

# Meet Girault Award Winner:

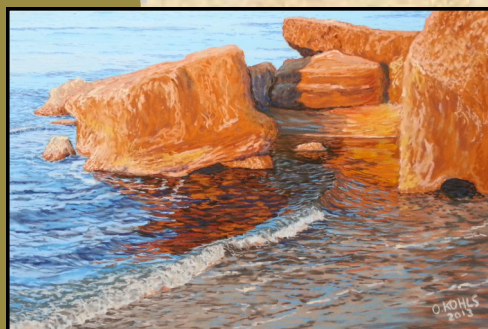
## Oliver Kohls

By Ruth Mann



***Please tell us a little about yourself and how you came to be an artist.***

I have always been interested in art and have painted on and off throughout my life. But life gets in the way doesn't it. I had not painted in 10 years when I started again in 2009 as a kind of therapy to relax from my busy work and



*Morning Light Cote Bleu*

family life. Being a naval officer, having four children and a wife who is working too I needed a couple of hours a

week purely for myself. I never received any formal art training and learned by trial and error and by reading lots of art books. Very quickly I became addicted to painting and it became more and more important to me. I love the whole process of it and it satisfies me to see the finished piece of work. By publishing my work online people became interested and so I started selling my work.

***What drew you to pastels as your medium of choice?***

It was a coincidence. When I started painting in 2009 I did not have my own studio. Being surrounded by small kids, oil and the odours of turpentine were not really an option. So I bought my first small set of pastels and tried it out. From then I was converted. I love working with both hands and rubbing in the pigments if necessary. It is a very direct approach, you do not have to wait for paint to dry and this really supports my artistic intentions.

***Tell us a little about the techniques you use to achieve your detailed, colourful and sensitive paintings.***

There is indeed nothing special to it. Teaching at some workshops I found out that my approach to painting is much more structured than that of the beginning painters. To me the preparations are the key to a successful painting. I think in advance

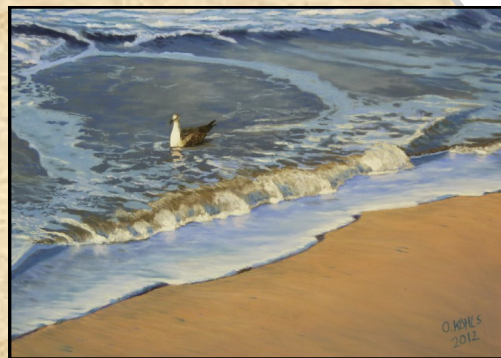


*Boats at Lake Plon*

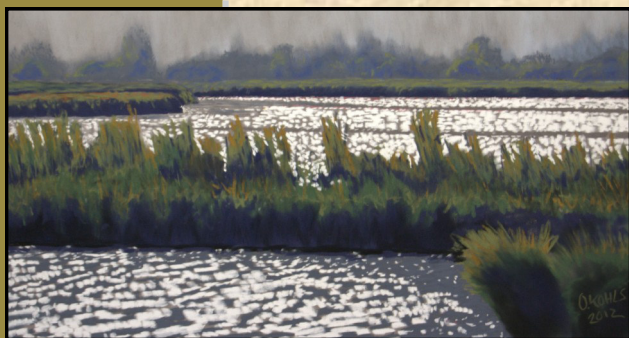
about the composition, the apportionment of values, the colour scheme and the problems which might arise. I ask myself what I want to express with a special subject. This seems boring and hardly spontaneous but it helps me so much in achieving the results I want to achieve. As many of my paintings show the sea, single waves or coastal scenes and I often do close-ups, these preparations are even more important.

I ask myself, how I can bend nature by placing clouds or lines of foam, for example to create the illusion of depth. Technically I squint a lot during the painting process to see whether the values are right. I work on wooden boards attached to my studio walls which forces me to stand during painting and

contacts to sell my paintings and promote my art. My website [www.oliverkohls.com](http://www.oliverkohls.com) has been up and running for a while now and I continuously try to improve it. And not to forget my Facebook Page [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)



*Seagull at the Beach*



*Breaking waves Cote Bleu*

gives me the chance to wander back and forth all the time. But most importantly I truly enjoy painting!

***What projects or art activities are you currently involved in and what are your plans for your future as an artist?***

At the moment I am working on becoming a full-time professional artist. Recently I saw a photo on Facebook showing Eric Idle. It said: "You are an artist? So what do you do for a living?" True, but I still want to turn full-time. Thus I put more effort into marketing and exhibitions and wrote a business plan. I am looking for gallery

[Kuestenbilder](#). We will see how it all works out but I am looking forward to it. I want to do more plein-air painting in the future and I am thinking about a series of paintings of the Wadden Sea.

***Do you see pastel as a fine art medium increasing its profile in Germany and Europe in general? Do you have any connections with US pastel artists so you can make a comparison between it's importance in the US and Europe?***

That is a difficult question to answer. I see more and more German Artists becoming members of the PGE. The internet brings people from all over the world together which is good. But I cannot say whether it is an increased interest in pastel as a medium or whether it is just the fact that we are now organised in the PGE. By teaching

at workshops and doing private lessons in my studio I try to make pastel more popular at least in the region where I live. Being also a member of the Pastel Society of America I am under the impression that pastel is much more established in the US. So it is up to us to promote pastel as a medium across Europe! I think in France, pastel has already an established place in the art world. As with every medium there are pros and cons to it. But pastel seems to me the ideal medium to start with as it has the advantage of immediacy and as I said before no drying times.



*Breaking Waves Cote Bleu*