

## feature

Ali Lindley tells  
**Tara Russell**  
how a chance  
encounter  
transformed  
her from a  
full-time mum  
to an award-  
winning  
professional  
artist



# HOME'S WHERE THE ART IS

IT WAS just another routine day for mum-of-three Ali Lindley.

She'd woken up at the crack of dawn, dropped the children off at school and was out walking in the village running errands like any other busy mum.

But she bumped into renowned Hampshire artist Daphne Ellman and from that moment her life changed forever.

Ali said: "We got chatting and she told me she was running a watercolour demonstration, which is unusual for her because she is a fantastic acrylic painter.

"She gave me huge amounts of encouragement and invited me along to one of her classes and then I suppose they say the rest is history!"

Thanks to the chance meeting, Ali, a former florist with no formal art training at all, discovered a hidden talent for painting. Now, 16 years later, you might mistakenly believe Ali has spent a lifetime honing her skills.

She is an award-winning artist specialising in watercolours and mixed media, has been elected into the Society of Women Artists and The Society of Floral Painters,

and teaches and exhibits across the south and London.

Speaking at her studio at her Chandler's Ford home, the 51-year-old said: "It just shows anything is possible no matter how old you might be when you start a new hobby.

"I was a stay-at-home mum. Both my husband and I came from families where that was the done thing. But I started the evening course because I wanted something else to do and now it has led to a career. I'd never dream I would be where I am today.

"People tell me my work is really different and I always get an enormous buzz when it evokes some sort of emotional response in people."

Ali is now displaying her work in the most sentimental exhibition to date. She has teamed up with her role model and former mentor Daphne in a special event at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens in Romsey.

The free exhibition called *Inspired by Nature* will allow the public to meet Ali, Daphne and Richard Tratt as well as watch their demonstrations.

**Ali's paintings cost from £45 to £900 and range from still-life and flowers to town scenes and animals**

Ali's work costs from £45 to £900 and ranges from still-life and flowers to town scenes and wildlife.

But the talking point of the exhibition is a painting of a zebra and its foal finished with gold leaf, which holds a special place in Ali's heart.

Ali, who always admired her father John's painting skills as a child, said: "I absolutely love it. We lived in Africa for five years just after we got married so we saw zebra out on the plains and the game parks and they are just lovely animals.

"From an artistic point of view, the stripy coat is just made to be a work of art."

Ali said she has now found a career she