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contents / summer 2015

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On the Cover

Redbuds Showing Off (acrylic on board, 20x30) by Hugh Greer

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Greetings, friends!

We are creatives—your art appears upon a painted surface while mine is made up of words strung together to reveal stories. We both seek out instruction from trusted teachers as we hone our skills. We read books and magazines on our craft. We listen for inspiration in music, or on the crowded train into the city. Our eyes are always watching for that just-right slant of light that illuminates a scene, or for the lyrical expression of a stranger that tells a story in one glance.

Perhaps you're like me and you've found the niche—hallelujah!—that satisfies your creative spirit as well as your bank account's needs. Yet, if we aren't careful, might we get a bit too comfortable within a safe groove and one day burrow down so deeply that the sides fall in on us?

Temple Grandin, Ph.D., said so simply and eloquently, "The most important thing people did for me was to expose me to new things." Do you paint traditional landscapes and therefore flip past the mixed-media collage stories in an issue of *Acrylic Artist*? Is your passion for abstraction, so you skip the features on photorealism? Obviously, I read every page, and I'm blessed to discover fresh approaches, techniques and ideas. And, often, I find amazing similarities among artists who, on the surface, seem diametrically opposed.

I challenge you to look beyond the obvious connections you have with specific artists in this issue, and read every story. Expose yourself to new things. Regardless of the genre in which they paint, they are talking about the same things that are important to you, too, as an artist.

Thank you for picking up this issue of *Acrylic Artist*. I'd love to hear your ideas, as well as your feedback on this issue. Email me at **aaedit@fwcommunity.com**.

WOODSIDE IMAGES / J. SINCLAIR

Wishing you peace,

Patty Craft

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Acrylic Artist (ISSN: 2376-2047) is published 4 times a year by F+W, 10151 Carver Road, Suite 200, Blue Ash, OH 45242. Subscription rates: $35/one year in the U.S. $43/one year in Canada, and $45/one year in international countries (surface delivery). Remit in U.S. funds only. Subscription Services: 1-800-264-9871 (toll-free U.S. and Canada) or 386-246-3321 (international customers), or write *Acrylic Artist*, PO Box 421751, Palm Coast, FL 32142. Contact online at **www.artistsnetwork.com/contactus**. Back issues are available. For pricing information or to order, call 855/842-5267, or visit our online shop at **www.northlightshop.com/art-magazines/acrylic-artist**.

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test zone

Learn how to use **Golden Artist Colors High Flow** acrylics on a brush, in a pen or a marker and straight from the bottle.

By Ursula Roma

When I was introduced to Golden Artist Colors (www.goldenpaints.com) acrylics about five years ago, I confess that I almost passed out from excitement. The buttery flow and the pigment load of the Golden Artist Colors products impressed me, and the line of High Flow acrylics is no exception. Golden High Flow acrylics replaced the Golden airbrush colors, improving the formula and increasing the line to 49 high-intensity colors, including iridescents and fluorescents. The Golden product description tells artists that we can use the High Flow acrylics in refillable markers, as well as in ruling or technical pens, but we can also just pour the paint right from the bottle. I found High Flow acrylics superior to most inks I've used. If I'm layering colors, the High Flow acrylics act like thin passages of color; when diluted, they act like glazes. The High Flow acrylics adhered to almost any surface, though a bit differently to each.

Surfaces and Applicators

I first tried the High Flow paints on cold-pressed watercolor paper using various brushes (see page 8). The paper absorbed the paint quickly, though the intensity of the color didn't wash out. I noted that a brush loaded with paint retained the paint without dripping. The

when the tip is depressed occasionally to keep a steady flow of paint coming out to wet the tip of the nib, thus effecting a nice crisp line for tight detail drawing. Marker bottles filled with custom colors are perfect tools to create varied sizes of circles or clean edges for controlled line work. I found that when I was drawing, the fuller the bottle remained, the more consistent the paint flow for longer strokes. (See drawing below.)

As for pen-type applicators, I tried several that allowed for a variety of lines, for instance a fine-line, standard-tip applicator bottle with a pin-type nib. The applicator itself caused more problems than the paint. The paint flowed smoothly and in a relief line on nonabsorbent papers, though it left a bead when I stopped, with the result that it often spread to a larger spot. Practice is required to get an even

Clockwise from opposite:

Flat brushes and rollers were used to apply paints for the background, and then paints were stamped onto the surface.

Using brushes of varying widths, layers of Golden High Flow acrylics were applied to hot-pressed paper. The colors flowed as smoothly as melted butter, and the concentration of color was remarkable.

A brush was used to apply Golden High Flow acrylics to cold-pressed watercolor paper. The High Flow paint absorbs well into the paper without losing color intensity.

emulsifiers Golden uses seem to secure the paint to the bristles until just the right amount of pressure is applied to the paper—a nice, comforting effect when you consider the level of control that you can maintain as a result.

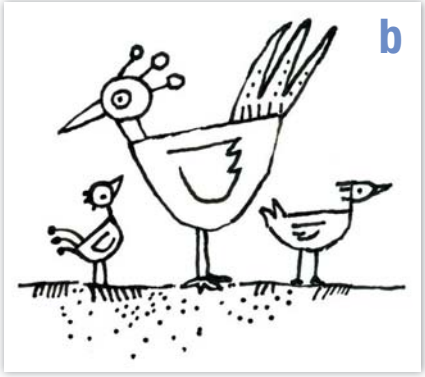
I then tried High Flow acrylics on vellum bristol board. Again, I found the results dependable. The color remained vivid and the paint showed a bit of relief on the surface, with very little absorbency, as the gesso prevented it from being soaked up by the board.

Then I switched to using other methods of application: sponge, pen, and brush. High Flow acrylics are versatile. Each experiment proved equally satisfying in both the delivery of paint to the surface and in the quality and density of color.

Next, I filled empty, standard-tip acrylic paint markers with a dark color to explore how crisp an edge I could achieve (see example A on page 8). I had a standard broad tip, which works best

No. 2 and No. 12 rounds, and 1-inch and ½-inch angle shaders were used to create richly colored, textural, meaty patterns (right).

Paint Marker: I filled a refillable, broad-tipped standard paint marker with Golden High Flow indigo paint; the consistency was perfect for very controlled line work.



Rapidograph Pen: I loaded Golden High Flow black paint in a 1.4 mm Rapidograph pen; it took some encouragement to get the line consistent.

Barrel Fountain Pen: I loaded Golden High Flow sepia paint in a barrel fountain pen and found that the High Flow acrylic flowed relatively smoothly.

line, as the degree of squeezing pressure necessary on the bottle is minute—but relevant. I didn't have a chance to master this procedure, but even the mistakes proved visually interesting and had a relief quality that I quite liked, one that could be a nice juxtaposition from the flat inky look, if executed properly.

Finally, I filled an old Senator fountain pen with sepia, and it worked surprisingly well. The flow stayed smooth and the color vivid, despite the thin line. No clogging occurred during the few days I experimented with the fountain pen (see example C, left).

On the other hand, the 1.4 mm Rapidograph pen which has a very large nib, filled with black paint was not a success story (see example B, left). Perhaps the sepia paint is thinner and therefore flows better in a pen of this type. I had to repeat my previous strokes to get a

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continuous line. I was least impressed with this particular application.

Compared With Inks

Applying the High Flow acrylics on smoother surfaces produced results very similar to the ones I would get with inks I've used, especially the black, which functioned almost identically to my favorite inks, although the adherence and density of color in High Flow acrylics were superior. For a long, deep black line that remains consistent the entire length, I found that High Flow paints beat out others I've used in the past. Opacity can be achieved, which is often not possible in one-stroke painting.

In general, I found that, as with inks, the Golden High Flow acrylics produced a smooth line on hot-pressed, smooth surfaces and tended to have a tad of fuzziness and inconsistent choppiness on more absorbent, cold-pressed surfaces. The paint dries quickly, so this can be controlled once you familiarize yourself with the medium. I loved the amount of color bursting through, as I added layer upon layer of the High Flow acrylics in a glazing type of application. Golden acrylics act like oil paints in so many ways that I found myself loving illustration again. The High Flow paints allow me to create a thin layer of color without using a massive amount of glazing liquid or water—both of which lead to drag on the brush and less pigment load in each stroke.

A variety of black paint pens and brushes were used to add detail on top of the existing color.

"I'm happy to discover yet another quality product line by Golden that reinvigorates my desire to show up at my easel."

I find I'm happy to discover yet another quality product line by Golden that reinvigorates my desire to show up at my easel. I've barely scratched the surface for the use of these materials, but I believe that these High Flow acrylics will keep an artist engaged in painting for more hours than you might think possible. I was surprised myself. /aa

URSULA ROMA is a fine artist, illustrator, sculptor, and graphic designer. Visit her website at www.ursularoma.blogspot.com.

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The Power of the Series / How painting like you're on an assembly line helps to break through creative block.

By Tesia Blackburn

What do Georgia O'Keeffe, Pablo Picasso, Richard Diebenkorn, Jackson Pollock, Grandma Moses and Andy Warhol all have in common? They worked in series.

When we work in a series we enjoy the benefit of giving our body of work coherence and integrity thanks to an obvious theme running throughout the paintings. While we concentrate on a specific motif or tackle a particular challenge, the multi-piece series gives us time to achieve success. Plus, we get the benefit of developing a connection with the viewer over several pieces. Each individual painting in a series may be good on its own, but a series is usually greater than the sum of its parts. Ten pieces on the same topic show we've got the skills to go the distance.

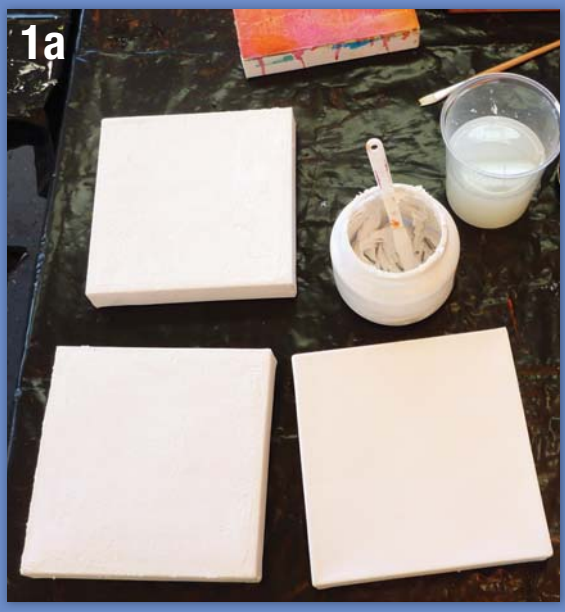
There are other practical reasons for working in series. When I buy canvas I usually buy a dozen or so at a time; all of the same size. Now you probably realize that buying a dozen canvases of the same size is going to save me money, but it's more than money that I save. I also save time and frustration because I'm solving similar problems on every canvas. The composition, colors and design can be repeated and reworked. I gain a better understanding and control of the designs and colors that I'm using.

Up, Up and Away #2 (opposite; acrylic on canvas, 12x12), ***Malibu Sunset*** (above; acrylic on canvas, 12x12) and ***Up, Up and Away #3*** (left; acrylic on canvas, 12x12) are paintings in the "Wonderland" series Blackburn is painting in which she's focused on the theme of childhood activities, and the accompanying joy of those remembered experiences. The colors in the series are bright and saturated; the shapes whimsical. Blackburn's tips for painting in series are put into practice here—each is painted on a 12x12 canvas using the same color palette, common shapes and sunburst stencil.

Think about painting in series this way: You determine a certain design motif for the series. You set up a framework or loose structure that the series must adhere to, and you go to work. You no longer have to think through all the variables for every single canvas. You only use the elements that are necessary to the particular series that you're working on.

Design Motif: Its Role in the Series

Think of your design motif as an important, identifiable, dominant element, idea, color or form in your painting or creative work. When I start a series I decide on color, texture and size before I begin. Setting these



Steps for Creating a Series

STEP ONE: In the "Wonderland" series I made the decision to use bright colors, so I prepped all of the canvases with Golden fiber paste. This gives me an absorbent ground that will work well with fluid paint and lots of water.

STEP TWO: Using only two colors and plenty of water I layer the paint. After several layers have been applied I'm ready to start painting in the design elements. I keep the colors simple to avoid making muddy mixtures, and to keep the colors bright.

STEP THREE: Next I paint in the shapes and patterns that I've established for this series. These design elements will be repeated many times in different variations in many layers.

STEP FOUR: I keep painting layers and design elements until the piece has enough complexity and unity.

FINISHED PAINTING: In the completed painting, ***Carousel #8*** (opposite, bottom; acrylic on panel, 8x8) you still see some of the beginning layers.


3


4a


4b

guidelines in my mind creates a rough framework for the series, and limits the number of choices I have to make on any given painting. Having made these tough decisions at the beginning of the series, I can enjoy the process of painting, knowing that I've set up the tools beforehand. Then, as each painting unfolds, I can make smaller, simpler decisions within each painting.

For instance, in my "Wonderland" series I'm focused on childhood activities and the joy I remember from specific experiences like going to the beach or eating ice cream. The colors in this series are bright and saturated. The shapes are whimsical, and the compositions lively. Several things immediately fall off my radar within these firm guidelines. The color black isn't going to figure in prominently. I won't need brooding dark glazes or ominous shapes. I know that circles, sunbursts and glossy color will be included.

> "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together."
> —VINCENT VAN GOGH

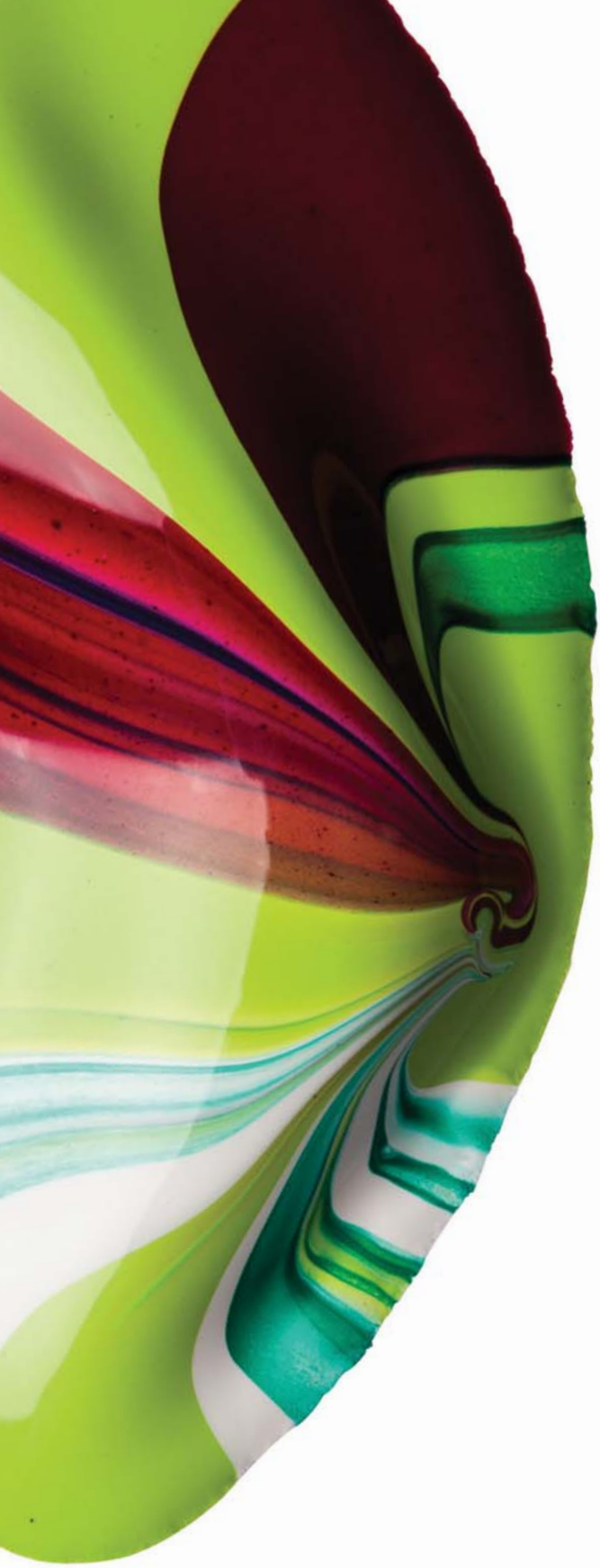
Grape Crush (above; acrylic on canvas, 12x12) uses some of the common colors chosen for the palette for the "Wonderland" series, but showcases the cooler colors rather than the warmer colors.

