

*Andrea Burke*

*Critique One*

*Hands*

*15th March 2015*

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Hello Andrea

This is a beautiful study. Well composed. Your washes are beautifully even and flow well.

I can see areas where I can extend you further.

My comments are not criticism, they are aimed to help you grow not only in this painting - but in all of your future work too.

I have a friend staying at the moment. She passed a comment on my painting that I initially thought "Ah - she has no idea what my vision for this work is".

However with time away from the painting, I found myself agreeing with her comment this morning. I made the changes and once again - realize that often we are too close to see everything from an objective view point.

The point I am making is we need to be open to suggestion. Even if it is from a non-artist! We also need space away from our paintings so we can see them with a fresh eye.

Often holding a painting in front of a mirror will immediately highlight any issues of course.

Here we go:

Lets chat about the five elements plus composition - these are the essential ingredients in any painting that bring realism and the connection to our viewers

## **Composition**

This is excellent. Why?

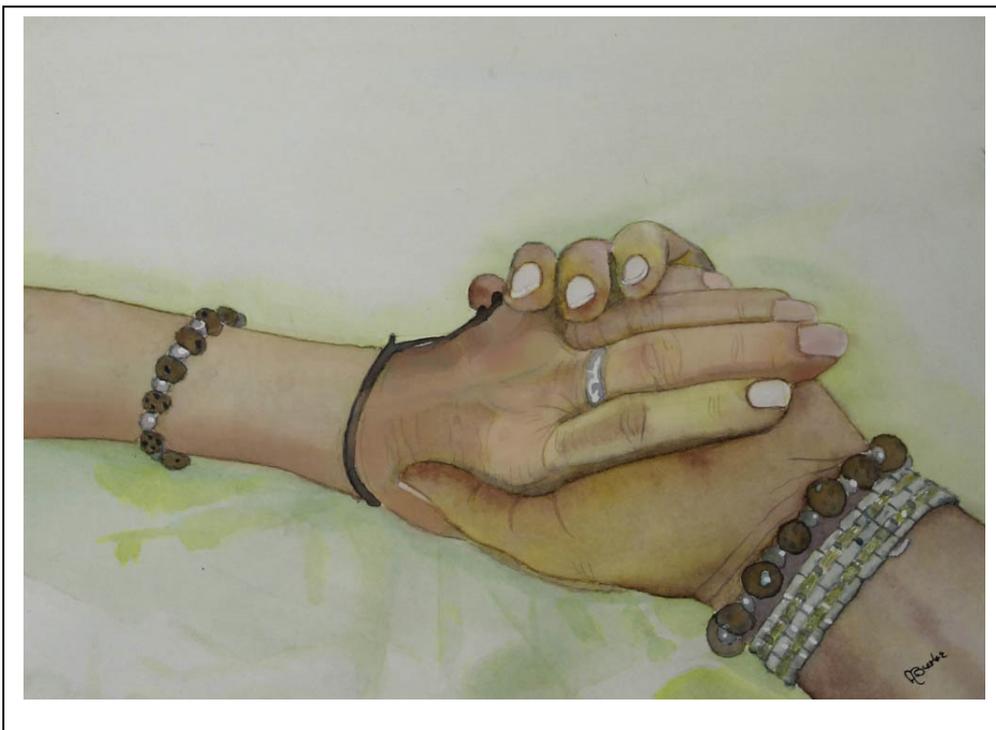
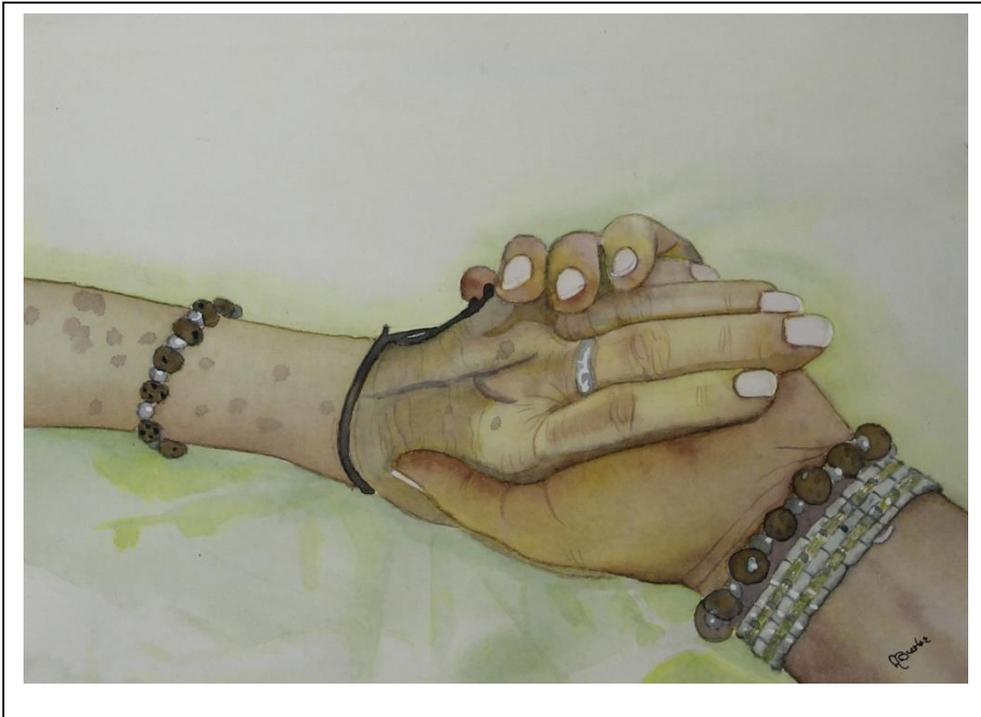
- You have the arms coming from different angles which makes it interesting
- The composition asks us a question about these people who obviously have a close relationship

