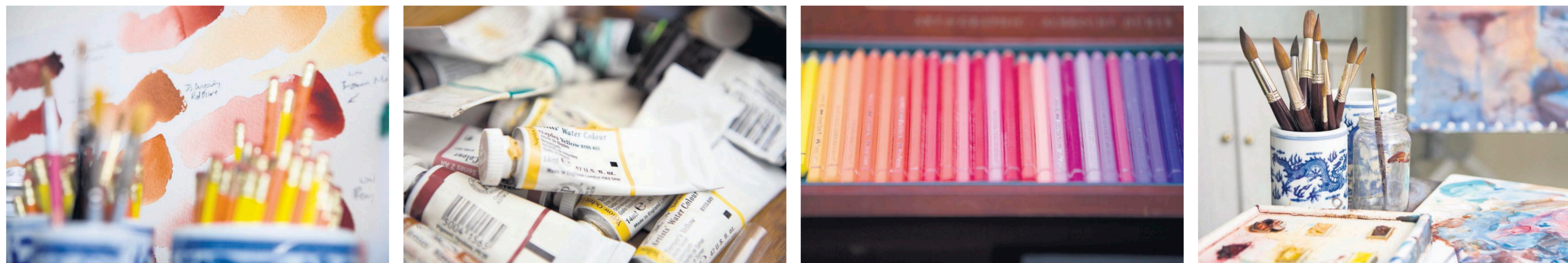




Paints and art materials, clockwise from above, in the studio of the artist Alexander Creswell. Photos by Matt Crossick for The National



The artist Alexander Creswell poses in front of one of his watercolours, *Doors of Perception, an Omani Village*, at his studio in Surrey in the UK. The painting will be on show at the Art Antiques Design fair in Dubai.

In living watercolour

The renowned British watercolourist Alexander Creswell, who specialises in painting architectural subjects, will be presenting a new work at the Majlis Gallery's stand at Art Antiques Design Dubai from Wednesday to Sunday. Depicting an Omani village, the 122 x 215cm painting is the largest watercolour

ever to be sold in the Middle East. Painting watercolour in such a large format presents an array of technical difficulties. "Watercolour is a very difficult medium, and you can't correct mistakes as you can with oil painting. So you could have been painting for three weeks and then one mistake will ruin the whole picture,"

Creswell says. The artist paints preliminary sketches on location and then finishes his works in his studio, which is specifically designed for working on large-format watercolours. So how does he render such an evocative atmosphere when he's back at home in Surrey? "I have a rather interesting method,"

he says. "I listen to certain music when I'm there and doing my sketches, then when I put the music back on in the studio, it all comes flooding back. It doesn't have to be music that relates to the scene, though – for this one I was listening to some rather heavy 1970s rock."

★ Gemma Champ

