

# SUMMER PROGRAM OPENS EYES

*Tyler Caldwell, St. Andrews '07, took an intensive, three-week painting class at The Putney School's Summer Programs. Devoting at least six hours a day to his painting, Tyler learned about color, form and discipline. But most of all, he learned to look in entirely new ways. Here's what he wrote about his experience in St. Andrews Magazine when he returned home.*

I was a little nervous about the painting intensive because I didn't know quite what to expect. How does someone paint for six hours a day? Going into the class with very little painting background, I wasn't sure what it would be like, and I am one who does not particularly like going into the unknown.

It was an awesome experience. I loved it. It was also very tiring. I was basically painting from 8 AM to

4 PM every day with some food breaks. After the first week or so, the days went by really quickly.

I wanted to keep up with my training for soccer, so on the second day, I made myself go running at the end of the day, and I badly sprained my ankle. I went for x-rays, and it wasn't broken. The injury ended up being somewhat of a good thing, mainly because I could focus on and pour all of my energy into painting and not worry about my training for soccer.

Nikolai Fox was my painting teacher. He has been coming to Putney for the past couple of summers. He is a fairly well-known artist who lives in Portland, ME, but he grew up in Philadelphia. He taught me new ways of looking at the world and its colors. For instance, he thought that a major idea was relationships. There is no plain white in the world. He said that you use relationships of colors to make one color seem brighter, darker, cooler or warmer. I used this idea in my painting of The Putney School barn. In this painting, I explored my

use of color, trying not to use plain white. In a roof, I used white mixed with a variety of different colors against a darker and cooler color to make the roof appear to be white. Although the class was intensive, it was fairly

some breaks while painting. If you couldn't think of anything you wanted to paint, he would suggest going for a walk outside on the beautiful campus to become inspired. I painted mostly landscapes, but I also painted

with us a couple of times a day about what we were doing and he would give us suggestions. It was the perfect balance of having a certain amount of freedom and independence, but also assistance and guidance.



relaxed. Yes, it was six hours of painting a day, but you were free to paint whatever you wanted. Nikolai wanted us to love and enjoy what we were doing, and so he thought it was a necessity to take

horses, and I did a replica of a Paul Cezanne painting. Nikolai would let us pick what we wanted to do, but while we were painting, he would talk

Working with Nikolai Fox has affected the way I see the world. When I walk out the door, I am not so much interested in whether it is sunny or rainy, but instead the contours of the clouds, the different shades of green



in the woods, how in the field outside my house there are extremely warm colors and extremely cool colors (which boggled my mind for quite some time). I look for relationships, the way the mountains and the sky seem to meet, even though the sky also appears to wrap around on the other side of the mountains, very far from being reached. I notice

informed me that brown is not a color, just a different shade of another color like green, red or orange.)

When I had one day left of painting, Nikolai asked me what I wanted to paint. I wanted to paint the horses at the barn. He went on with a very long talk about how complex form is, especially for a young painter like myself.

muscle and bone. It takes a long time to understand a form because if something like the nose is just a fraction off, then everyone will notice. After this long speech, he then asked me what I wanted to paint. I said that I still wanted to paint horses. The next morning, I spent three hours watching and drawing horses, but mainly watching. I noticed how when they eat grass, every horse has the same relationship between their front feet and their back feet. I also studied their muscles. Even though some horses have more muscle than others, all horses have the same definition and muscle structure. I studied different stances the horses take when they are eating, alert, twisting to one side or the other. In the afternoon, I painted something which ended up being one of my favorite paintings. It was a painting of a chestnut horse. I knew



how not a single tree is actually brown, but instead silver, gray, green, orange and a combination of other colors. (Nikolai

He emphasized how long it takes to study form to master it. You have to understand the relationships between every



that I hadn't mastered a horse's form, but I felt as if I had done a good job with color and recognizing the many different relationships throughout the whole structure.

My interest in the arts started with Introduction to the Arts, a class that all freshmen at St. Andrew's take. I loved this class, and for me it led to drawing class, which led to painting class. Now, I am set up to be an art major next year, which I am excited about.

I heard from previous art majors that the class is a lot of fun, but that it can be time-consuming. Now, having gone to this program, six hours of painting seems like nothing. Painting for that long isn't a drag because it just seems to draw me in and consume me for hours. It is a lot of fun—next year maybe I'll try blacksmithing.

*Tyler Caldwell is the son of Peter Caldwell '74 and grandson of Hepper '46 and John Caldwell '46.*