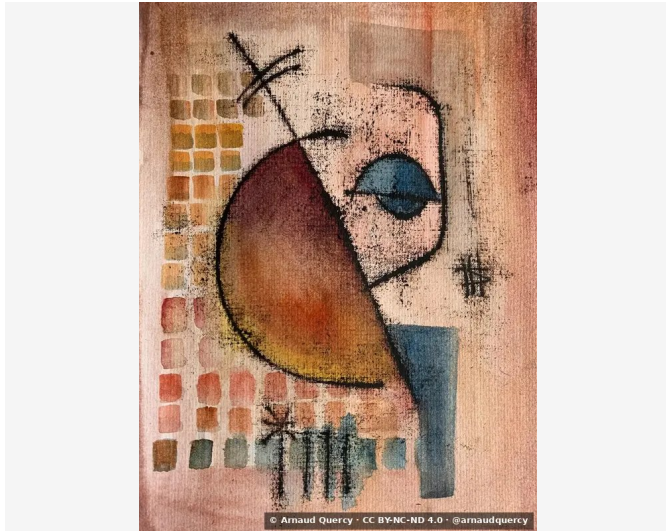


# Nanopublication – Sir John Falstaff as Visual Character Study – Contradiction, Excess, and Watercolor's Natural Diffraction

by Arnaud Quercy [2] · Sir John Falstaff · 2022



**CLAIM 1: SIR JOHN FALSTAFF AS VISUAL CHARACTER STUDY – CONTRADICTION, EXCESS, AND WATERCOLOR'S NATURAL DIFFRACTION**

I chose watercolor as the medium to translate Shakespeare [5]'s Sir [1] John Falstaff [4] into visual form because the medium's inherent instability mirrors the character's fundamental contradiction: wit and self-indulgence, boisterous vitality and moral ambiguity, theatrical grandeur and comic deflation. The fluid bleeds and uncontrolled blending of watercolor on paper enact what Falstaff embodies – an irreducible excess that resists containment, spills beyond its own outline.

## CONTEXT

Sir John Falstaff – Shakespeare's most voluminous invention, appearing across *\*Henry IV\* Parts 1 and 2* and *\*The Merry Wives of Windsor\** – is a character who defeats reduction. He is simultaneously companion and parasite, philosopher and coward, beloved and contemptible. His humor is never simple: it is always self-aware, self-undermining, and yet never fully ironic enough to be mere cynicism. He is a man of genuine warmth and genuine vice, and Shakespeare refuses to resolve the tension.

In translating this character into watercolor, I worked with the medium's structural analogies to Falstaff's nature. The warm orange range – tan, rosybrown, burnt sienna, wheat – builds a foundation of bodily presence, earth-

iness, the heated flush of a man who eats, drinks, and lives loudly. These tones accumulate without being fully controlled, pooling and drying at their own tempo, which suits a character whose appetites always slightly exceed his will. The black line work – gestural, assertive, non-illusionistic – provides the wit: sharp, ironic notation over the warm wash, like Falstaff's verbal dexterity laid over his considerable bulk.

The grid of color squares on the left of the composition functions as something other than pure decoration: it introduces a visual rhythm, a kind of inventory or tally, an echo of Falstaff's endless accounting of debts, pleasures, and justifications. The blue accent – unexpected in so warm a composition – marks the character's occasional moments of genuine pathos, the flickers of something more serious within the comedy.

The work belongs to the Untamed Creations collection, which gathers pieces governed by free expression rather than systematic method. This is not ideamorphic transliteration operating through a codex; it is direct portraiture of character through chromatic and gestural intuition. The "untamed" quality is precisely what Falstaff demands: his vitality cannot be systematized without becoming something else.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Arnaud Quercy (2022). Sir John Falstaff – Catalog raisonné. <https://arnaudquercy.art/en/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0433.html>
- [2] Quercy, A. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2662-7790>
- [3] Quercy, A. (2022). Sir John Falstaff (AQC0433). Untamed Creations collection. Art Quam Anima. [https://artquamanima.com/en/artworks/2022/01/sir-john-falstaff\\_4wm.html](https://artquamanima.com/en/artworks/2022/01/sir-john-falstaff_4wm.html)
- [4] Bloom, Harold. *\*Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human\**. Riverhead Books, 1998. [Chapter on Falstaff as Shakespeare's supreme creation of self-delight]
- [5] Shakespeare, William. *\*Henry IV, Part 1\** (c. 1597). The Arden Shakespeare. Methuen, 1960.
- [6] Shakespeare, William. *\*Henry IV, Part 2\** (c. 1600). The Arden Shakespeare. Methuen, 1966.

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**WHERE THIS WORK LIVES**

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**Series:** Shakespeare  
**Collection:** Spells and Magic  
**Technique:** Watercolor

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**EXHIBITIONS**

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Transcendence - World Premiere of Ephemera Arts (2023-10-29  
→ 2023-11-15, Koblenzer Kunstverein e.V., Koblenz)

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**OTHER WORKS IN THIS SERIES**

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Ariel - The Spirit  
Sir Galahad  
Bertram  
Ariel, the spirit  
Ariel - The tempest

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**DOCUMENTED AT**

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Catalogue Raisonné — Sir John Falstaff — Sir John Falstaff  
— Shakespearean Character Study — Arnaud Quercy (2022)  
Gallery — Sir John Falstaff  
Nanopublication — Sir John Falstaff — Digital Image  
Documentation - aqc0433\_img\_full\_1536x2048\_webp  
Nanopublication — Sir John Falstaff — Physical  
Specifications  
Nanopublication — Sir John Falstaff — Computational Image  
Analysis - AQC0433

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**THEMATIC ELEMENTS**

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shakespearean character   watercolor portrait  
untamed creations   contemporary figurative  
orange earth tones   literary interpretation  
small format painting   character study

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**EPISTEMIC PROFILE**

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|                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Claim type</b>       | artistic statement        |
| <b>Voice</b>            | first person              |
| <b>Epistemic status</b> | authorial attestation     |
| <b>Methodology</b>      | direct practice knowledge |
| <b>Certainty</b>        | high                      |

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**CHECKSUM (SHA-256)**

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|--------------------|------------------|
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