



Mark Leach 'Winter in Provence III'

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It has always puzzled me why pastel, with its direct intensity of colour, has remained so largely unfashionable in contemporary practice – after Degas, Monet, Whistler et al, the only famous name I can think of is Paula Rego. All of which makes the early death of Mark Leach in 2008, just as he had been elected President of the Pastel Society, such a particular tragedy. Here was an

artist whose whole modernist-influenced output was centred around pastel, a passionate advocate who would have changed perceptions. Just how good he is can be seen in the show currently at **Bath Contemporary** where the colour fairly zings off the surface – as he put it so well: “they are not colours that imitate nature – they are nature.”

Nicholas Usherwood