Calliope #2 (left; acrylic on canvas, 8x8) Materials used in this painting include Golden Fluid Acrylics in diarylide yellow, green gold, Hansa yellow medium, manganese blue hue, titanium white, Golden fiber paste, Golden glass Beads and stencils from www.stencilgirlproducts.com

It's not easy to paint in series, but the rewards are big. You'll have to be committed to your design motif, maintain clarity about your theme or message, and stay focused on your chosen design elements. When you do all of this and your series is complete, you'll get to enjoy the satisfaction of having created a strong, coherent body of work that will engage your viewers and demonstrate your level of determination and skill.

The Power of Repetition

Painting the same subject over and over again may not sound very creative to you, but what if you use the same design motif and change it slightly? Painting in a series



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Calliope #1 (acrylic on canvas, 12x12) is another completed painting from the "Wonderland" series. Materials used include Golden Fluid Acrylics in Hansa yellow medium, quinacridone magenta, teal, titanium white, Golden Fiber Paste, Golden Glass Beads and stencils from www.stencilgirl products.com.

doesn't mean painting the same thing repeatedly. It means carrying a set theme or set of design elements through a variety of canvases. Here are painting prompts to help you think in terms of a series:

- Use color as a repeating element. Working with a single color, add only black and white to create shades and tints of the color. Create a series of works using only these colors. Or, use a single color in an innovative way as Yves Klein did with International Klein Blue.
- Use a shape as a repeating element. Mark Rothko created stunning art using only squares and rectangles.
- Use a repeated word as the basis for a series. Make photocopies of the single word you've chosen using different typefaces. Then use these photocopies as the basis for a collage or mixed-media series.
- Reinterpret a favorite painting by another artist. Picasso famously quoted Velázquez's *Las Meninas* in a suite of 58 paintings. /aa

TESIA BLACKBURN has been a working artist in the San Francisco Bay area for more than 25 years. She is a revered workshop instructor; find her upcoming classes on her website at www.acrylicdiva.com. She's also the author of *Acrylic Painting with Passion* which you can find in the North Light Shop (bit.ly/northlightacrylicpassion).

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Questions Answered / Advice from the Experts

Q I paint in acrylics, and I've been told that I should put a base coat of paint on my canvas before I start. One teacher said I should paint the base coat red, another said to paint it orange and yet another said to paint it sienna. Which is correct, and why?

A. To answer this question, we must have a common understanding of the term base coat and its usage in fine-art painting. A base coat, which is more commonly called a ground, usually refers to the gesso that you apply to the canvas before you begin the actual painting. In this sense, base coats are most often pure white, but you can use tinted gesso, which is marketed in a number of colors. You can also tint it yourself by adding dry pigment to white gesso. Colored gesso sets the chromatic tone of the painting with a field of color, into which you apply your paint. You may also use what oil painters call an imprimatura. This is a layer of paint (usually a thin one) you apply to the top of the gesso. An imprimatura serves essentially the same purpose as a colored gesso by setting the overall hue and tone of a painting.

I must say that I've never heard of a method of acrylic painting that rigidly prescribes a specific color of base coat or imprimatura, so I checked with a fellow painter, Mike Townsend, who's a technical consultant for Golden Artist Colors, and one of the most knowledgeable experts on acrylics in the United States. He was also unaware of any such method.

So this is what it comes down to: Unless you're working with an esoteric method which requires you to use a certain hue of gesso or imprimatura, the choice is really up to you. There are too many variables in acrylic painting to prescribe an exclusive base color. It all depends upon your preferences, as well as your individual style and technique. It's also a matter of what you want to do with the painting and how you want to do it. If you're a landscape artist and you wish to paint an autumn scene, you may want to underlay it with orange, red or burnt sienna. If you want to paint a cold winter scene, on the other hand, you may want to paint a color field of blue. Or you may wish to paint a warm early fall landscape by starting with a cool blue underpainting; glazing and scumbling warm hues over cool hues can yield some beautifully vivid colors.

When you're in a particular art class or workshop, I advise you to do it the way your teacher tells you to do it, but when you're on your own time, you can do it any way you please and in any way that works for you. *—B.K.*

Q Can I use acrylics on my watercolor paper? If so, can I use the paper just as it is, or do you recommend sizing or priming it? Also I'd like to try mixing watercolors and acrylics in the same painting. Any tips?

A. Acrylics work beautifully on watercolor paper and can be used transparently, opaquely and translucently, just as they can be used on canvas. For a surface that accepts more texture, use hot-pressed paper; for more control over washes, use cold-pressed paper.

Most watercolor papers come already sized, although Strathmore Aquarius II is an exception. For experimental purposes, you might try texturing or coating your paper with gesso. For even more texture, explore moulding pastes, soft gel mediums and Lascaux Structura to build up a tactile surface. Holbein's colored gessoes work beautifully for intriguing color explorations. If you're painting transparently, underpaint with a thin wash of iridescent paint. Let the underpainting dry before you paint on top of it. The advantage or advisability of any of these products depends on your intention.

Similarly, you can use acrylics on wet or dry paper, depending on the look you want. When you wet watercolor paper thoroughly, however, you wash off the sizing. I advise you to use watercolor paper without sizing until you understand what acrylic does on that surface. As you gain control over the medium, try other surfaces.

Before you experiment with acrylic and watercolor on the same painting, be familiar with the characteristics of both, independent of each other. They're entirely different media, with different drying times and properties. I once painted a 60x80 canvas with watercolor mixed with matte medium, naively thinking that the matte medium would turn the watercolor into acrylic. Not so! As I varnished the canvas, I watched in horror

What's on Your Mind?

You've got questions; we've got answers. We've got trusted experts ready to respond, and to help you overcome your painting challenges. Whether it's a technique question, or you're in a quandry about materials or products, we want to hear from you. You'll earn a one-year subscription to *Acrylic Artist* when we use your question in print. Send your questions to us via eMail at aaedit@fwcommunity.com with "Q&A" in the subject line. Or write to us at: *Acrylic Artist* Q&A / 10151 Carver Road, Suite 200 / Blue Ash, OH 45242.

as the watercolor started running. I had to repaint the entire canvas.

Thin, transparent acrylics work well as a basic wash over which to apply watercolor, but if you apply acrylics too thickly, watercolor will slip off. Remember that acrylic has a polymer film that acts as a shield. Once dry, it's impervious to lifting (except by experienced painters who have learned various techniques using alcohol). Another salient characteristic that bears comparing is that watercolor dries lighter and acrylic dries darker.

Read books on acrylics and try some of the exercises to understand more about the medium. Also, take workshops with people whose work you admire. If you're near a trade show, seize the opportunity to take classes with well-known artists who demonstrate how to use the complex variety of acrylic products. *—B.D.S.*

Q How do you achieve a drybrush paint application using acrylics? Loading the brush and then dabbing it on a paper towel to make the pigment drier is tedious and interferes with my spontaneity and energy. Is there an additive—homemade or commercial—or another method of paint handling that will help me?

A. Forget the additives and concentrate on technique. Drybrush is a rhythmic action and refers to a method of handling the brush and paint. In a way, you could compare it to skipping. Your wrist and hand movements skip (or roll) across the paper or canvas with a brush that is loaded with a small amount of thick paint. For best results, practice, practice, practice.

You seem to be putting too much water in your paint, which is why you have to dab the brush on a towel. To keep your brush dry, squeeze out the water with a paper towel before applying paint to the brush. Another consideration is surface. You get different drybrush impressions on rough surfaces than you do on slick surfaces. For example, if you drybrush on rough watercolor paper, the roughness of the paper enables you to drybrush more easily. Scumbling—or loading the brush with paint and dragging and skipping it through an already painted surface—gives you a drybrush look and reveals some of the pigment underneath. For me, rolling the brush on its side definitely makes drybrushing easier, but perhaps other painters have their own preferred methods. *—B.D.S.*

Q I can paint details with watercolors but not with acrylics. I use Galeria tube paints and have watered them down, hoping the thinner paint might help, but it doesn't do the trick. Any advice? I'd also like to know what type of paper most acrylic painters use.

A. First, what kinds of brushes are you using? In the best of circumstances, painting details is difficult with a brush that doesn't make a good point. For acrylics, use a sable sign brush or rigger or a good, sturdy synthetic brush that holds a point. Smaller sable brushes aren't very expensive, but if you prefer a synthetic brush, I recommend Kaerell brushes by Raphael, Grumbacher bristlette brushes, Cheap Joe's Golden Fleece brushes and Stephen Quiller brushes. When using synthetics, I prefer a soft brush. A No. 4 should do the trick. You could try a smaller size, but keep in mind that very small brushes don't hold much paint and water, so they require returning to the palette for reloading more often.

Second, have you experimented with both flat and round brushes? Many artists find that they paint details better with a round brush; others have more success with a flat brush. Sometimes your subject matter dictates your brush shape. For organic subject matter (anything alive or curvilinear, like the human body or trees and flowers), I always use a round brush. For geometric objects, mountains or rocks, I find flats work better. Focus on the characteristics of your subject as you paint, and choose your brush accordingly.

Third, are you watering down your paints too much? You need enough paint to make the details stand out. Finding the balance between too much and too little water can be frustrating, so you might try using fluid acrylics to paint details. Fluid acrylics flow more smoothly than tube paints and you don't have to add as much water. Several fluid brands that I use are Golden, Lascaux Perlacryl, Lascaux Aquacryl and Liquitex. You could also try adding a little matte medium to your Galeria paints to give them more viscosity.

Remember, the last thing you add to a painting is often the first thing others see. Details are usually added last and are the decoration or the calligraphy that gives intrigue and interest to your subject.

Finally, consider whether you're painting the right value. If you have too little contrast between subject and details, the details won't stand out.

Experimentation is key in determining which paper is best for you. Try several good brands, such as Fabriano Artistico, Arches, Winsor & Newton, Strathmore Aquarius and even the synthetic YUPO. Each possesses its own characteristics and idiosyncrasies. Through trial-and-error, you'll discover the paper weight and surface that work best with your painting techniques. *—B.D.S.* /aa

BETSY DILLARD STROUD is an artist, book author and an online instructor for www.artistsnetworkuniversity.com. **BUTCH KRIEGER**'s career as an artist, illustrator and book author spans more than 30 years.

UNITED BY

These 11 innovative artists share how they wield color to evoke emotion and tell their stories.

By Patty Craft


COLOR

CRISTINA ZORRILLA SPEER / **YELLOW TULIP**

(on pages 24-25; fluid acrylic on canvas, 48x72)

Describe your process on a canvas this large.
I balance the canvas flat on four large wedges on the floor. The fluid acrylic is mixed with water in plastic cups and then poured onto the canvas. I do not use any brushes. To help the paint flow I sometimes use a plastic spoon. The wedges allow me to keep the canvas level or incline it to control the flow.

Did an actual yellow tulip inspire this?
No, but I named the painting after what the image reminded me of when finished. I am inspired by organic shapes and bright colors.

Tell us about your relationship with color.
Color is part of my Mexican culture. I like vibrant colors that look good together, and sometimes I try to "tone them down" by using adding gray. Complementary colors work great for this.

What's the funniest comment you've gotten about being an artist?
One of my sisters once told me, "All artists are weird, including you, dear sister!" I tell young artists: Art is work, things don't get done by themselves. Don't hide behind the starving-artist stamp.

DARIEN BOGART / **ANOTHER CROSSROADS**

(below; acrylic on panel, 30x80)

Tell us how you used color to convey the ground on either side of the tracks—one side in the sunset's glow and the other already in shade.

We encounter yin and yang in everyday life. *Another Crossroads* was painted as a diptych to further emphasize those two complementary forces apparent in even a simple landscape. Against the warmth of the hill bathed in the sun's evening glow are the cool ground colors found in the shade. Like water, it reflects the golden colors of light and guides your eyes up and over the hill into the setting sun.

Tell us how you hope color will carry a message.

I enjoy pushing the color limits in my work, bordering on the surreal. It forces me, as well as the viewer, to look a little deeper. Our sight and its perceptions can become remiss with time; taking for granted all the beautiful variations of color.

What's the oddest thing people say to you when they realize you're an artist?

Living in the West, and as I've grown "weathered" with age, I've been told I look more like a rancher than an artist. However, I take that as a compliment.

R. MIKE NICHOLS / **OTIS, PICKLE AND GREY BOY**

(above, left; acrylic on canvas, 20x16)

What lessons did you learn painting *Otis, Pickle and Grey Boy*?

I was commissioned to paint an accurate portrait of three cats in their environment. The client supplied various photos of the cats and the living room. The chair, pillows and rug all caught my eye; I knew I had to incorporate them into the portrait. The challenge was to organize all these elements into a cohesive composition that captured each cat's coloring and personality while balancing the patterns, values and light.

I used much of the coloring that existed in the photos. The flooring, wall and window were elements I stylized and minimized so they wouldn't compete with the main images. I like using complementary colors next to one another, and I try to maintain a balance of warms and cools.

DEB WARD / **POURED YUPO PEONY**

(above, right; fluid acrylic with tape on YUPO, 13x19)

How does this painting compare to your other works? Do you often paint abstracted realism?

Most of my paintings are realistic rather than abstracts. This painting came about when I was asked to demonstrate a pouring technique using

YUPO synthetic paper. I do sometimes pour or drip paint into a flowing water wash, using watercolor, acrylics or ink, but I rarely use YUPO.

Since YUPO is synthetic and acrylics are plastic, I wanted to make sure that when I removed the tape it would not pull the paint from the YUPO. I began by using masking tape to save whites. Knowing painter's tape would have less adhesive, I then switched to that for additional layers. This process worked perfectly. It even allowed paint to run under the tape to create the lovely frilly edges of some of the petals.

How do you select your color palettes?

Most of my paintings are realistic, and I strive to convey the actual objects that I see, selecting or mixing colors as close to reality as possible.

Almost all of my paintings begin with a loose wash of water into which I drop colors, allowing them to mix and mingle. This technique serves multiple purposes: it gives a light tint to parts of the paper which helps unify the painting; it nullifies the dreaded white-paper syndrome; and it creates beautiful passages of colors that can't be duplicated with a brush.

In this painting you can see warm colors glow through swirls of color from each successive layer.

What's the funniest thing someone has said to you once they realize you're a painter?

Well, one person asked if I paint fairies! Most people seem not to be impressed with my vocation and respond with a simple, "Oh," and then move on.

ALI ESMAEILIPOUR / **THROUGH TIME (MONEY BAG USA)**

(acrylic on linen and wood, 37x45)

Tell us about the story behind this still life.

I begin with an idea and develop it with sketches. This painting is from my "Money Bag" series which is about people, money, history and power. Once the idea is fully developed I set up the composition in my studio, then photograph it to capture the exact light that I want.