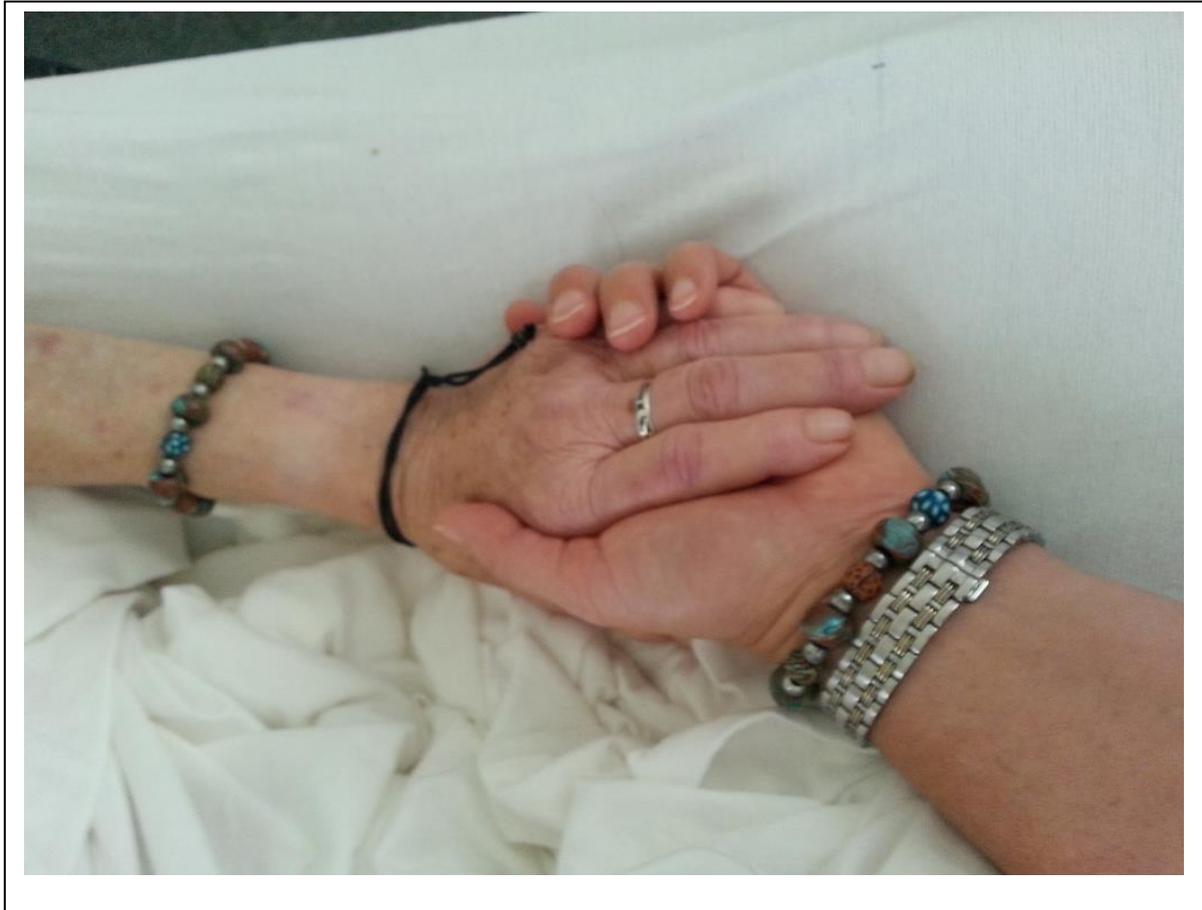
## Color

You have some excellent colors in this painting. However on my screen the skin color tones are a little too yellow/green.

