

Watercolor Painting For Beginners

There are times when one is struck, by a breath-taking scene that may never be encountered again. Should you lack a camera in such a situation, put your pencil to use and do a quick sketch of the scene with detailed pencil notes about the actual color. This will give you a chance to apply your knowledge about the warm and cool classifications of color because it will be almost impossible to remember each individual color by name. A sketch like this should not be too detailed, yet it should include the essential elements in proper relation to each other. Any hills in the background are merely outlined and if there are woods at left and right, as they get nearer, they should still be merely wiggly lines. Buildings, too, are merely indicated rather than actually constructed. When you get back to your base of operation, make an immediate color sketch based on the drawing and notes made on location as well as anything you may be able to remember and visualize about the scene. This procedure will give you a solid basis for a future finished painting.

Painting windows One of the most frequent queries I've had during my years of teaching is "How do you paint a window?" It is essential to learn this if you are to paint buildings successfully. A window, of course, is transparent, but often it also is a reflecting agent. There are three stages in painting a window. First, apply a wash of Payne's gray and yellow ochre (stage 1). While this is still wet, apply a darker wash of the same with a touch of Antwerp blue at the top of the window (stage 2). When this dries, paint the frames. Should you wish to put in a curtain, paint a dark area to the center and then add other, less dark, values for wrinkles (stage 3). You may leave one pane lighter than the others to lend an interesting contrast.

Painting texture Two very commonplace subjects - an old barn and a stone wall - make interesting subjects. The silvery quality and rotten, weather-beaten wood, complete with knot holes and rusty hinges usual in a barn make it an intriguing subject for professional and amateur artist alike. This also applies to any picturesque stone wall. Both subjects are a challenge to any artist because of the subtleties of textures involved. First place the structure of the fence wall within a cube in order to get the proper dimension and perspective. Having done this first, then break up the wall into an interesting, irregular pattern. To achieve the texture of the old wood in a barn, work from light to dark - a series of light washes. For the silvery quality of old weather-beaten wood use a thin wash of black. To show wood that is warped, work from the basic middle tones up through lighter tones to the dark shadow edge. Many texture effects are achieved by using an almost dry brush. Remember, it takes time and patience to get good texture. Don't finish any specific area - work over the whole picture until it is completed. If your light area gets too dark, use a bristle brush with clean water to make it light. If the area is large, use a sponge. Mastering these aspects of watercolor painting will get you off to a good start.

About the Author

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