

The space I feel most at home is behind a microphone asking questions, teasing answers out of people, discovering their lives and loves.

The space I feel most me is at the other end of pen or brush: drawing the world around me, making marks on paper - never frightened of despoiling the virgin white, happy to dive in and see what happens.

They say that's the problem with watercolour - you can't always tell just where it's going to go. And it's like that with interviews. Oil paint goes where it's put, you can cover up your mistakes, endlessly rub over your failed marks. But my grumpy old art teacher taught us never to erase - to throw our rubbers away. If we made a mistake, we had to live with it.

Like in life.

We go wrong, and life goes wrong for us. But we have no magic eraser, no rewind button. No squeaky wobbly red rubber on pencil end, to unsay the line, to take back the argument you say wish you'd never got into.

So real life is watercolour, not oils or acrylic. You have to work round your mistakes. Great splashes of blood on the page, painted crimson lake or vermillion. The mood is indigo, squirrel brushed on not press smooth paper. Occasional bright chromium yellow splashes of young love and children's' smiles.

It's what's there in the background as well as what's painted in front. Use the primaries, you can always mix the rest: whether it's Vincent's dazzling golds, Turner's blues, or the shades of greys of a fading marriage.

Sometimes, when I'm out and about I forget to pack a water bottle - so I use whatever's around: beer, coffee, tea, tonic water. More recently I tried brown sauce which really didn't work - pea purée was more successful.

Riffing with paint over the jazz of the picture. Improvising my life, in an interview I trust my brush to find the next question. Realising that you can't rub out, go back, unsay.

People say, 'how do you know where to make a mark?' And wonder about how I know what to ask. But, like primary colours, there are only really five questions: Who? what? When? Where? How? And, always, endlessly ...Why?

Yellow, Blue, Red, and Black...but people argue about black. They say the absence of colour doesn't count as one. But I see a red door, and I want to paint it black.

If you're brave enough, you can trust yourself to only ask the few questions - knowing which comes next, to get the best answer.

And you'll trust yourself to draw that thick wavy blue line, that bright yellow dot. Knowing that those mere marks and squiggles are to others a sunlit beach.

