



The Daily Dog

Although British artist **Sally Muir** has been painting and drawing dogs as long as she can remember, her art life took off when she committed to posting one dog a day on social media.

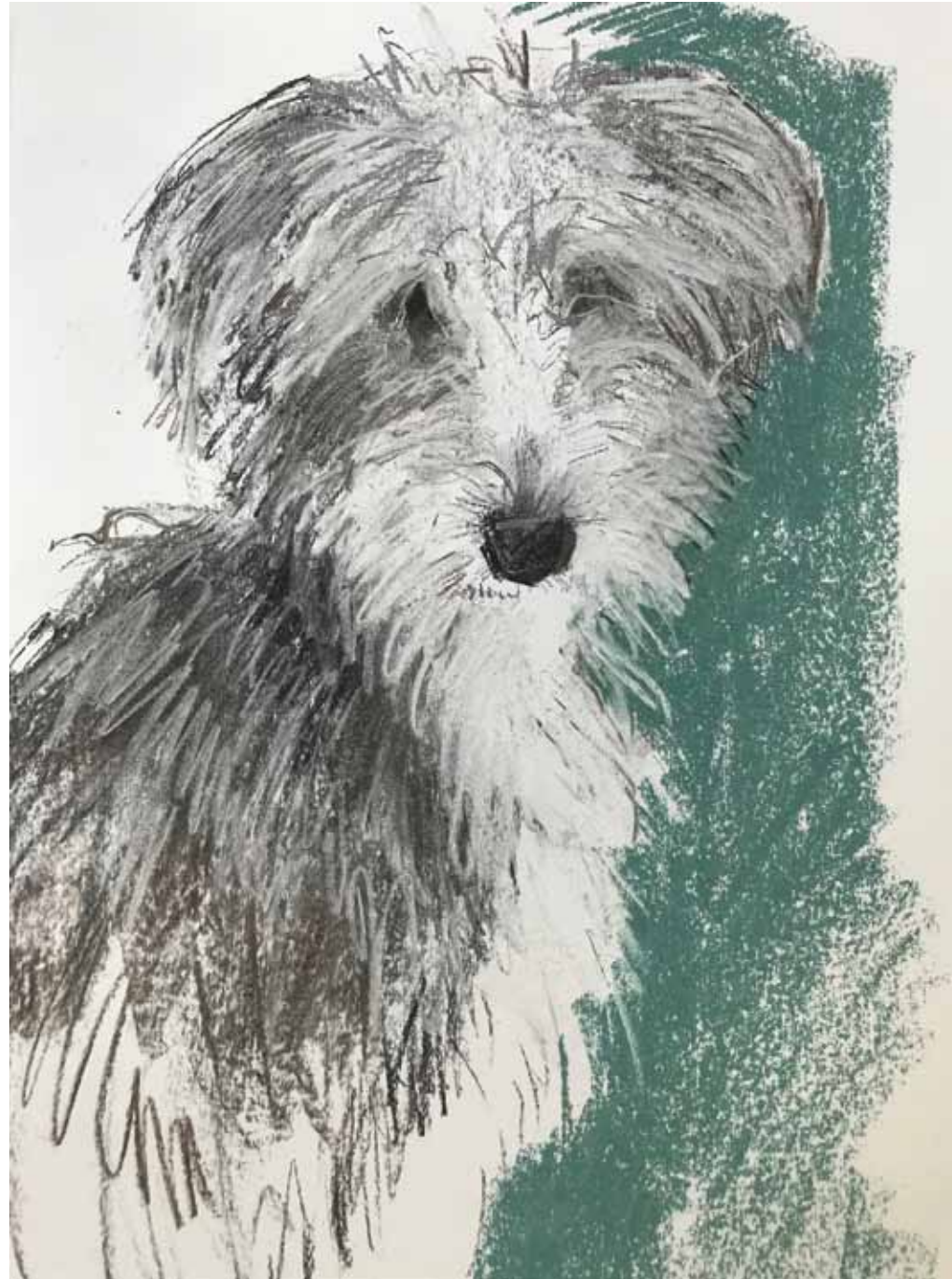
By Ani Kodjabasheva

British artist Sally Muir works in a variety of media and likes to continually try out new materials and techniques. She tends to create her drawings and paintings freely, without a plan, by trusting her media and her intuition. Muir feels her best art happens when she's present in the moment—not thinking back or planning ahead, which, she notes, is also the way a dog's mind works.

Paradoxically perhaps, this desire to work quickly and directly has led the artist to focus on multiple year-long projects with daily works centered around a theme. Muir's most enduring and celebrated series has been her portraits of dogs. Working from life, photos and her imagination, the artist started posting her daily dog paintings on social media in 2013, committing to keep it up for a full year.

LEFT TO RIGHT
Badger (charcoal
and pastel, 16½x11½)

Lily (pastel,
25½x31½)



The project eventually led to the book, *A Dog A Day* (Harper Design, 2019), featuring 365 of her canine artworks. A follow-up book, *Old Dogs* (Pavilion Books), was just released this year. The new collection was inspired by her 15-year-old whippet, Lily. In the eponymous pastel and chalk drawing (previous page), we see Lily sprawled diagonally across the sheet of paper,

her figure as delicate and graceful as a Degas ballerina, only in repose. The drawing is done over another sketch of Lily, in profile, showing the stretch of time the artist and subject have shared while making the piece.

Making Art a Daily Habit

Many artists have found the structure of a painting-a-day commitment

to be motivating—not only as a way to encourage a regular art practice but also as a way to allow for experimentation and exploration. The magic is finding a theme or subject that can sustain one's interest.

For Muir, that was easy. She's endlessly fascinated by dogs and the people who love them. The artist isn't looking to create perfection in her

portraits, but rather to capture—quite often with some humor—the essence of the dog, its personality, and the unique experience of being in its presence. **PJ**

Ani Kodjabasheva (anikodjabasheva.journoportfolio.com) writes about artists, the arts and education from her home in Sofia, Bulgaria.

LEFT TO RIGHT
Dino (charcoal and pastel, 30x22)

Sidney (charcoal and pastel, 16½x11½)