What's the symbolism in the bold, primary colors of the words "Think again" at the top?

I picked up some of the colors from the flowers to create harmony, but I chose to use the variety of colors in the two words to symbolize the many different groups of people who live in the USA. I place words on the frame to draw the viewer's eye into the whole painting, including the spaces between the main objects and the frame. The frame is part of my painting, too.

What's the strangest thing people say when they realize you're an artist?

When people talk to me they seem to think artists have a wonderful, easy life without stress and problems. They just see the painting as a beautiful object and don't realize the life of the artist that exists behind the painting.

PEACH McCOMB / **TSUNAMI**

(acrylic on canvas, 24x36)

How does color convey the message you want to express?

I was overwhelmed with emotion when I saw the devastation caused by the tsunami that hit Japan in 2011. One minute everything around them was intact, and then everything was gone. The spectrum of colors from bright to dark symbolize all the moments of that horrific event. There is a controlled chaos coming out of the mist; sharp edges and bright colors contrasting with the soft and neutral surroundings.

How did you come to painting abstracts?

I painted my first abstract on a wall in my bedroom using latex house paint after I ruined the wall taking down some shelves. Mary Field Neville, my close friend and painting mentor, saw it and declared, "Miss Peach, I think we found a new profession for you!" That was about 14 years ago. I took Mary's experimental-watermedia workshop about eight years ago. We were literally throwing paint at the canvas during the workshop; it was so much fun. Then I had a couple of nice pieces when we finished—and I was hooked on abstracts!

Explain why you call your process "yoga for the mind."

I concentrate intensely on what I am doing when I paint. To practice yoga poses that benefit the body, one must be completely present—following the breath, concentrating on the placement of limbs to be firmly rooted and balanced. In that focused state, a calm comes over the body. Those thoughts in my mind that naturally swing from one idea to another like a monkey just drift away. There is a glorious relaxation. That is exactly how I feel when I am painting abstractly. It's yoga for my mind.

Heard anything funny when folks learn you're an artist?

Because I work in computer technology people are often astounded to learn I'm also an artist. I hear, "You're an artist? You paint? I guess you work in computers because you need a real job."

I paint because I have no better means of expressing what I want to say. Whether it is via color, subject or medium, it is the best way I have to communicate. Sometimes there are no words to describe what I feel, and painting expresses my feelings far more eloquently than any words I could choose.

IRA KENNEDY / **AMERICAN ICON**

(acrylic on canvas, 36x48)

Tell us about the unique dot-painting technique that you use in this work.

The dot is the original brushstroke; it lacks confusion. By placing colors next to each other I rely on the viewer to mix the colors. Also, by incorporating subtle optical color contrasts within the dots the painting becomes visually active and alive. I borrow from the techniques known as Divisionism (also called Chromoluminarism) and Pointillism. Dots throughout the painting create an overall visual field common in the paintings of Australian Aboriginal artists and those of Jackson Pollock.

Some of your color choices are realistic while others seem imaginary. How do you select your colors?

It's not the color I see, but rather the color I feel. The primary figure in a painting is rendered realistically using colors according to its appearance in nature. Then I create a semi-realistic environment that captures a feeling of movement and vibrancy of color. The lines of dynamic movement imply past, present and future stages to give the sense of timelessness.

How did you come to choose this style for your paintings?

Picasso's revelation came once he saw African art, and van Gogh's discovery of Japanese art was equally life-changing. Likewise, my exposure to Aboriginal art during a visit to Australia was an epiphany that changed how I interpret the world through my paintings.

What's the oddest thing people say to you when they realize you're an artist?

They ask, couldn't you make more money in the fast food industry? I think it's unfortunate that everyone can't experience a painting as artists do. I mean, the paint on your fingers, the alchemy when mixing colors, the inspiration and desperation, the evolution from what is held in the mind into something tangible that must be released into the care of others.

EDMUND PRICE / **ZIMBABWE HIPPO**
(acrylic on canvas, 18x24)

How did being in a different part of the world—and the local colors—inform this painting?

I was on safari in Zimbabwe during the dry season, on the Zambezi River (the only place in Zimbabwe with a little greenery around it), when I took the reference photos for *Zimbabwe Hippo*. It was a very rugged, harsh environment with no clouds, and the sky was a white/blue color. The intensity of the hot sun and the amount of dust in the air gave a warm yellow hazy color to the landscape.

I altered some of the colors of the hippo and the water to give both elements more depth and appeal. The water was actually a dull brown, and I pulled the colors out more on the hippo's skin to show the texture and to emphasize that his skin is not just dull gray.

Tell us more about altering reality to create stronger paintings.

As a wildlife painter, the animal dictates the direction that the painting will take. Where the subject lives, the elements of its environment, whether it's more active in daylight hours or night—these factors contribute to the composition. After I have these components pulled together I decide what colors come into play to create the mood or attitude of the painting.

I use color washes extensively in my work, building layer upon layer to create textures and a three-dimensional quality. In this painting the overlaying of various colors from purple to green to pink give a brightness and depth to the water and the skin of the hippo.

What's the oddest response you've heard when people discover you're an artist?

I'm often surprised that so many of the people in my circle don't realize the full extent of my artwork. This became apparent to me when I started mailing postcards of my latest paintings and got feedback that ran the gamut from "I had no idea you were that talented!" to "Where can I buy your work?" Don't assume everyone in your sphere of influence already knows what you're doing—get the word out.

ANDREW J. MORRISON / **EARLY JANUARY IN THE SQUARE**

(below, left; acrylic on canvas, 24x48)

With so much color bursting forth, describe the path you created for the viewer's eye.

The taxis in the foreground capture the viewer's eye and lead directly to the focal point of the American flag in front of the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station. The vertical lines of those surrounding buildings also return the viewer's eye to the flag.

What inspired you to paint this wintery scene of New York City?

Most of my paintings are of my first love, San Francisco and its environs. As such, I get questioned frequently about why I don't paint something else. I had these reference photos that reminded me of a winter trip to visit a friend in Manhattan years ago. I knew the piece would be challenging with the strong color priority and varied tones complementing the bright lights and reflections. Working to convey the tangible contrast of cold, wet, swirling snow with warm, cozy vehicles and building interiors added to the attraction of painting this scene.

What's the most frequent comment people make when they realize you're an artist?

The usual "you don't look like an artist" is sometimes accompanied by the sympathetic "I'm so sorry" facial expression.

STEVEN KOZAR / **TAVERN SNOWSTORM**

(below, right; acrylic on Ampersand claybord, 14x11)

Describe the process you used to get the warm and cool colors to work.

The warm color of the brick was influenced by the cool light surrounding it. I layered quite a bit before I was happy with the results. I lost track of how many times I painted the brick wall and then stepped back and decided it still wasn't the right color and value. Fortunately, acrylics dry quickly and allow for many layers to be applied. In hyperrealism, detail is the "icing on the cake." If the values or colors are wrong, then all the detail in the world won't help. I chose to paint this scene in acrylics rather than watercolor to achieve the subtle atmospheric aspects, and to capture the fine detail. Because acrylics can be used thinly, like watercolor, they're great for fine detail. For blending I combined thin layers of paint with airbrush.

What's the oddest thing people say to you when they realize you're an artist?

After viewing a large number of paintings I've done, which required many years of work, people ask me if this is my full-time job. As if I could have done all this work in my free time! I'd like to say this to aspiring artists: One of your jobs is to keep yourself inspired. Don't wait for inspiration to hit you, because it might not. Look at the world around you, and be inspired by the obvious beauty (like a sunset), but also the quirkier, more gritty types of beauty out there.


Salt

Be Inspired Beyond Color

The artists featured in this article represent a small fraction of the 116 artists whose works fill the pages of the recently released *AcrylicWorks2: Radical Breakthroughs* (North Light Books, 2014). The book is part education, part inspiration. It includes a variety of subject matter—landscapes, people, still lifes, animals and abstract art. The works collected on its pages exemplify unique uses of color, different painting approaches, unusual subjects or methods, creative compositions or brushstrokes and so much more. Every artist featured shares insights from his or her process, and you'll spend hours discovering new artists and likely fueling your own radical breakthrough. If you do experience a profound shift in your own painting thanks to something you read or see in the pages of *AcrylicWorks2* (available at www.NorthLightShop.com), please tell us about it. We love hearing from readers, and perhaps we'll be able to share your story in a future collection of paintings here in *Acrylic Artist*.

Email us and tell us about your own breakthrough at **aaedit@fwcommunity.com.**

MARLA THIRSK / **DISCONNECT**

(acrylic and Inktense pencils on canvas, 36x30)

What's the story behind the woman in your painting?

I paint a series of women inspired by a collection of vintage photographs I have of my mother from the 1940s to 1960s. My mom passed away when I was young, and our history together had not been a Norman Rockwell-type of existence. When I began painting these old pictures of her, it was as though the flood gates opened and all the past came spilling out onto the canvas. However, I had the hardest time trying to paint her face. I repainted it 15 to 20 times; no exaggeration! Then I just decided to paint a face. From there the figures transformed into all the mythology of women I had grown up with—the princesses, witches, heroines and she-devils. What began as a portrait became a story. The paintings are not portraits in the true sense of the genre; they are more representative of myth and legend. Every one of the portraits does share one characteristic with my mother. I always give them red hair, just as hers was.

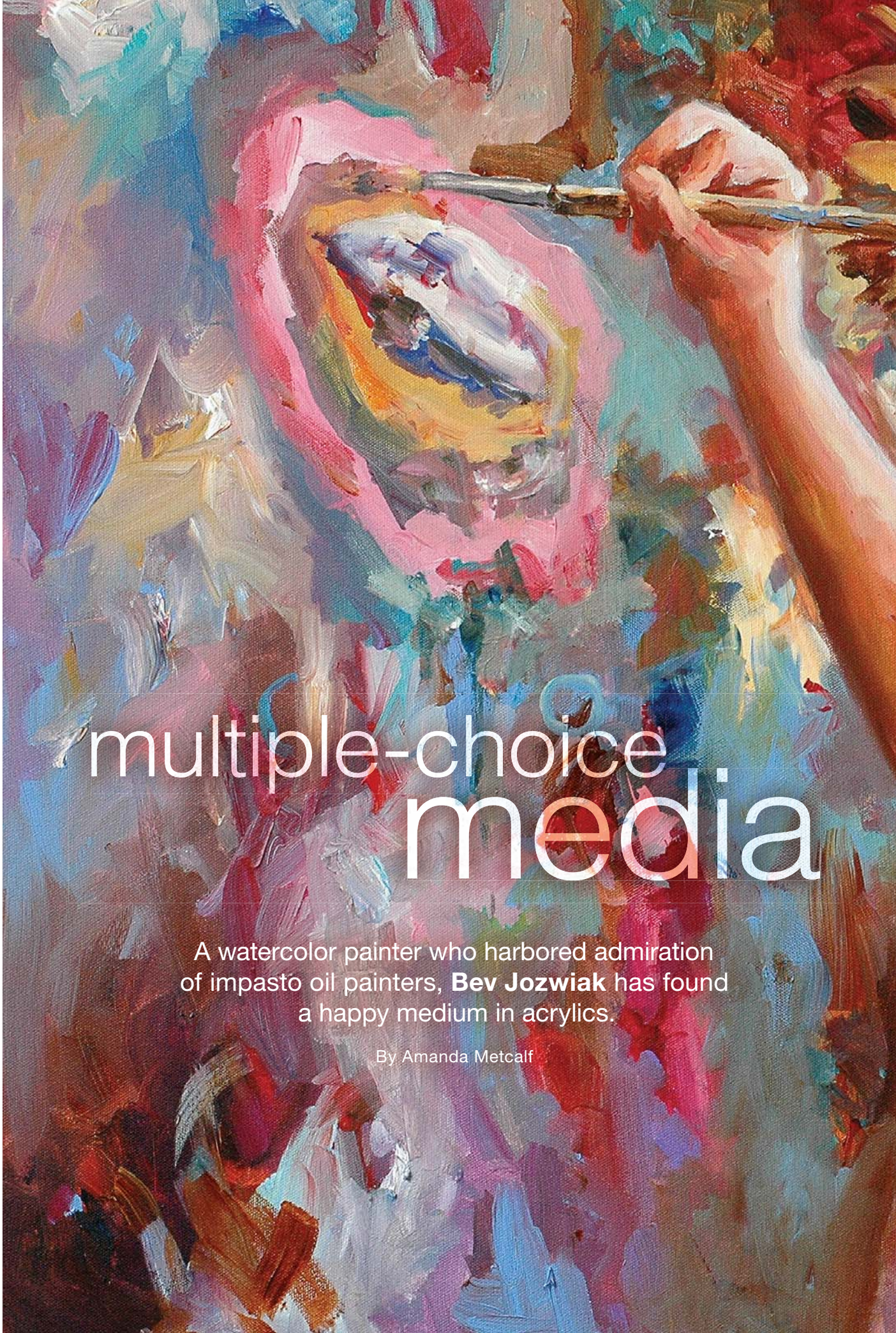
Talk about how you used color to tell the story.

I'm purely intuitive when it comes to the use of color in my paintings. I'm drawn to bright and often complementary choices juxtaposed with black and white. I've never had formal training. Which is not to say I paint in ignorance, because I'm a voracious reader. I study books about painting and color. I painted with watercolors before I came to acrylics, and working in watercolor taught me a lot about how to mix colors.

Heard any outrageous comments about your being an artist?

I've done a lot of artist demo gigs. These are priceless opportunities for outrageous commentary. I've heard, "Nice hobby," and "You know you're worth more dead than alive." However the most gob-smacking comment came from my mother who told me, "You should learn to groom poodles so that if your 'art thing' doesn't work out, you'll have a career to fall back on." /aa

PATTY CRAFT is editor-in-chief of *Arylic Artist.*



multiple-choice media

A watercolor painter who harbored admiration of impasto oil painters, **Bev Jozwiak** has found a happy medium in acrylics.

By Amanda Metcalf

At a street fair, this girl was engrossed while painting on an open-to-anyone-to-try canvas when Jozwiak knew she had to take the picture, then paint this painting within a painting, ***Universal Canvas*** (acrylic on canvas, 24x30).

The bright, abstracted background in ***Ah, Glorious Sunshine*** (above; acrylic on gessobord, 12x12) communicates the day's warm sunlight.

From a photo session at the beach, made specifically to shoot reference photos, came ***Sunset at Seaside*** (opposite; acrylic on gessobord, 8x10). The bold brushwork gives this simple design its vitality.

FROM FAMILY BEACH VACATIONS TO CHILDREN AT PLAY, BEV JOZWIAK'S subjects are the stuff of countless family photo albums. Her thick acrylic brushstrokes, however, capture the energy and feeling of the moment better than any camera ever could.

The Camera's Role in the Process

Don't be mistaken, however. Jozwiak loves her camera and the thousands of reference photos it's produced. So pervasive is the camera in her life that her kids and grandkids ignore it. Years ago, when her daughter Briley was in a wedding, the photographer had to instruct Briley to look into the camera.

Jozwiak loves the authenticity, the real-life feel of truly candid pictures. Many of her paintings, such as *Universal Canvas* (on pages 38-39), depict the subjects from behind. "I don't like people to know I'm photographing them," she says, adding that she prefers to capture them "doing their everyday thing, not posed."

Frankly, that approach sells better, too, she explains. It's easier to project one's own experiences

Jozwiak is praised for her realistic beach scenes, but it's the essence, not the details, that she captures accurately. In the background of ***All-American Beach*** (above; acrylic on gessobord, 11x14), she painted the shapes of objects, using their largest lights and darks to add dimension to bodies or depict the crook of an arm or the crest of a wave.

