wolfie

Soft pastels

Lukan

Soft pastel



Lukan

Soft pastels





Autumnal Sun Pastels

I'm Watchin Yer
Soft pastel



The Lookout

Watercolour





Pretty in Pink

Watercolour

Watching and Waiting

Watercolour, wet into wet





Bloomin Purrfect

Watercolour

The Furree Pusskateers

Watercolour





Lounging Around

Watercolour

Les Pawl Watercolour





Happy Family

Watercolour

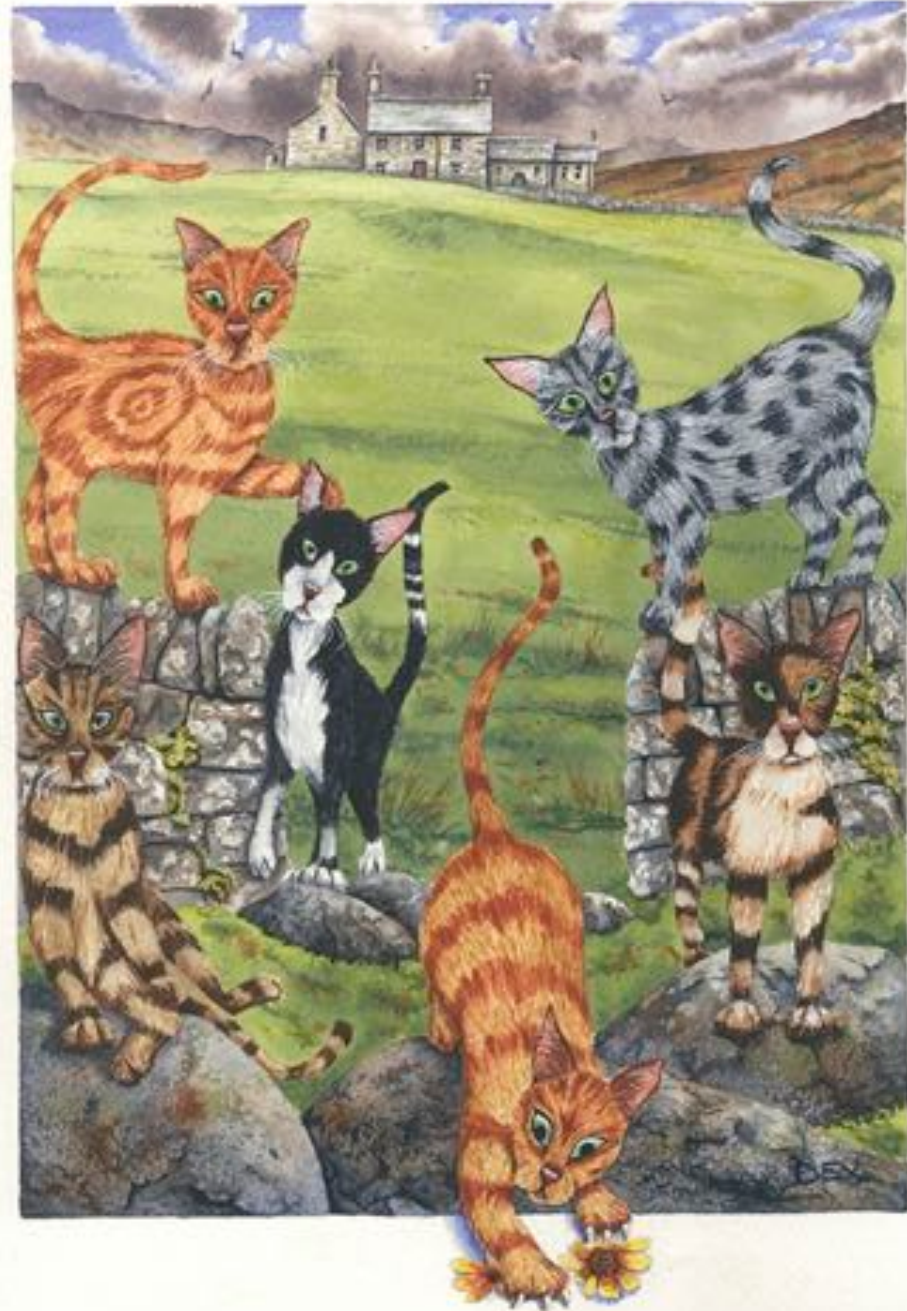
Over the Seas to Skye Watercolour





The Purrnines

Watercolour







Moggscow

Watercolour

The Meowrientials

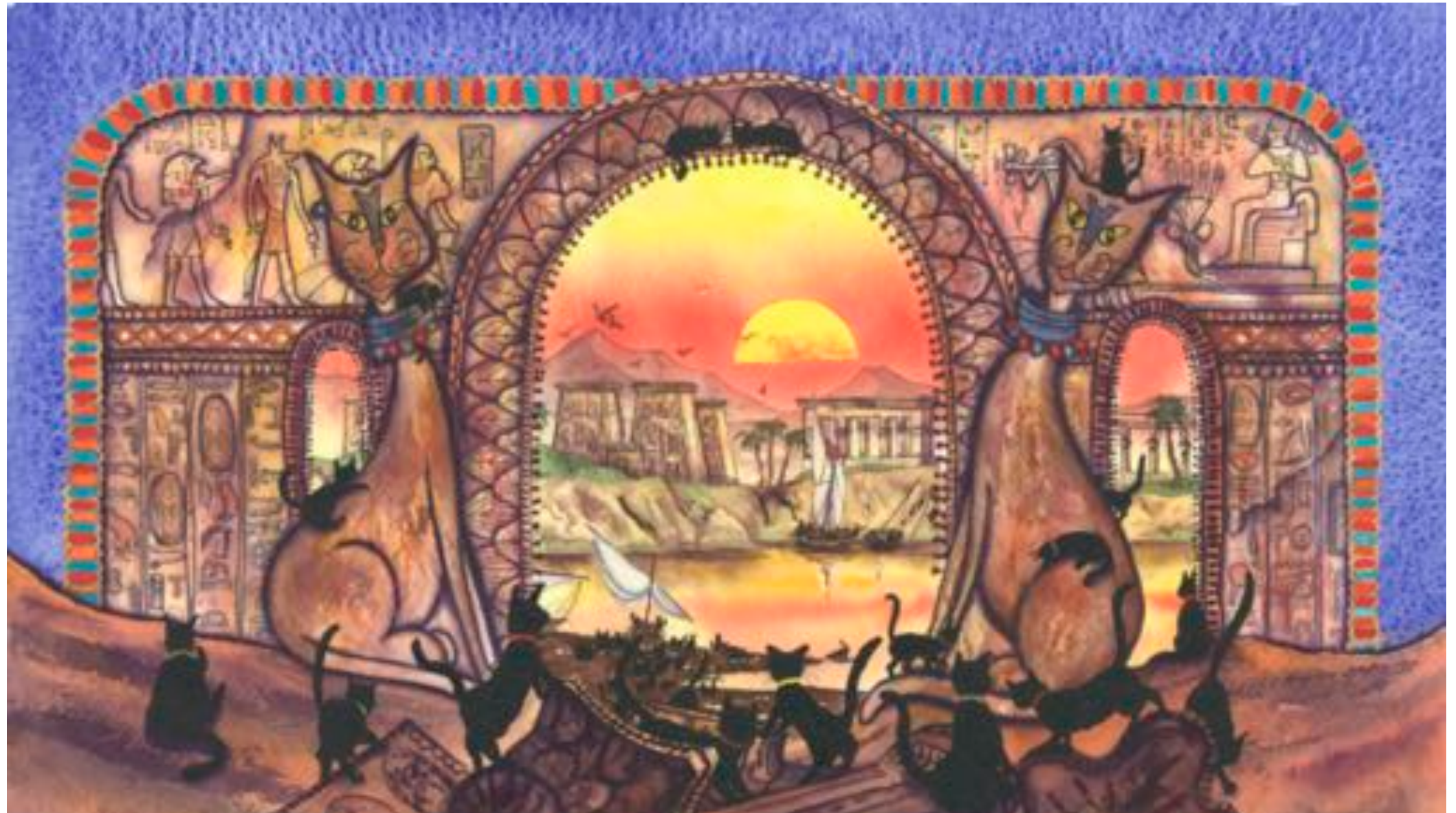
Watercolour

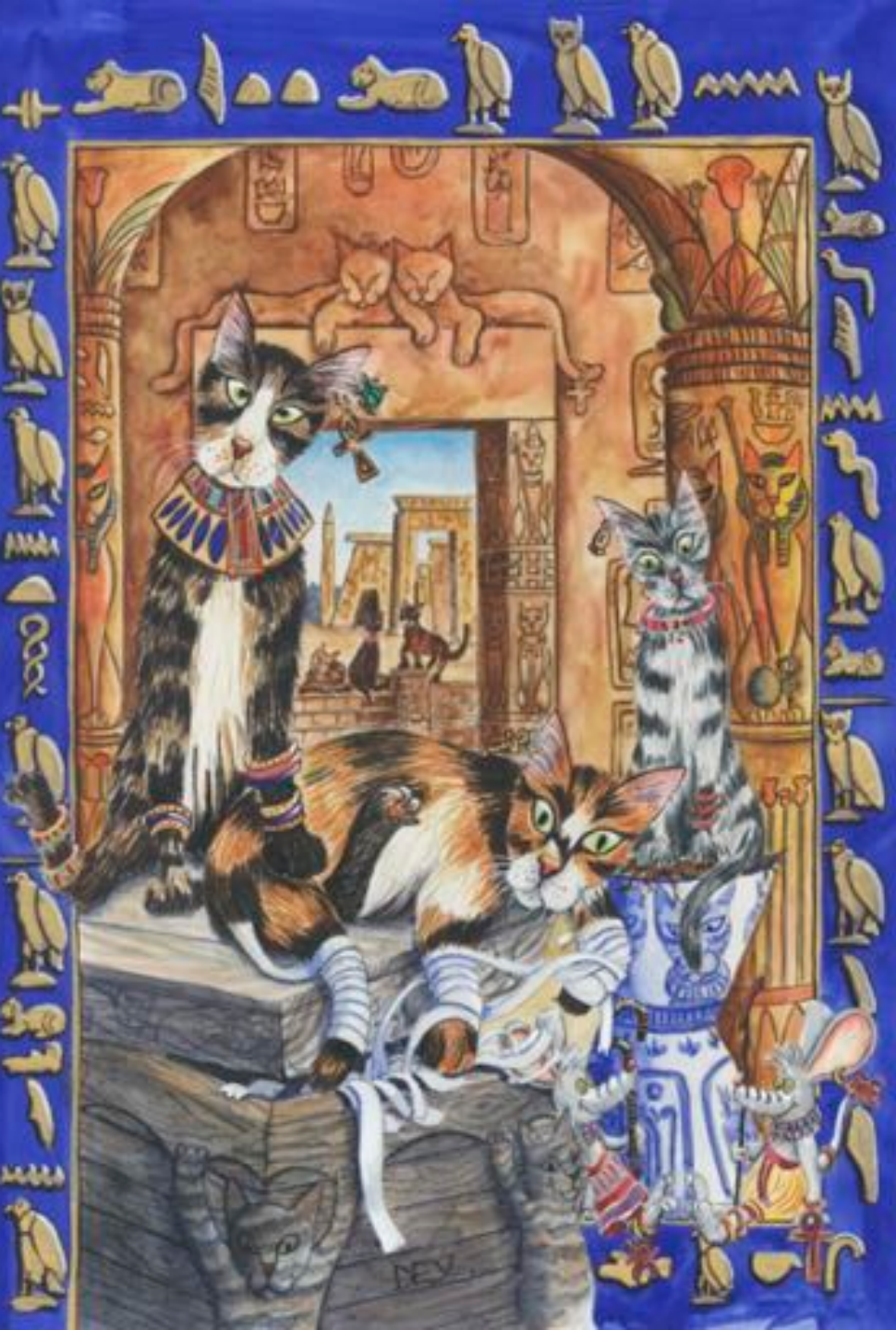


The Rise of Egypt

- The following accounts of history are my theories.
- Cats have always been worshipped in Egypt and they have Bastet the Cat god.
- Through the following artworks you will see my thoughts and ideas of who built the pyramids.
- The reason for this is that the cats designed and constructed the fantastic structures that have amazed since.
- Pyramid is derived from Purramid.
- I will introduce you to some more fascinating facts soon.