You can counteract that with the complementary color of yellow/green - red and blue. A variety of reds and blue reds (purples) will bring this painting into a more natural skin color range.

I also feel the background is just a little too yellow/green. We can also make minor changes there that will improve the overall impression of color and appeal.





As you can see in the image I have adjusted - I have made a few changes but left the underneath hand and the index finger of the top hand as it was prior to my changes

I wanted you to see the differences right next to the original piece.

What did I do:

1. Firstly I removed the age spots on the left hand arm. In retrospect I feel this was too strong a change. The arm lost the look of age. I think you could lighten these spots. Why? Because they do age the person unflatteringly. If you lighten them a little to how they are in the reference image you will find they are more in-keeping with reality and they also still retain the older person appeal. My arm look too young. I would soften your spots using a brush like my scrubby brush: da Vinci series 122 size 2 & 4 are great sizes. They are inexpensive and have a great flex as well as being gentle on paper. So back to where we were: slightly soften the age spots first. I have also removed or softened some of the deep line on the hand. This takes away some of the aging as well = and you may prefer to leave some of the lines there. However most artists in their emerging stage bring in too much detail and when painting people, this can make the person appear to be so much older than they really are. The sitter doesn't usually appreciate this. I know! :0)

2. **Colour and colour temperature.** Look closely at the ref shot. You will see there are colour differences in the arm that allow us to create a roundness of form. This comes from using colour and colour temperature. We will deal with colour temperature in this heading too as there are many cross references that relate to both. Please note the overall colour needs to be slightly more red - and in areas of shadow at the bottom edge of the arm you could use a warm red such as scarlet red, a touch of Aureolin Yellow (AY) and a **tiny** touch of Sap Green . This will give you a lovely warm shadow colour for the underside of the arm - facing the bottom of the painting. The side facing the upper edge of the painting needs a touch of Alizarin Crimson(cooler red) with the infinitesimal touch of Thalo blue. This will create a slightly purple red. But still red. Once again - this is the colour temperature thing coming into play here. Warm on one side and cooler on the other. The coolest area is where the light hits - which is on the mid top of the arm. Leave this as you have painted it initially. Once you have completed the other areas - then look at it to see if you need to make any changes to the coolest area which is always the area where light has the greatest influence.

### Now let's look at the hand

You can see I have changed the overall colour in the hand too. I used the purple red in the cooler areas - sometimes allow the blue to be a little stronger - as I could detect in the ref image. In other areas of shadow I use the warmer mix mentioned above.

I would add more red shadow colour to the shadow areas of the fingers. Keep your shadows warm and highlights cool. The shadows are always warmer than the local skin colour.

### Nails:

Your nails are very opaque looking. Compare those to our own nails. You will see there is a slight skin colour in the nail colour. They are an extension of the skin and are see through - so to some extent - you are most likely to see the base colour is mostly skin tone colour. See my changes.

Nails are not flat. It is easy to create the impression of roundness by allowing one side of the nail to have an ever so pale warm shadow colour. Often nails have a tiny highlighted area that is rather muted. If you look closely at the ref image you will see the index fingernail has a line. Keep the line soft edged. Otherwise the nail will look very shiny.

### Tonal Values

Your tonal values are good. But they look dull and slightly muddy because the colour temperature is wrong. Warm those up (esp the shadow areas at the sides and below

the fingers and you will find this painting will sing with colour. Make the shadow colour sing - not just be dark as it is now

### Intensity

I think your intensity is good. If you go richer and more saturated, the hands will look much more tangible - however I love what you have now.

### Edges

I would soften your lines. Everywhere. This will give a much more rounded impression. Hands and arms are rounded rather than flat. I think you do have good dimension in this piece but you will find if you soften your lines your subjects will look so much more three dimensional. Lines will always flatten an object.

Your shadow lines on your fingers in particular are too hard. If you soften and blend them you will find your fingers looks much more rounded. Flaring a shadow line into the local colour will always give the impression of rounded form.

### Ring

If the ring is gold - you may like to add some yellow mixed with a touch or SR and a touch of SG. Vary the colour. Be very sure to leave the highlights. You only need a suggestion of colour.

### Finally the Background

A **very pale** wash of your slight shadow colour (reddish purple) will push the green background into a slightly less vibrant green. It will be more in-keeping with ambient atmosphere/colours that you will be introducing to the hands. Keep the background beautifully simple as you have already achieved a foil to support the hands. Not a distraction from the hands.

### Bracelets

You may like to brush some of your shadow colour on the shadow side of these to keep them in the same colour temp mood of the adjusted painting. This will bring a much greater sense of form too. Remember one side warm and one side cool. With the coolest area always being the highlight area.

Well done Andrea! This is a beautiful and emotive painting.

Susan

Keep up the beautiful work!