The artist's love of red spread to ***Blowin' in the Wind*** (opposite; acrylic on gessobord, 18x12), of her daughter Briley, right, and Briley's lifelong friend Hannah. Hannah's dress was another color in reality, but Jozwiak changed it and carried shades of red and pink into Briley's clothes, the sand and even the sky.

onto the paintings that don't include detailed, recognizable faces, she says, adding that she often hears viewers of her art say, "That looks like my kid."

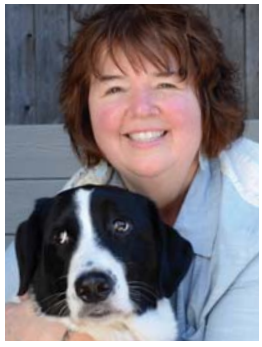
Jozwiak takes 50 or 60 photos for every few she prints out for reference. Still, she has about 10 boxes of categorized photos that come out during her downtime. (Ballet, birds and beach represent just the Bs in her collection.) So "watching TV" actually means having background noise playing while flipping through her boxes for inspiration for her next painting. It's a habit that drives her husband a bit bonkers, but, she asks, "How can I change?"

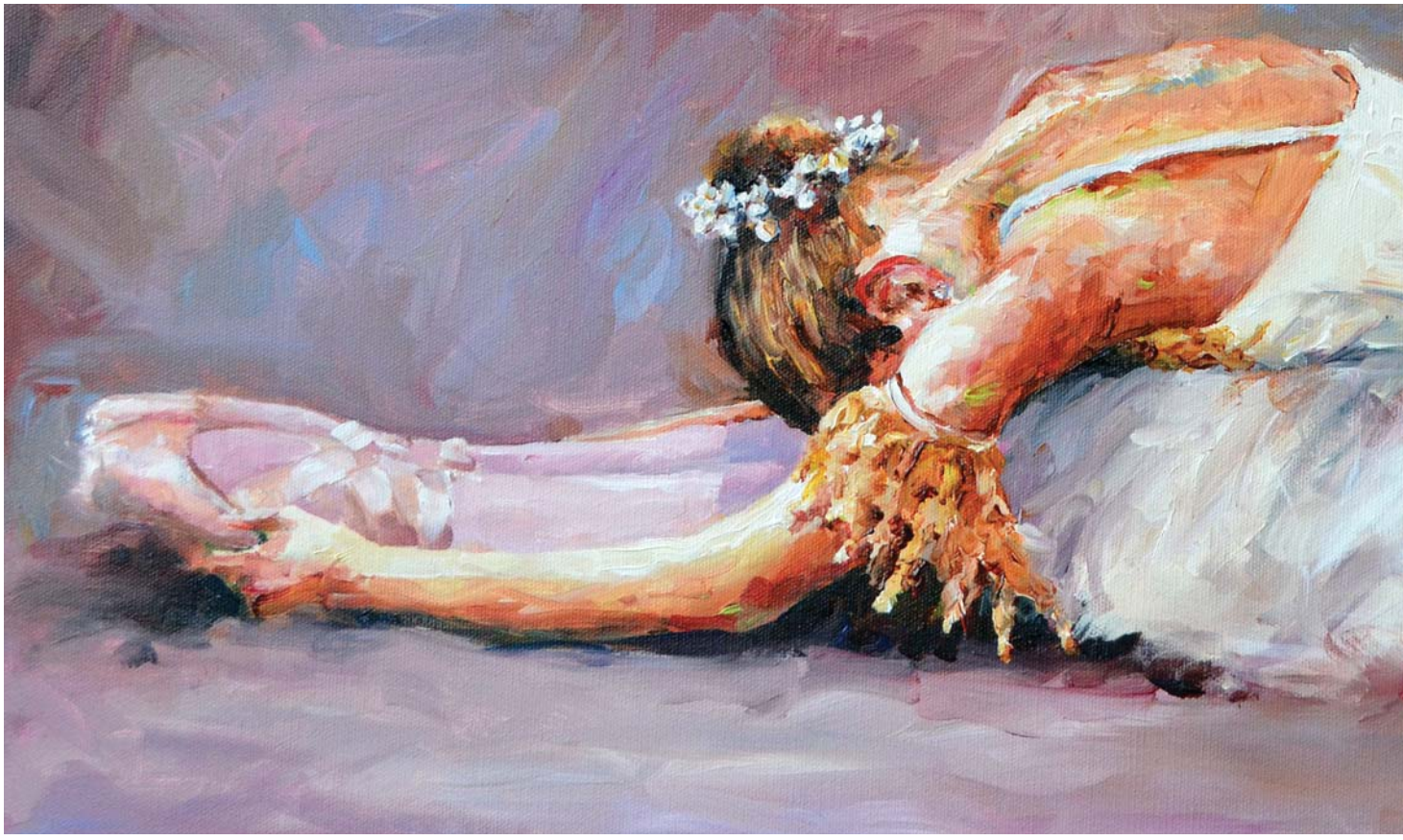
The Photograph as Starting Point

Jozwiak often combines figures from multiple photos into one painting. In fact, her daughter, now a professional ballet dancer with Ballet Tucson, has appeared multiple times in individual paintings. It helps that

Meet Bev Jozwiak

A fine arts graduate of Western Washington University, 90 minutes north of Seattle, Bev Jozwiak followed her great-aunts, grandmother, aunt and father into painting. Whether acrylic or watercolor, her Impressionistic works have earned her shows in prestigious galleries, signature status in The American Watercolor Society, the Northwest Watercolor Society, Watercolor West and the National Watercolor Society, and a spot among the Who's Who in American Art. Jozwiak resides in her hometown of Vancouver, Washington, with her husband of more than 30 years. You'll find her in-person workshop schedule, additional paintings and more info on her website at bevjozwiak.com.





Tools of the Trade

Bev Jozwiak shares her thoughts on a few of her favorite products.

FABRIANO ARTISTICO 140-LB., HOT-PRESSED PAPER OR GESSOBORD: Jozwiak likes movement in her work and likes the paint to slide. These surfaces are ideal to achieve the results she wants.

M. GRAHAM AND GOLDEN HEAVY BODY ACRYLICS: She had tried the long-drying, open acrylics, but she never could comfortably adjust to them in her painting routines. As a fast painter, she doesn't need them anyway.

M. GRAHAM QUINACRIDONE RED AND GOLDEN INDIAN YELLOW HUE: Jozwiak employs thick layers of paint in her basecoat, but using these two colors for her warm basecoat shade makes it okay if she misses a spot or two.

2B PENCIL: She tried a water-soluble pencil but this simple classroom staple feels more comfortable and gives her better results.

PALETTE KNIFE: Jozwiak scratches into the paint to convey rain, typical weather for her home state of Washington.

Jozwiak often photographs potential subjects in consistent light: either indoors near a window or in the early evening to capture long, dramatic shadows.

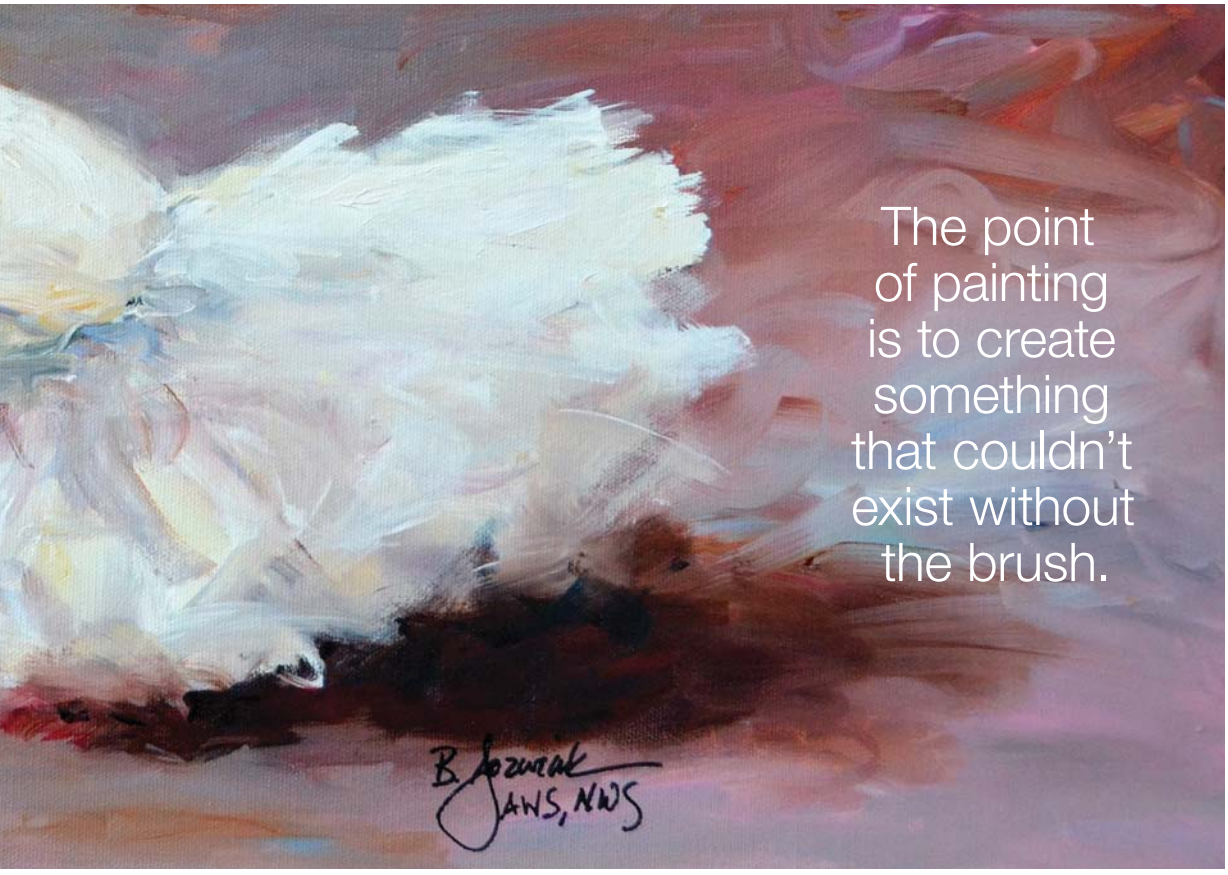
She's not one for experimental sketches but rather plans a strong horizontal and a strong vertical, both at least a little off center. The vertical typically is the figure she's painting, and it stands out from Jozwiak's blurred backgrounds, which has become typical of her work over the past three years. She almost always starts with a warm base coat and then draws a detailed depiction of her subject. Once the paint starts to go on, though, she forgets about the lines. They help her paint anatomically accurate figures, but the rest is artistic license.

Jozwiak works swiftly, usually producing four paintings a week and sometimes as many as eight. The day before we talked, she had finished one painting, started and finished another and begun a third. She always was fast, but the speedy approach also allows her to achieve the impasto look using acrylics. She starts at the top of a painting, working on the heads and skies or backgrounds simultaneously, and then moves downward. She paints just one, thick layer, only occasionally adding fresh paint to the background near the head if she takes too long on the face and hair.

Lost and Found

Jozwiak had painted with acrylics in college, but thinning the paints as much as her fellow students did struck her as ridiculous. If she was going to paint in watermedia, why not watercolors? And so, she became a watercolor painter.

For 18 years after college, though, the painting stopped, other than the occasional hobbyist piece. She worked as a packager for Lay's potato chips until her dissatisfaction with the job led her to panic.



The extreme orientation of ***The Long Stretch*** (left; acrylic on canvas, 10x30) was the best way to emphasize how lithe and limber the dancer was.

Lacing Up (below; acrylic on gessobord, 24x36) is an exception to Jozwiak's typical work; this one focuses on the subject's face. The artist painted this piece for herself. She also used more layers than in her other paintings. The background, originally as dark as the floor, wasn't working and so she added layers of lighter colors. The earlier layers show through, an unintended effect that Jozwiak came to appreciate.

Painted six years ago, ***Backstage Butterflies*** (above; acrylic on canvas, 30x40) shows a step on Jozwiak's journey away from photo-realism. Though the figures and shapes have blurred edges and brushstrokes are visible throughout, the setting is clear in the background. Jozwiak's current style focuses more on the figure and the backgrounds tend toward abstraction.

Lean on Me (right; acrylic on gessobord, 11x14) captures Jozwiak's youngest daughter and her friend in the studio.

Jozwiak had been painting chefs in watercolor and gave the subject a try in acrylic, as well, in ***Stirring the Pot*** (opposite; acrylic on gessobord, 11x14).

The Red Earring (above; acrylic on gessobord, 9x12) is a tightly rendered portrait full of unexpected colors and varied brushstrokes; a departure from Jozwiak's figures painted from a distance. The gessobord, smoother than canvas, allowed the paint to move in a manner similar to watercolors.

Jozwiak loves splashes of unexpected color, so while red dominates in almost all of her paintings, she includes other colors within each block of red, such as the umbrella in ***A Loving Hand*** (opposite; acrylic on gessobord, 12x16). For the inset reference photo, she sent her grandkids out into the sun to play with an umbrella. She added rain, which conveys movement, but kept the sunlight nevertheless. She created the impression of a bustling city scene in the background.

With her husband's support, she took the plunge to painting full-time.

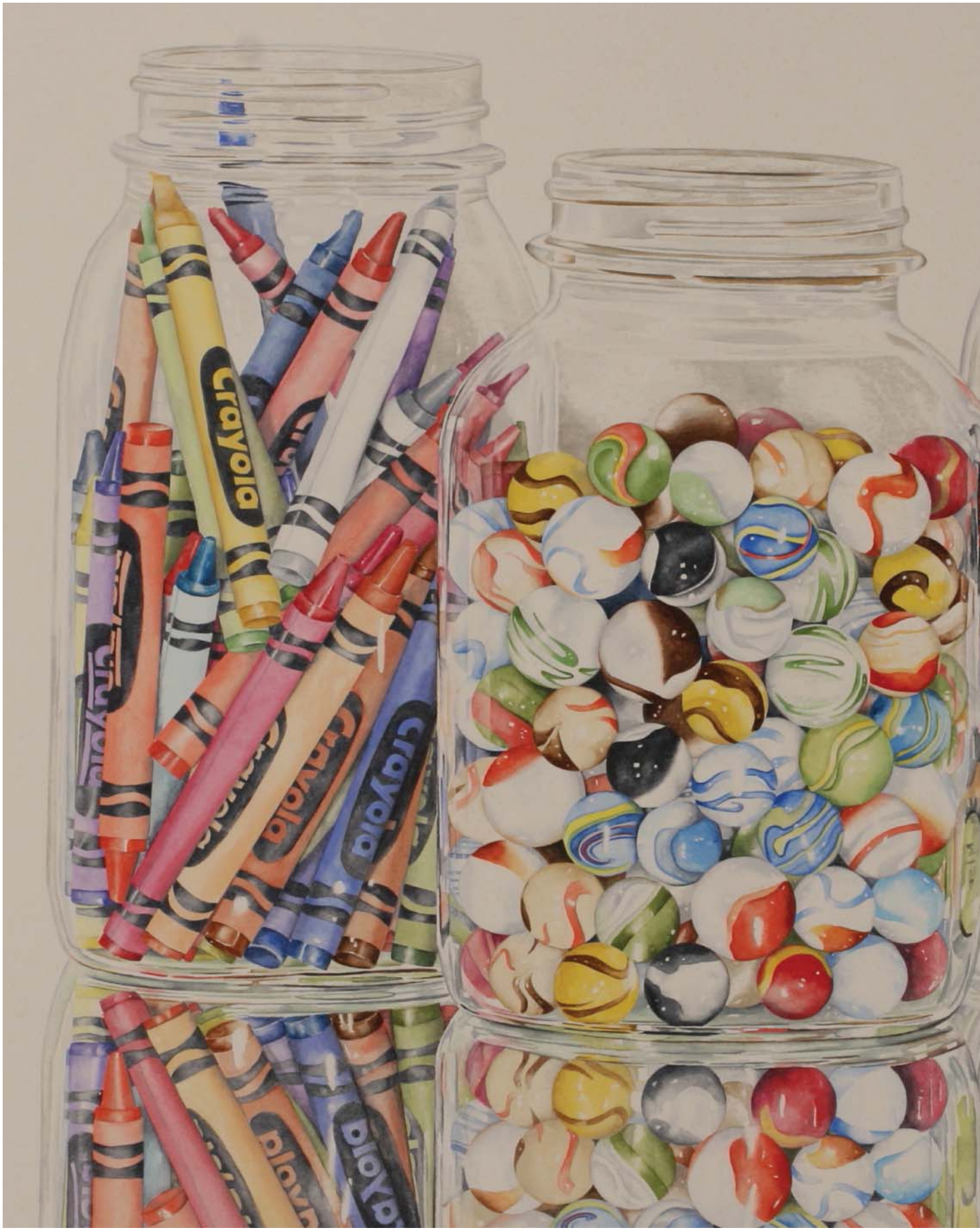
Over the years, she found her watercolor applications getting thicker and thicker. And so, six years ago, she tried out a few tubes of acrylics leftover from her early college days. Miraculously, they still worked, and she liked the feel. (The odor of oil solvents simply won't do for her small studio.)

