



**Pictures 1 and 2** Philip Gray painting beneath an Antarctic iceberg **3** Off Lanzarote **4** In the Conotes Caves in Mexico **5** Painting secretly in an underwater city in China **6** Philip uses Old Holland oils, a palette knife, a kitchen sponge and his finger to paint

needed to get out of his comfort zone. Among his sub-aquatic sojourns, he has painted beneath an iceberg in Antarctica and in Mexico's Conotes caves. His most dangerous foray was to an underwater city in China, 45 metres down, where local officials told him no-one is allowed to go. He found some divers who agreed to give him assistance, but they needed to use rebreathers so that no bubbles would alert the patrol boats above them.

He says his favoured Old Holland oils, a palette knife, a rubber shaper, a kitchen sponge and occasionally his

finger are all he needs to complete a canvas beneath the waves. When the water is -2°C the oil paint turns to putty, so he adds some gin to stop it from freezing. The only thing that is added on dry land is his signature.

The biggest problem is securing the easel and canvas to prevent them from drifting away, as he often has to contend with currents. On the China site, Philip reveals that he had a special cradle built to secure him to the wall of the underwater city.

Philip's underwater originals sell for

around £7,000. His prints are around £600. His art is sold by De Montfort and Clarendon Fine Art.

It turns out that Philip is not alone. After further research I came across the Russian oil painter Olga Nikitina. Olga not only paints underwater but takes things a step further by showing her finished canvases in underwater exhibitions. The last one was visited by more than 100 scuba divers. Find out more about her, and Ukrainian sub-aquatic artist Alexander Belozor, in the panel, below left.

Jeff,

Feb 14th. 2025

As promised a copy of  
my story in 'Art + Framing Today'

Delighted that Philip Gray  
chooses 'OLD HOLLAND' oils !

Regards. Keith



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and framing



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