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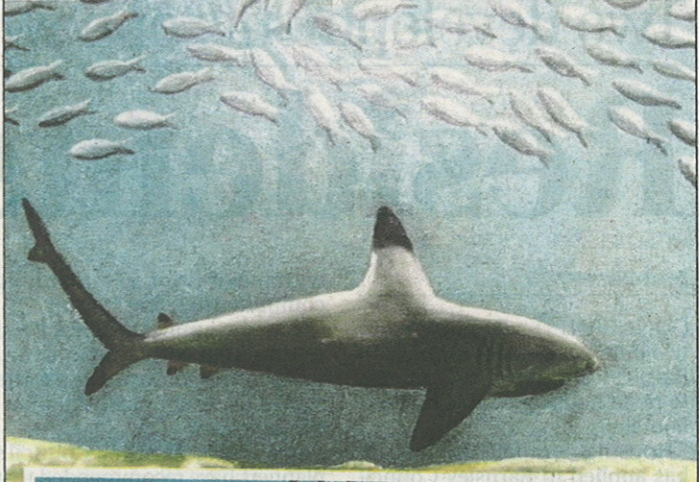
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**TOIL ON CANVAS:** Underwater artist Caroline Appleyard, from Chesterfield, who takes her oil pastels and hardboard to the seabed with her so that she can sketch shipwrecks and wildlife. Picture: rossparry.co.uk



**INTO THE BLUE:** Above, Caroline Appleyard at work on an underwater creation and, top, a painting of a shark in the Maldives.

# Scuba enthusiast takes her art to new depths

Jeni Harvey

A SCUBA-diving artist has come up with a new way to capture sealife scenery – by creating her artwork while underwater. Caroline Appleyard believes she may be the only artist in the world to don full scuba diving gear as she takes her oil pastels and hardboard to the seabed with her, so she can sketch the fish and wrecks she encounters. The unique illustrator retired from a job at an accountancy firm in 2006 to take up painting full time and is now doing a booming business in her unusual artwork. She has her technique down to a fine art, employing mini-weights to tie down her oil pastels, drawing on to hardboard and using her scuba expertise to stay on the seabed for up to an hour. The 43-year-old said: "I started doing it because I am awful at taking photos underwater and it was actually easier to paint instead. "I loved painting and I loved

diving and I had never heard about anyone doing both at the same time, so I thought, why not? "I had a look on the internet and couldn't find any tips on doing it so a couple of years ago I began to try out different things to see what would work." Ms Appleyard, who lives with her partner Chris Housley, 60, in Chesterfield, experimented using a range of different pastels and papers to sketch underwater, with some disastrous results. She said: "I tried going down with some oil pastels and wax paper or canvas, but the results were absolutely atrocious. "I would open up my box of pastels and they would come flying out and then, when I wasn't looking, crabs would creep along, steal some of them and crawl off. "I would be waving my pastels about and they would be clinging on." She sells her creations on her own website, prices ranging from £250 to £700.

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