She found that acrylics gave her an outlet for when she wants to paint thickly, and that freed her watercolors for days when she wants to let the paint run. Neither medium has to pull double-duty anymore, though she does borrow tricks and techniques from one medium for use in the other. *Lean on Me* (on page 46) borrows a signature of her watercolor paintings: unfinished works in which the paint drips to the bottom of the paper. In both media, she loves lost-and-found edges.

Following her gut has worked out so far. The woman who made $3,000 in her first year of full-time painting now shows in eight galleries and teaches across the U.S. And she expects to evolve plenty more. Just as she started with photorealism in college and moved on to Impressionism, she's lately begun to embrace abstracted backgrounds. You can witness the evolution from *Backstage Butterflies (*on page 46) to *A Loving Hand* (opposite). The longer you paint, the freer you are with your vision, she says. "And the more I enjoy the process, sales skyrocket."

In 10 years, she predicts, she won't be a big fan of the stuff she's doing in 2015. But for now, both she and the viewers of her art are enjoying the "confidence in a confident brushstroke." /aa

AMANDA METCALF is a Brooklyn-based art and business writer.

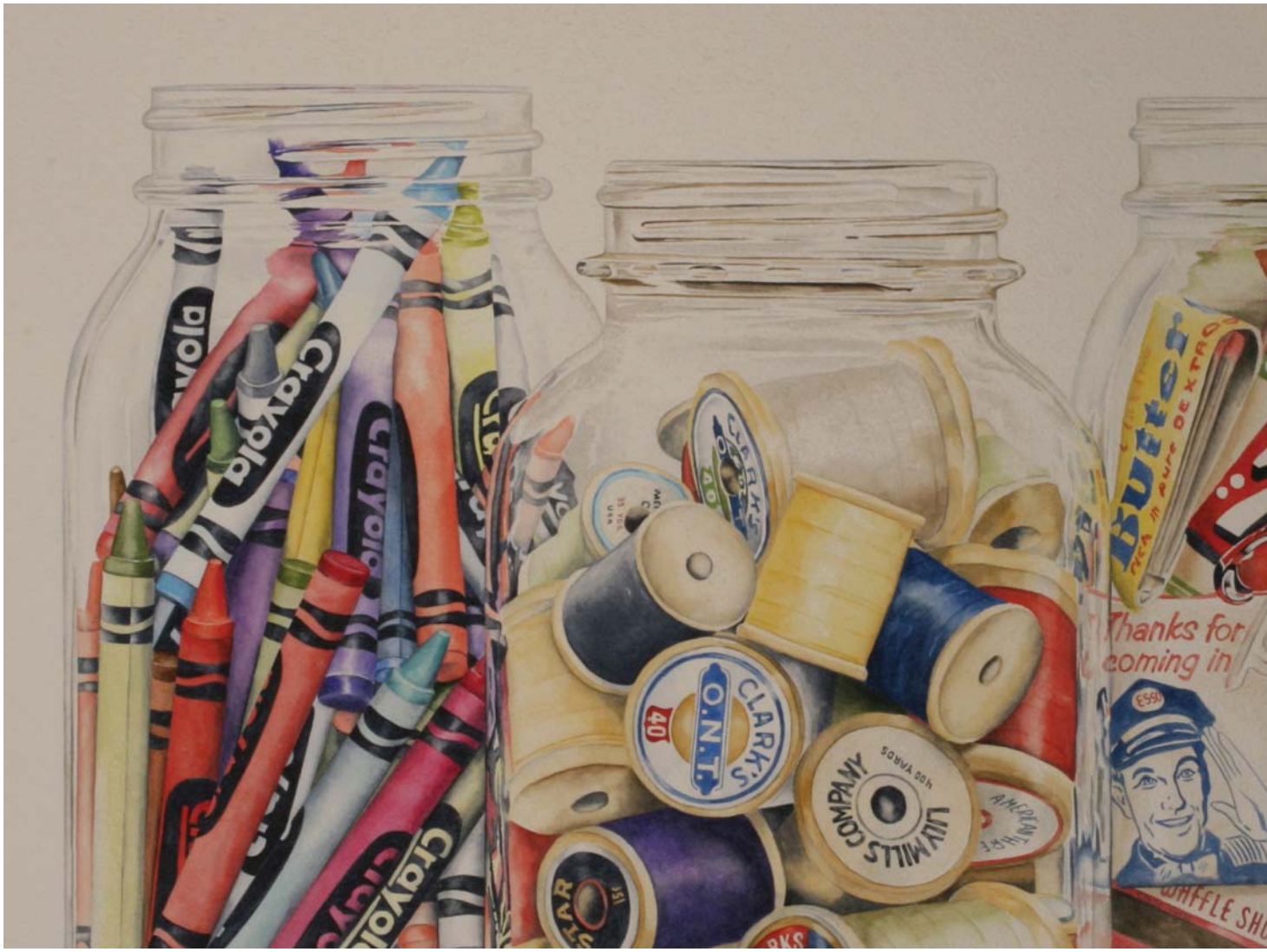

Crayola

There's Nothing There

Painting clear glass forced **Elaine Twiss** to drop her assumption that transparent subject matter has no color.

By Amanda Metcalf

Marbles, crayons and bottle caps evoke a flood of memories for viewers of every age. For ***Collections*** (acrylic on paper, 17x20), many of the bottle caps, acquired on eBay, were dirty or rusted, but Twiss used her creative license to clean them up. She reconciles her love for old things with her "clean and shiny" style.



THE IDEA THAT ELAINE TWISS SHOULD PAINT STILL LIFES LADEN WITH CLEAR glass could only have originated from a non-painter, someone who has no idea how hard that is to do.

So it was that Craig Twiss picked up a photograph of a menagerie of Mason jars one day in 2005 and, playing the role of the incorrigibly encouraging husband of a self-taught painter, said to his wife, "It's so beautiful. Why don't you paint that?"

"But there's nothing there," the artist replied.

Her husband was so encouraging in this instance—and in all of her previous painting exercises, proclaiming his wife's improvement with each piece as she learned—that, she says, "I'd start believing him."

Patiently Passionate About Detail

Twiss is the right person for the job of painting clear glass. As it turns out, it's her love of detail that gives her the will to work through multiple washes to achieve the subtle illusion of glass. It's also what drives her to declare that her favorite part of these paintings is working on the jars' rims—the sudden and frequent changes of plane of the screw threads manipulate the reflections held in the glass. "It drives your head crazy," she says, in a tone of delighted self-torment you'd expect from fans of *The New York Times'* Sunday crossword. The Ball logo on the jars similarly never takes shape via the same process twice—never the same lighting and thus never the same refractions of colors—as in *Pens & Pencils* (opposite, top) and *Mason Jar* (opposite, bottom).

Twiss loves to zoom in on her still lifes to get to that detail she loves, and because thinned acrylics on paper dry fast, she often works small or close to life-size to keep the process manageable. It's difficult to keep damp the large mixes of color needed for big washes on sizeable works, just as it's a challenge to mix additional batches consistent in color to the

Enjoy more work by Elaine Twiss at **www.artistsnetwork.com/medium/acrylic/elainetwiss**.

Twiss often paints life-size or near it, but she went big with ***Thanks for Coming In*** (opposite; acrylic on paper, 13x23), creating room to go into intense detail on the matchbooks, particularly. The painting is named both for the ESSO-man matchbook featuring that saying, and for the invitation for the viewer to dip into each jar's contents.

Writing embedded in glass like the Ball logo in ***Mason Jar*** (below; acrylic on paper, 6x7) and ***Pens and Pencil*** (left; acrylic on paper, 13x9) are both tedious (while painting) and rewarding (after).

Materials List

- Arches 140-lb. rough paper
- Board upon which to tape paper
- Can of water to keep mixtures moist
- Glass palette
- Liquitex acrylics
- Magnifying glass for drawing and painting details
- Princeton Snap! brushes
- Robert Simmons brushes Nos. 0, 2, 4 and 6, plus a No. 10 for large washes
- Old tablecloth for wiping off brushes (her collection of cloths serves as an abstract anthology of her painting career)

Minute by Minute (above; acrylic on paper, 9x19) required quick work. In the timepiece at bottom right, for instance, Twiss started the dark wash around the light '4' at the top of the number and had to get back to the starting point before it dried—and so on through several washes.

The candy featured in ***Candy Jars*** (right; acrylic on paper, 15x18) came from Candy Baron on Forest Avenue, the main drag in Laguna Beach, Calif., where the artist exhibits at the annual Festival of the Arts. While setting up her still life for a reference photo, she had to keep replacing the salt water taffy, thanks especially to her affinity for black licorice taffy. Unable to find a background to suit the subject matter, Twiss painted this one herself and then included it in her reference photo.

Twiss usually paints her subjects just as they appear in her reference photo. ***P is for Pelican*** (acrylic on paper, 10x9) proves the exception. She altered the color of the wooden block to match the pelican toy, and borrowed that green for some of the marbles. She also added the background design after the rest of the painting was done. She prefers that the background be in place before taking the reference photo, but in this case, the planned solid background didn't look right. The filled-to-the-brim jar enabled her to cheat this time around.

previous one. She does, however, write down her mixtures as she goes, just in case. The extra effort is worthwhile, considering she works on one painting at a time, spending one or two months on each. Twiss's paintings are labors of love.

Paint Something Made of Nothing

Much of the work precedes her paintbrush. Even finding her subject matter is a long process. She spends quite a bit of time at flea markets and on eBay in search of objects that inspire her. Sometimes, she's got an object in mind, as with the timepieces in *Minute by Minute* (opposite), but seeks variations in size, shape and color that she can play with and choose from when setting up her still life. Despite

Meet Elaine Twiss

Elaine Twiss has been working solely in acrylics since she began teaching herself to paint 30 years ago. The California native's work has shown in galleries and other venues, including one-woman shows, from her home state to New York. She's been juried into the Laguna Beach Festival of Arts for the past 12 years, and is a Signature member of both the National Society of Painters in Casein & Acrylic and the San Diego Watercolor Society. Visit her website at www.elainetwiss.com.

6 Tips for Painting Glass Subjects

1. Be patient, maintain a clear mind and embrace trial and error.
2. Think through each application of paint thoroughly before touching any brush to the paper because you can't lift or lighten acrylics, even when heavily diluted like watercolors.
3. Start with an extremely detailed drawing—the more prepared you are, the better.
4. Use thin washes and let them dry completely between each application. Apply as many washes as you need—there are no rules and no limits to the number of washes you can apply.
5. Remember that glass is filled with color when you look closely—both via reflections from objects within the glass container and within the glass itself.
6. Step back for a clearer perspective to determine if you need more washes to achieve an authentic look.

her obsession with painting "found" objects, Twiss is not a pack rat. Some objects she keeps in case she might want to paint them again, and many others she resells once her painting is done. (Upon the writing of this article, Twiss had come into possession of 15 vintage clocks and had more on the way.)

When setting up her still life, she emphasizes, she's also got to have the background in place. The only way to paint transparent glass accurately is to observe its real-life interaction with the objects in and behind it, as in *Candy Jars* on page 54. She opts for even lighting and straight-on views of her subjects, minimizing shadows in favor of letting the details of the objects speak for themselves. She takes a picture, experiments some more, takes another picture and so on for hours.

Eventually, she chooses a photo, the still life comes down, and her board, with rough watercolor paper taped down, comes out. But it's still not time for the paintbrush. That won't emerge until her

Vintage Jars (opposite; acrylic on paper, 11x7) used just five colors: titanium white, Payne's gray, phthalo blue, emerald green and raw umber. The trick, says Twiss, is multiple, thin washes.

Coffee (left; acrylic on paper, 10½ x17) also appears in *The Art Lovers' Cookbook* (SRC Publishing) opposite Twiss's recipe for carrot bread. "I'm not a cook," Twiss says, but she loves to bake, a craft that, like painting glass subjects realistically, requires a mind attuned to detail.

drawing is perfected—and in Twiss's world, "perfected" also means detailed. She draws in details that will be covered by the first layer of paint, even if she has to redraw them again later. The activity enables Twiss to front-load the thinking and "seeing" into the beginning of the process and leaves her free just to paint as the piece progresses.

Twiss does reserve the right to alter the abstract pattern of a marble or to change a color here and there for composition purposes, but for the most part, what you see in the full-page, printed reference photos of her still lifes is what you get in the painting. That goes especially for vintage toys that viewers might recognize, such as the bird in *P is for Pelican* on page 55.

Once she finally starts painting, there's no pulling Twiss from her paints. There's no room for mistakes in acrylics, especially the thin (i.e., fast-drying) washes she applies, as in *Vintage Jars* (opposite). Even neighbors know she can't come to the door or answer the phone at this point in her process. She begins with objects in the foreground, starting with lighter washes and painting all the spots of the same color before moving on to the next. She applies as many as five washes in each area, thinking in terms of tiny blocks of color like those refracted through the thread of the rim of a glass jar, as in *Coffee* (above). Last, come washes of shading, within such small areas as the numbers on the timepieces in *Minute by Minute* on page 54.