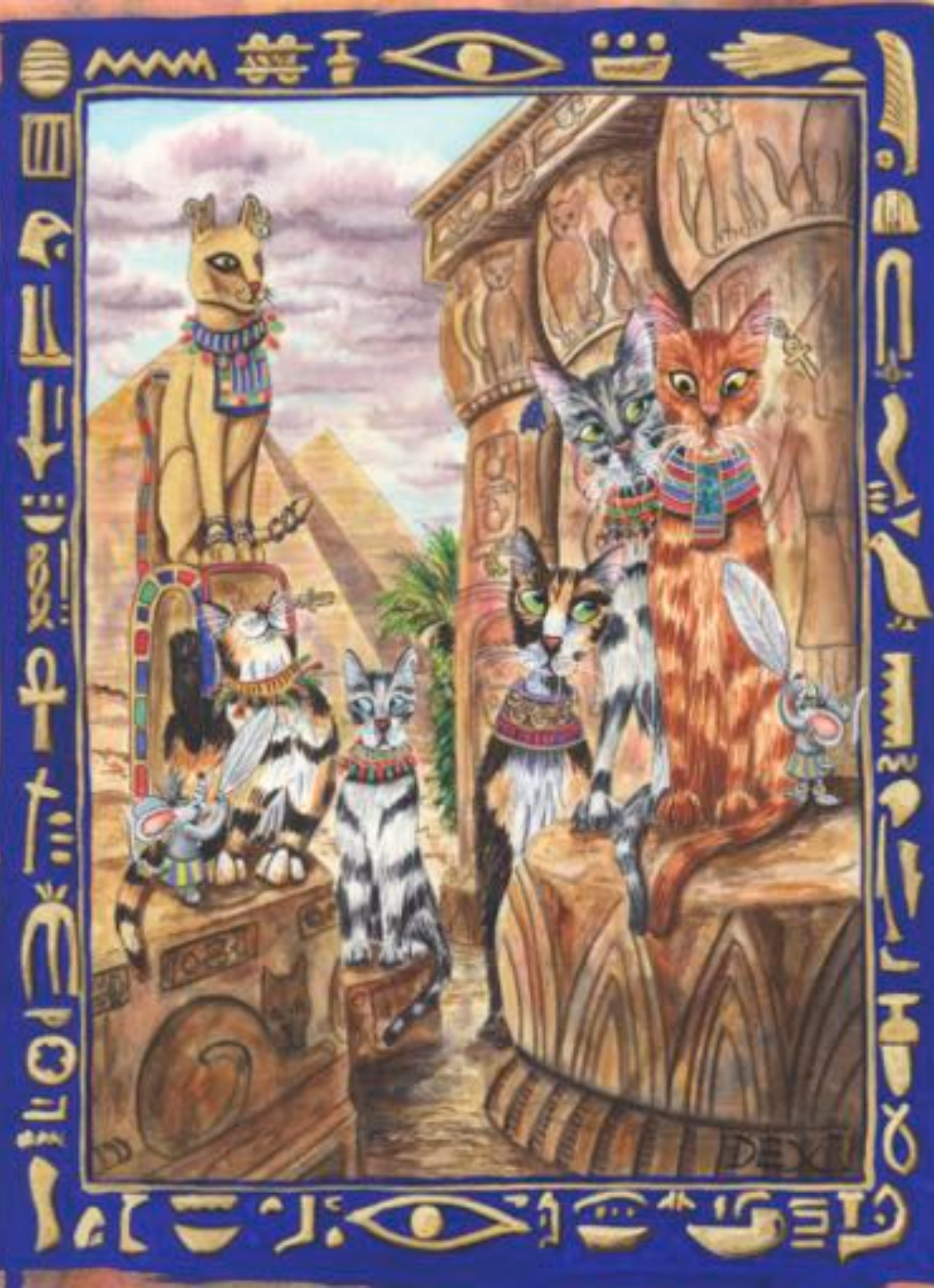
The Purramid
Grrradianz

Watercolour



Mummies Little Helpers Watercolour





The Awesome Purroes Watercolour



Comic Con, Artist Alley

- Millie is my latest character and loosely based on the Japanese anime and manga. I am really excited at the adventures ahead for Millie and her friends.
- I am planning to have a stall at the Comic Cons up and down the country which is exciting.
- I have also decided to sell prints and zines at the Comic Cons because in the past I have just concentrated on selling original art at exhibitions and Galleries.
- Hopefully I will start uploading my artworks onto social media in the New Year ready from the end of COVID and the summer Comic Cons.



Meet Millie

Millie is always having adventures visiting earth either looking for new creatures or helping with a new dynasty.



Millie's Story

Look up into the evening sky and find Sirius.

A little to the left is a planet called Mintab and this is Millie's home.

They are non-breathers and telepaths who are intelligent beyond our wildest beliefs.

Think of any great empire and you will find that Millie will be at the starting point.



Watercolours on the Go

Moleskin and Sketches