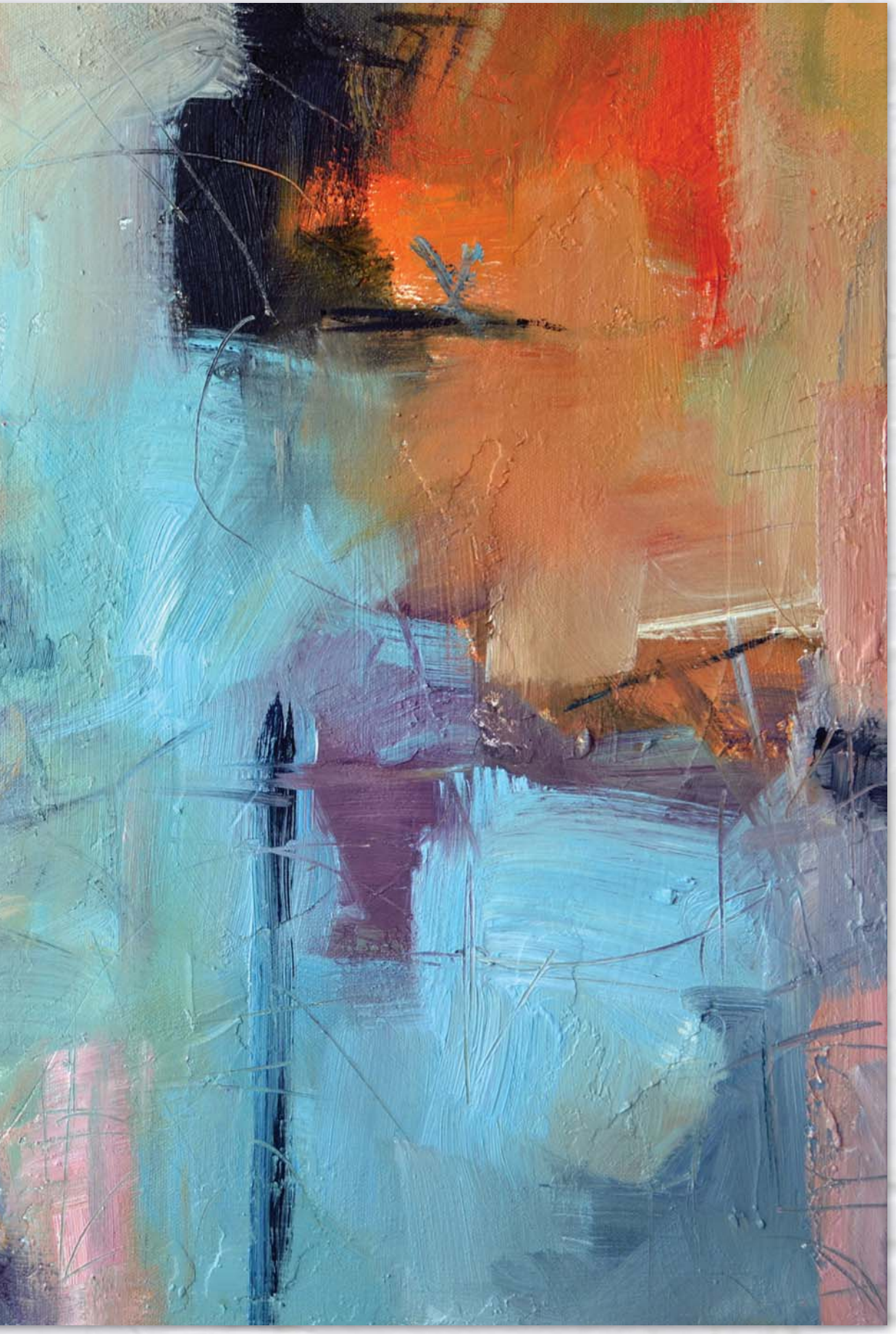
And that's Twiss's trick. More than the subject matter, more than the challenge, "I love detail," she says. /aa

AMANDA METCALF is a Brooklyn-based art and business writer.

TRUSTING INTUITION

Filomena de Andrade Booth follows the lead of that still, small voice and it makes all the difference.

By Maria Seda-Reeder



Using a 2-inch chip brush, the artist first covered the canvas with gesso then layered on thick paints for ***Dusk*** (acrylic on canvas, 20x20x1½). Next she scratched linework through the wet paint using a sharp pencil, and once the paint dried added more linework with oil pastels.

BACK IN THE MID-'60S, FILOMENA DE ANDRADE BOOTH'S GOAL WAS TO ATTEND THE LOCAL NEW JERSEY STATE COLLEGE to become a Spanish-language teacher. Having lived in Portugal until she was 18-months-old, her family immigrated to the United States where Portuguese was spoken in their home along with English. She felt confident she'd be accepted into the teaching program, but following a gut instinct to have a Plan B she also applied for art classes at Kean University.

Booth was devastated to receive a rejection letter from the teaching program, unaware that a path toward her life's greater personal satisfaction was opening up to her. "They told me they were trying to attract more guys into teaching," she remembers. Her hopes of being a Spanish teacher were dashed, and she was grateful she'd listened to her intuition and applied to more than one school.

She was accepted to what is now known as Kean University, formerly Newark State College, where she began art classes, and quickly realized she was glad for the way things had worked out. "I absolutely loved it there," Booth recalls. "There are times in your life when you have to trust your instincts." That willingness to listen to the little voice that told her to cover all her options with multiple applications to schools put her on the path toward a life-long passion for art. Her abstract expressionist paintings demonstrate the artist's willingness to trust her gut and to follow her intuition, combined with her penchant for experimentation with the medium.

Following Plan B

Booth graduated from Kean University in 1969 with a B.A. in Art Education. She then taught high-school art classes for nearly a decade in New Jersey. "The good thing about teaching was that I learned how to use and work with a variety of materials and media," Booth recalls. "I did copper enameling, watercolor and crafts. Working in it all helped me develop an ability to be versatile in my work," she says.

Booth employed collage, sgraffito and stenciling on ***Urban Renewal*** (opposite; acrylic on canvas, 30x36x1½). The horizon is implied by the black contrasting colors, but the real story is in the textures, colors and movement across the surface.

The perspective of ***A River Runs Through It*** (left; acrylic on canvas, 20x20x1½) is like looking down on a landscape via satellite imagery. The surface reveals the results of using unconventional tools (in this case a hair pick) and fast-action scraping and reapplying to reveal the colors underneath.

Though she mastered many techniques while teaching, Booth didn't paint much during that time. "Teaching exhausted me creatively," she admits. So after she gave birth to a set of twins when her first child was only two years old, she chose to stay home and raise her three sons.

After a move to Pinellas County, Florida, in the mid-'80s, Booth began painting again so that she could cover the 15-foot walls in her new home with her own artwork. A worker from the new subdivision they'd moved into saw her paintings and inquired about the artist. Admitting she was the artist, the fellow encouraged her to take some of her art to the design center of the subdivision so that it could be considered for use by the interior designers.

Once she mustered the courage to visit the subdivision's model-home design center with her portfolio, the art consultant there bought everything Booth had to show her. "That's when I realized I could sell my art," she says. She worked with that consultant and various other interior designers for a decade, moving from custom commissions for residential clients to eventually creating works for large hotel chains, corporate offices and private yachts.

Her Ever-Changing Process

Booth embraces an intuitive painting approach in her artwork. "A lot is accidental—serendipitous," she says of the impasto-like textures she builds up and then scrapes off her canvas using acrylic paints and a variety of acrylic mediums. Before she even puts color on the canvas, Booth mixes a gel medium into gesso, then primes her surface with the mixture using wide brushes. She continues to manipulate the surface treatment using palette knives, a hair pick and other unconventional tools.

Then she might apply a wash of color to the primed canvas using watered-down acrylic paint applied with

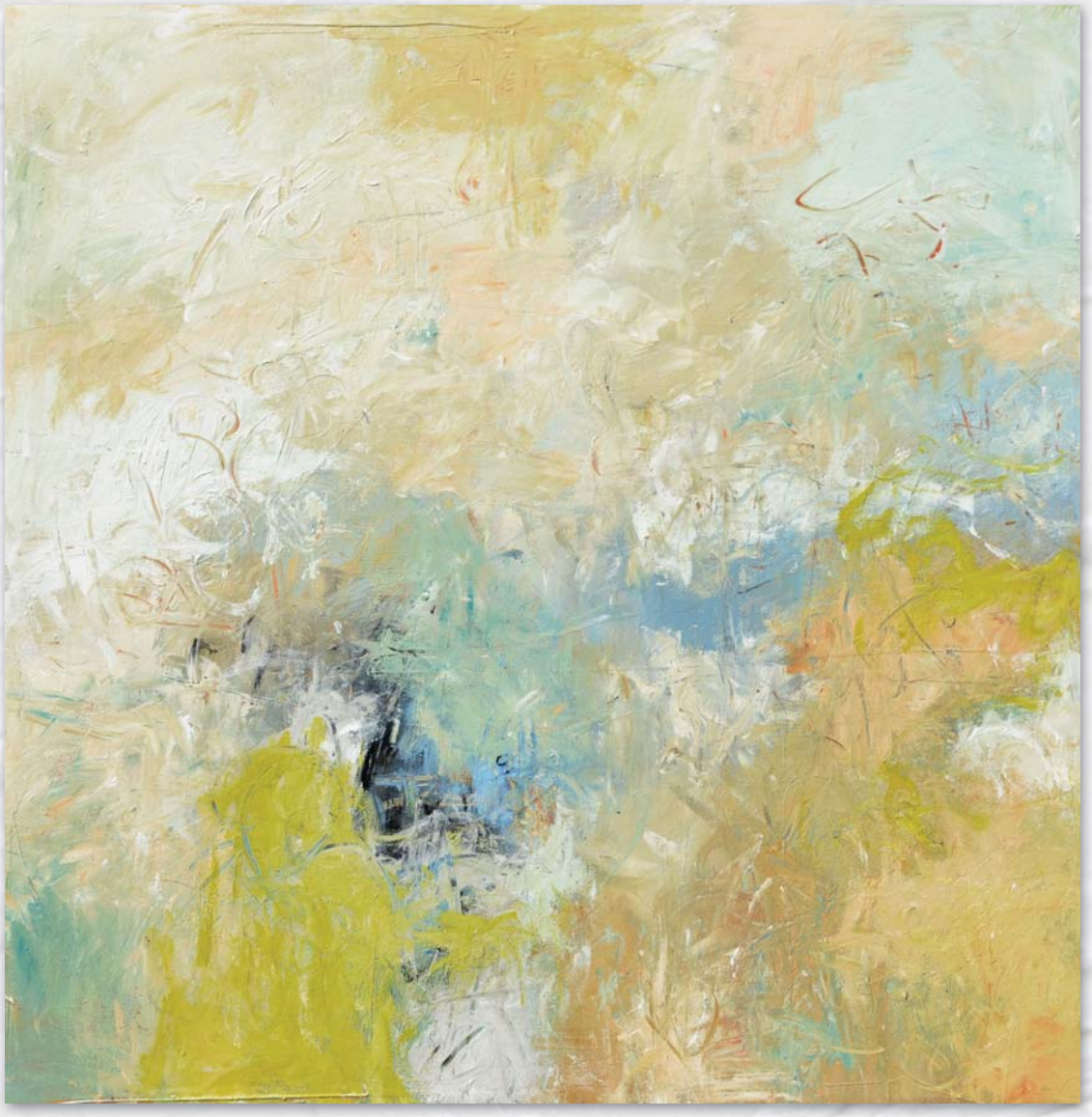
See a step-by-step demo of Filomena Booth's surface treatment preparations at **www.artistsnetwork.com/medium/acrylic/filomenabooth**.

Color was applied soley by hand on ***Cascade*** (above, left; acrylic on canvas, 30x30x1½). Booth used her fingers to scrape texture into the surface.

The artist poured juicy pools of paint and a puddle of medium onto her palette, then dipped her brush first into medium and then into paint for ***Song of the Seas*** (above, right; acrylic on canvas, 24x24x1½). Using a heavily loaded brush, the painting came together quickly.

A heavily gessoed and textured canvas supports ***Emergence*** (opposite; acrylic on canvas, 24x30x1½).

What makes ***Coastal View II*** (right; acrylic on canvas, 30x30x1½) unique is that it's totally a "fingerpainting." No brush or tool was used for any part of the painting.



a natural sponge in wide strokes. Or, she may choose a completely different approach. "As far as technique goes, every painting I create is different," Booth says. "I just start putting paint on the surface, working and reworking it." For example, Booth once decided to forego applicators altogether and simply scooped paint with rubber-gloved hands right onto the canvas.

She prefers to work quickly, and acrylics, with their fast-drying time, lend themselves to her approach. "Modern acrylics have come a long way since I was in college," the artist declares. She remembers the first time she experimented with acrylics in art school, and how the paint turned into what she describes as "a purple gumball."

The versatility of acrylics appeals to Booth. "They've done so much with acrylics; you can use them like oils or mimic watercolor. The fumes from oils give me a headache, and oils are hard to clean up. I love that with acrylics I just have to wash my hands."

Booth uses Golden and Liquitex products for most of her work. The artist's fondness for Golden products in particular seems fitting since Golden marketed the first acrylic paints in the 1940s. The Golden store in Manhattan was a popular hangout

Meet Filomena de Andrade Booth

Artist and teacher Filomena de Andrade Booth was born in Portugal and grew up in New Jersey. She holds a B.A. in Fine Art from Newark State College, now known as Kean University, in New Jersey. She has taken a variety of graduate courses at Montclair State University in New Jersey, as well as studied at the Dunedin Fine Art Center in Florida. Booth has taught several art workshops in Florida and Texas, as well as served as a juror for the Art in the Square outdoor festival in Southlake, Texas. She currently resides near Waco, Texas, with her "extremely wonderful and supportive husband." Booth is a grandmother who recently celebrated her 68th birthday. She still teaches workshops in a private setting. Her most recent workshop was called "Go Big, Go Bold!" To see more of Booth's artwork, visit her website at www.filomenabooth.com.

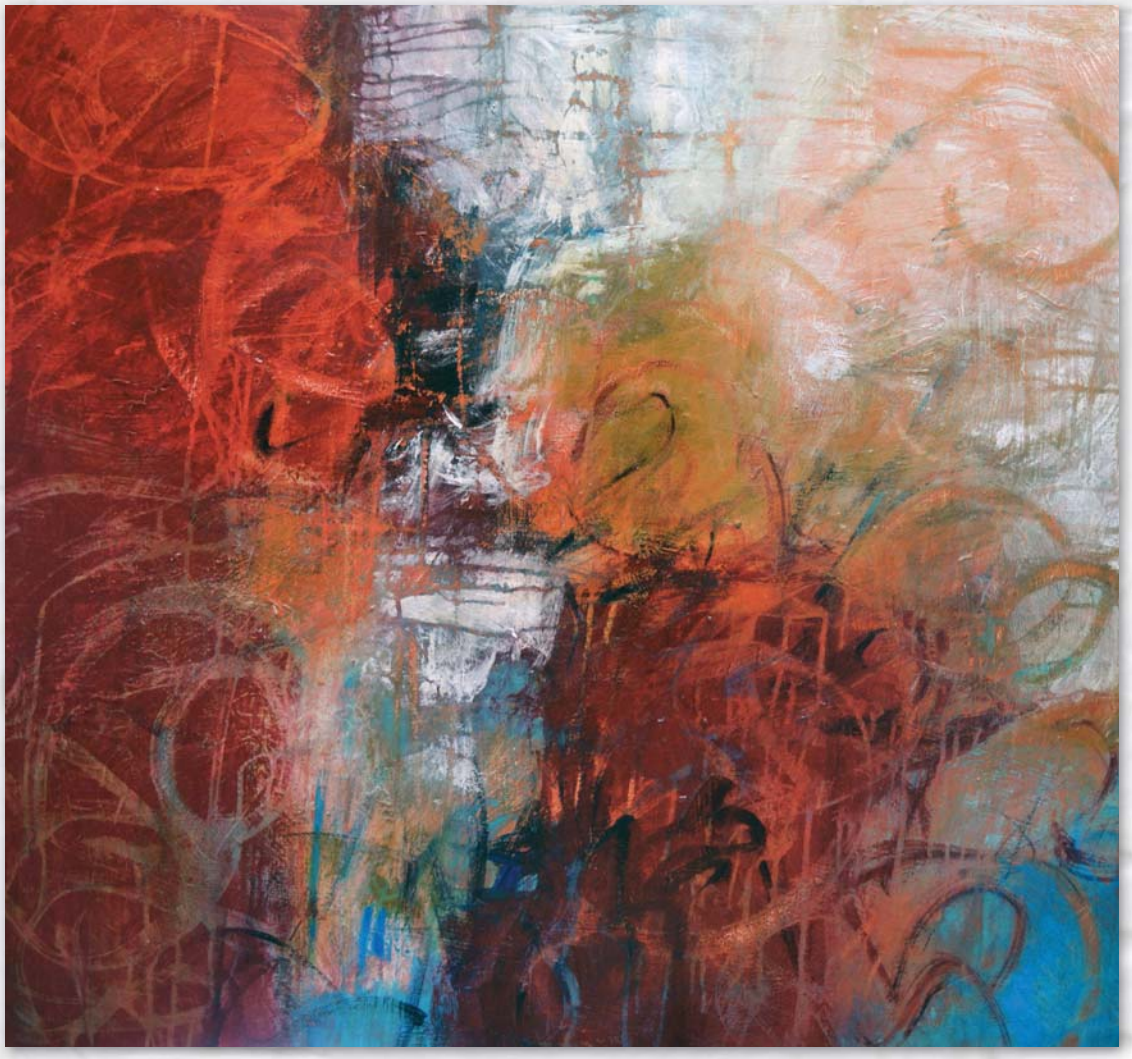
for Abstract Expressionist forebears, whose work her own seems visually and conceptually linked to, such as Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock.

Booth enjoys getting to play with her medium, and she admits to being obsessed with art supplies. "I'd rather buy art supplies than clothes," she says laughing. "I pull out colors, and experiment and play with them until I achieve a result that I'm happy with."

The Road to the Gallery

While she has cultivated an abstract expressionist style throughout her career, the artist's work shines when she walks the line between abstraction and representation. Booth captures natural subjects such as landscapes and animals, but when seen through her artistic vision, horizon lines are implied, limbs and wings move in Muybridge style, and scenery details become blurred. The painter applies concise, soft tonal palettes with darker contrasting colors to limn representational details, allowing only the necessary features to be conveyed.

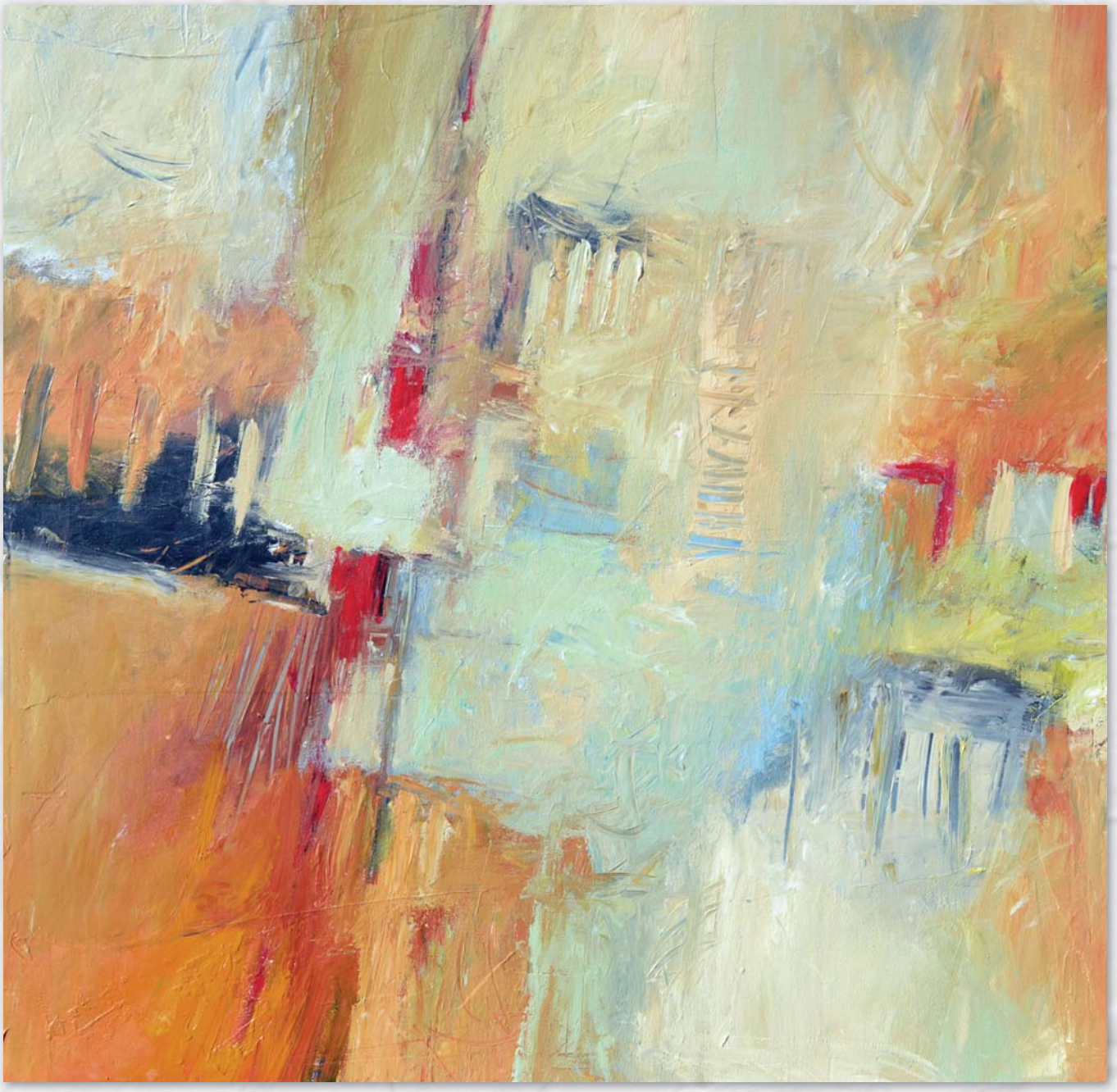
After a move to Texas for her husband's job in the early 2000s, Booth began to research the idea of using the Internet as a marketing tool to get her art in front of potential customers and collectors. She quickly realized that if she wasn't careful she could spend more time on the computer marketing her work than she did painting!



Because of the pale/bold palette and visual movement across the canvas, ***Making Connections*** (above; acrylic on canvas, 20x36x1½) calls to mind a more serene Willem de Kooning painting.

Legacy II (oppostie; acrylic on canvas, 24x24x1½) represents the artist's style of eight years ago. Booth used quinacridone nickel azo gold, then sponged on a soft blue and white over it. Next she sprayed the canvas with water to achieve the runs, and finally applied the stenciling.

Booth applied color with a sponge for ***Opposing Forces*** (left; acrylic on canvas, 36x40x1½). As the paint dried to a tacky state, she sprayed the canvas with water and then wiped areas to reveal color underneath.



"Every painting I create is different … I just start putting paint on the surface, working and reworking it."

Then she discovered eBay. Booth had noticed a California-based artist was selling a lot of art online, so she wrote to her and asked for advice. "This woman told me she was making $6,000-$8,000 a month selling her art," she says. Booth listened again to that little voice that said, "My stuff is as good as hers—let's give eBay a try!"

Her first online sale excited her so much she could hardly sleep. Booth sold her work on eBay from 2002-2004 until the online site changed how they showed art. According to Booth, the site began charging artists to have their work featured, and as a result, she says, "A lot of artists started leaving, and many new art galleries began popping up."

She sought out other online avenues, and by 2004 started selling her work through online art galleries such as www.artfulhome.com and her own website at www.filomenabooth.com. "I prefer to sell online because it gives me more control over everything," Booth admits. She's a successful, one-woman outfit in that she handles posting all of her work via various social-media outlets, writes her own eNewsletter and

Mesa (above; acrylic on canvas, 20x20x1½) demonstrates Booth's abstract approach to landscapes. The foreground and sky colors are similar, broken up by the implication of a rising plateau on the right side of the canvas. This palette evokes colors of the sunset, and the contrast of blacks and reds to the sea foam and bisque pastels allows her to define space as well as create an interesting composition.

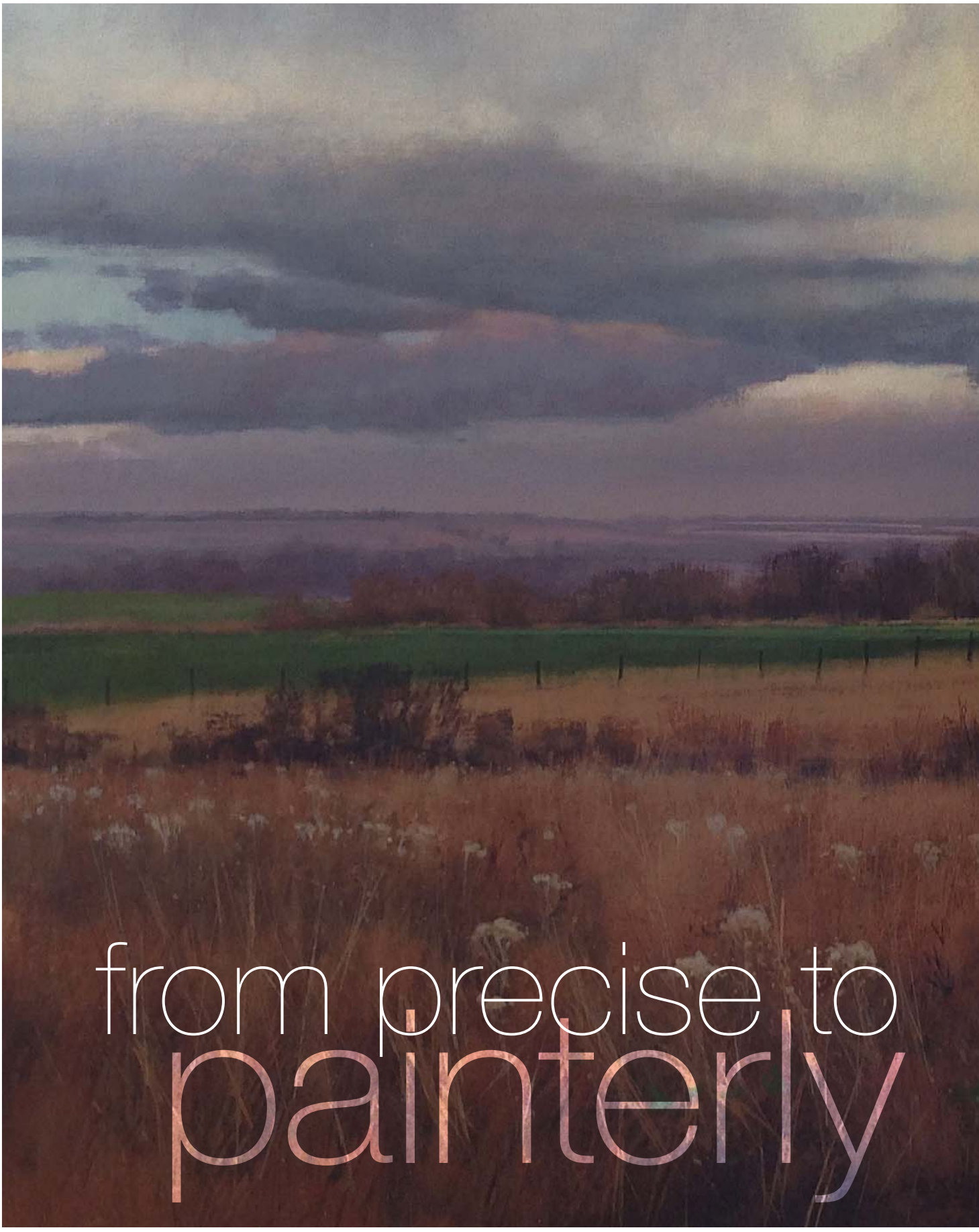
Booth misted ***The Harbor*** (opposite; acrylic on canvas, 30x30x1½) with water to blend the paint.

facilitates shipping of the art she sells. When asked if she spends a lot of time on self-promotion, Booth acknowledges, "You have to, because if you don't do it nobody else will," she says with a laugh.

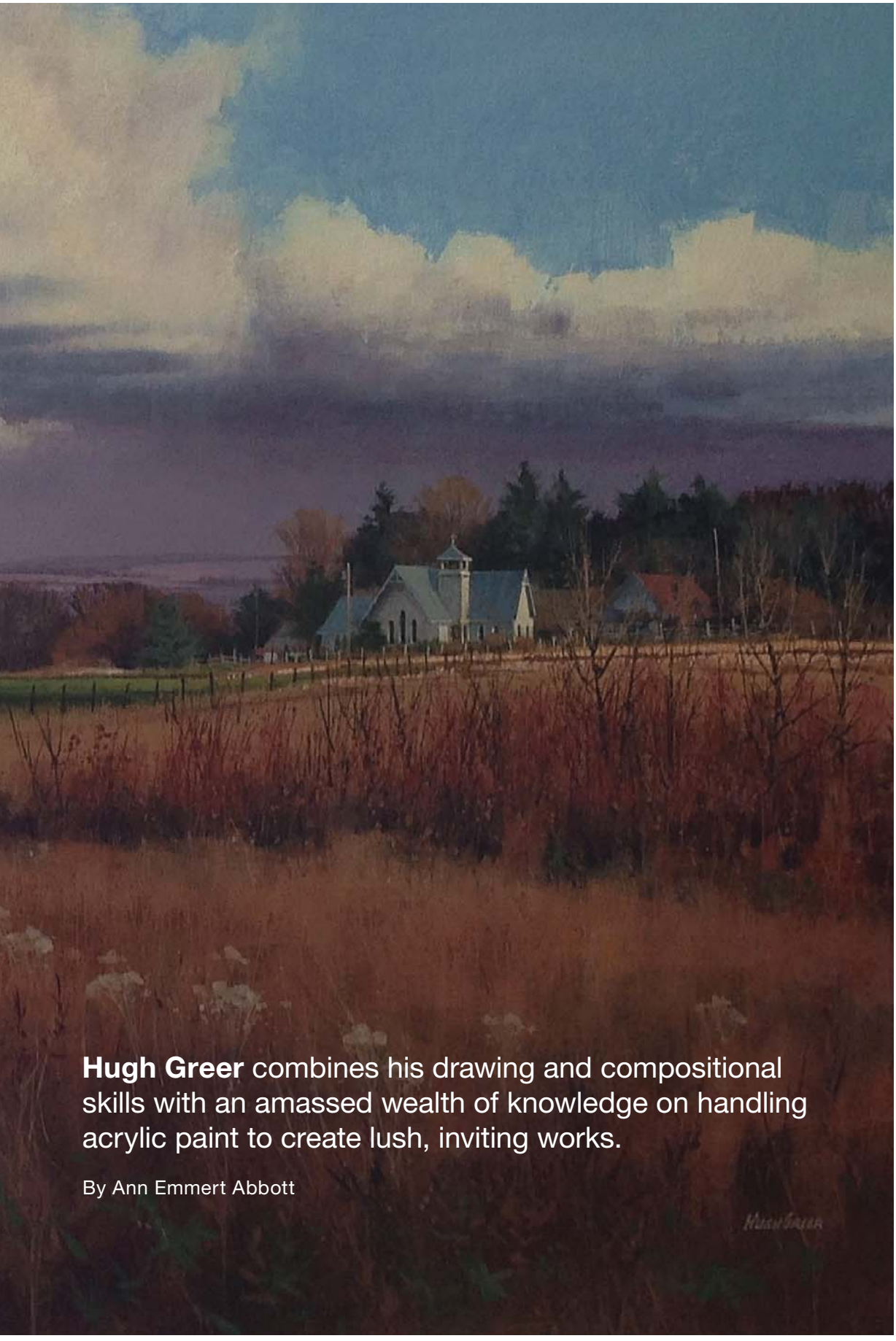
The business side for an artist who intends to make money from her work is a necessity. Yet Booth confesses that the true joy, not surprisingly, is in the painting itself. "I usually start with no idea in mind, and as I work an idea develops. Then I follow that lead." She doesn't stop painting until "there's nothing more that I can add," she says. After that, though, she'll even take a few more days to simply look at the piece to make sure she's satisfied with it.

Knowing when the piece is finished is "an instinct," Booth says. "I used to tell my students, "There are no mistakes in art. You can work with it, modify or change it, but there are no mistakes." /aa

MARIA SEDA-REEDER is an art critic, freelance writer, curator and adjunct instructor at the University of Cincinnati.



from precise to painterly



Hugh Greer combines his drawing and compositional skills with an amassed wealth of knowledge on handling acrylic paint to create lush, inviting works.

By Ann Emmert Abbott

"Without any additives, acrylic paints lay flat on the surface," says Greer. Because of this, he says, the texture you see in the foreground of ***Flint Hill Sanctuary*** (acrylic on board, 22x30) is "all brushwork." The green swath in the mid-ground is wheat, which is green in the wintertime.

HUGH GREER DISCOVERED ACRYLIC PAINTS SOON AFTER THEY BECAME AVAILABLE, while working as an architectural illustrator. It was the early 1960s, and gouache was the illustrator's usual choice, but Greer was attracted to the flexibility of acrylic paints. Like gouache, acrylics have a short drying time and vibrant colors, but with acrylics, Greer explains, you also get luminosity and transparency, as well as the option to go completely opaque.

And so began a decades-long journey of trial and error, learning and perfecting an amazing library of acrylic techniques. Fifty years later, though considered a master of the acrylic medium by most, Greer himself maintains that he's still learning: "I'm fascinated with acrylics because every time I sit down, I learn something new," he says.

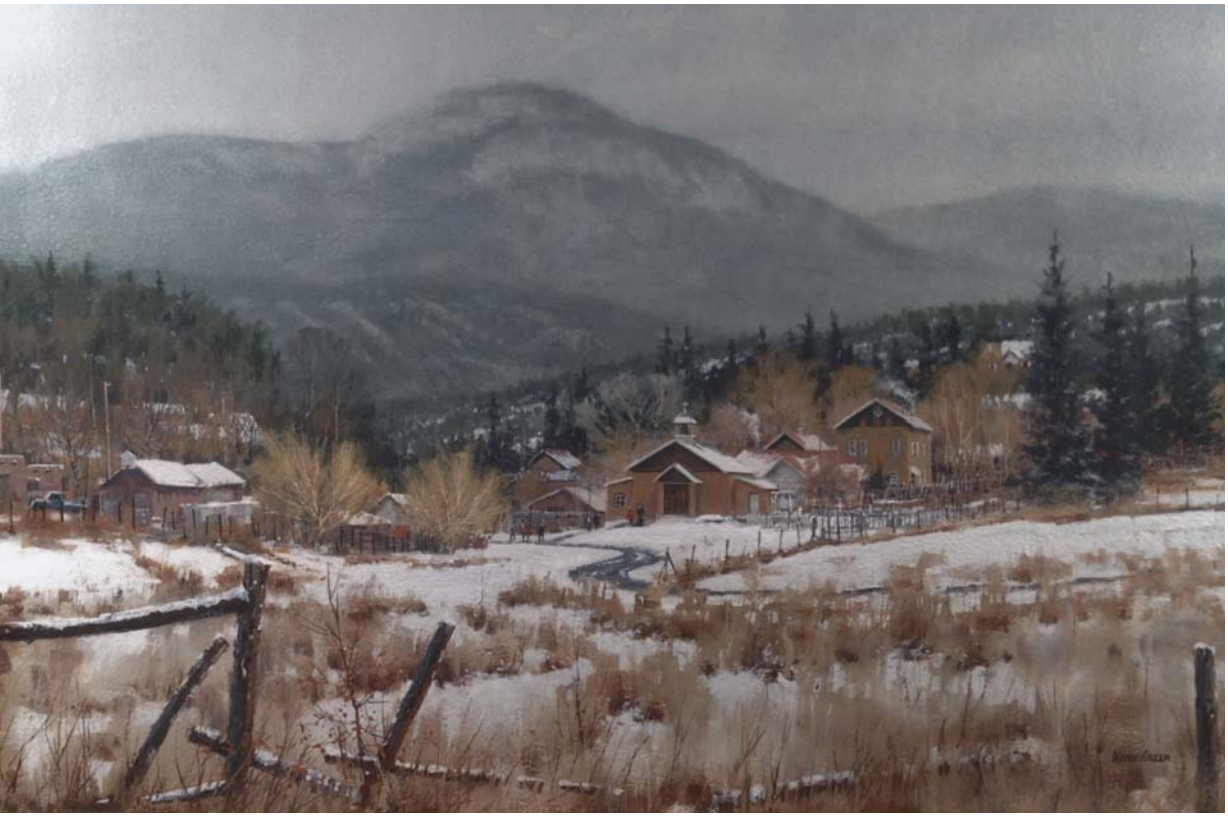
It Starts With Solid Skills

Trained in industrial and architectural design, Greer has compositional and rendering chops that contribute mightily to the expert execution of his paintings—especially when combined with his ability to manipulate acrylic paint for painterly effects. The result is carefully crafted works with an almost magical appeal, as Greer creates a space the viewer truly wants to be in, adeptly pulling you into his paintings, moving your eye around, and always bringing you right back to the center of interest.

When out scouting for images to paint, Greer often sketches onsite, and snaps multiple photographs of a scene—as many as 20 to 30. The sketches allow him to get the perspective and composition right, the photos serve only as a reference, "to trigger my memory," he explains. Greer also sometimes paints en plein air, and has assembled what he calls a mobile art studio that allows him to set up anywhere.

In the studio, Greer uses his reference material to execute another sketch, "a quick line drawing," of larger shapes that he then transfers to his painting surface with transfer paper. Today, Greer's painting surface of choice is multimedia artboard, which is created by combining paper pulp with epoxy resin. The result is a non-absorbent, tough painting surface that won't warp, buckle or shrink even after many washes. Greer cautions that the board is very brittle. "You can snap it in half, and it will shatter." Other than

See more of Hugh Greer's paintings at **www.artistsnetwork.com/medium/acrylic/hughgreer**.



For ***Bridge Over Otter Creek*** (opposite; acrylic on board, 12x16), Greer started with a grayish-brown underpainting, and kept the gray sky wet to retain the soft edges.

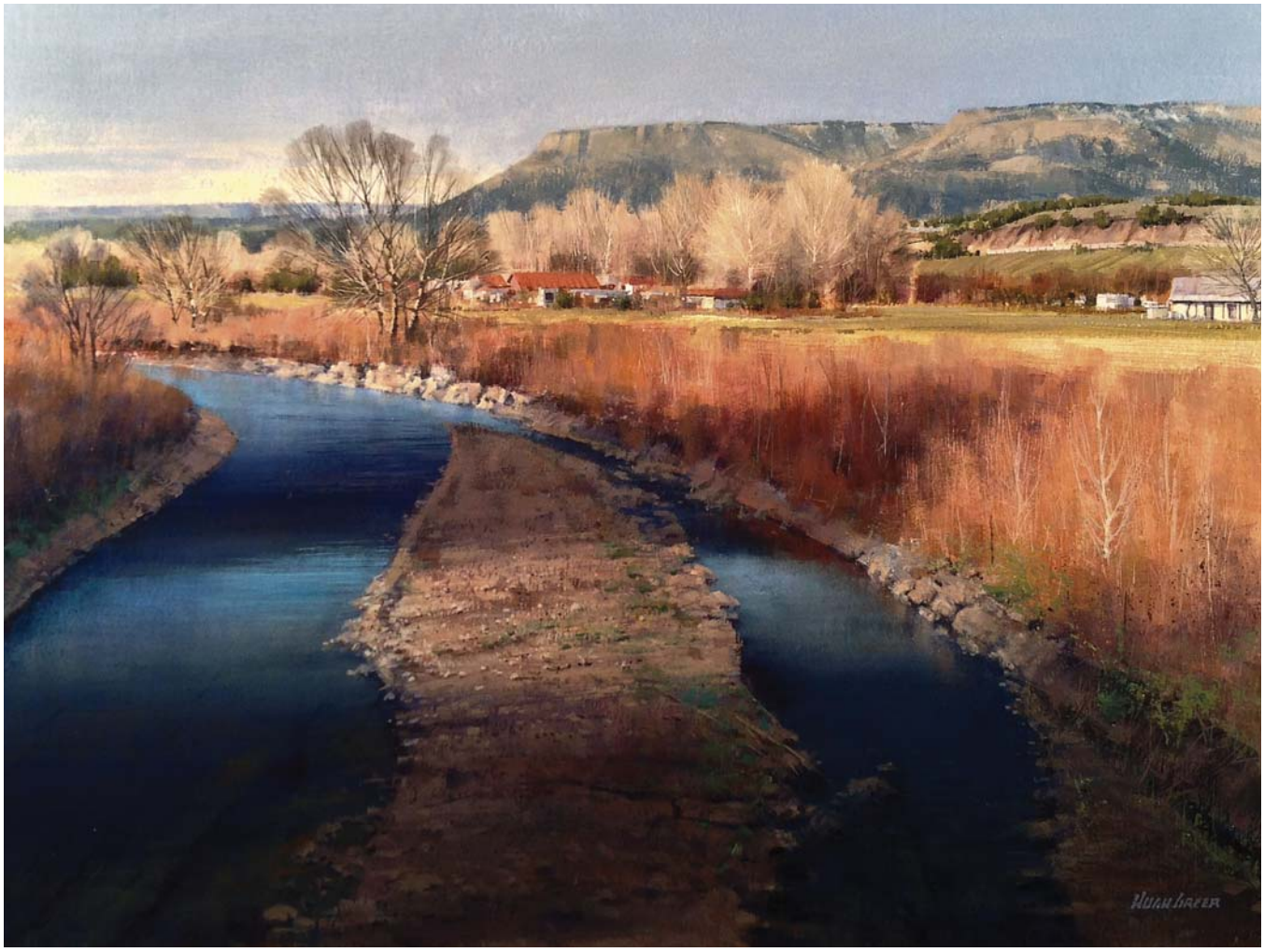
For the snowy areas in paintings like ***Mennonite White*** (above; acrylic on board, 20x30), Greer notes that the white snow is comprised of different shades of white. He reserved the brightest, purest white for the center of interest, the roof of the main barn.

Mountain Morning Mass (left; acrylic on board, 22x30) depicts the faithful attending mass in a small village on the way from Santa Fe to Taos. Greer toned the surface with a "paper bag" colored wash, and built up layers on top.

Bluestem is actually the yellowish native grass you see in the foreground of this painting. While painting this piece, Greer envisioned a grandfather/grandchild walk during which the child asks: ***Why Do They Call it Bluestem?*** (above; acrylic on board, 20x30)

Greer worked from multiple photographs to recreate ***Rio Hondo*** (right; acrylic on board, 8x12), which depicts the beginnings of a small river, while it's still high up in the mountains around Santa Fe. As he ran out of wash and had to mix new, you can see slight color variations in the brush in the foreground.

Historic Pecos River (opposite; acrylic on board, 18x24) captures long shadows cast over the waterway.



being non-absorbent, the board "acts like watercolor paper," the artist says. "You can flow washes over it, scrape into it, lift off of it."

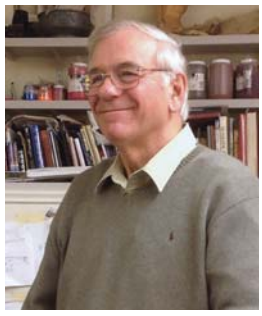
Greer tapes the board, which comes in a variety of sizes, to his work surface—no surprise he works nearly flat, on a drafting table.

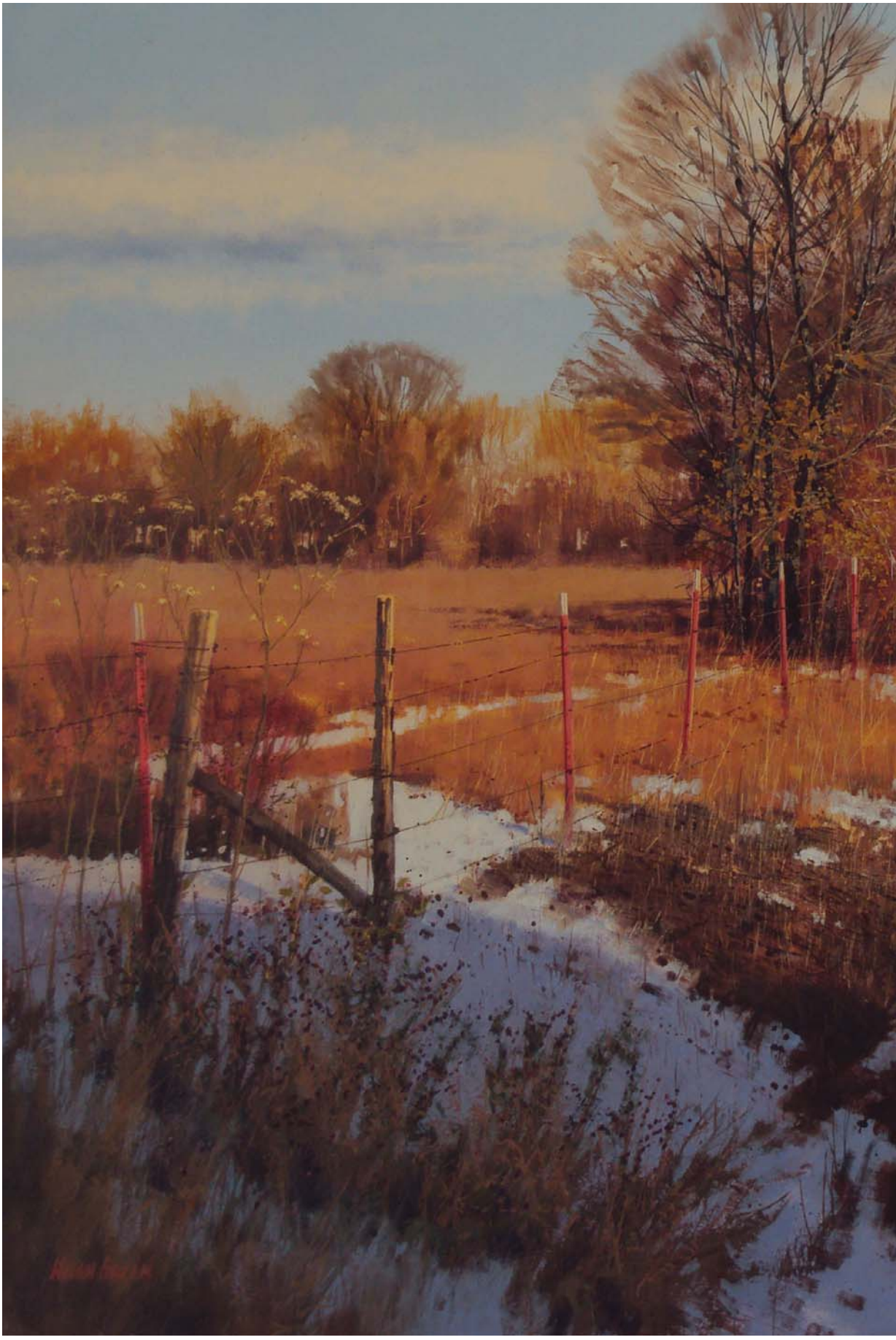
Layering Up and Up

Once he's transferred his rough sketch onto his surface, Greer starts to lay down washes. "I start with the biggest brush possible, depending on the size of the painting," he says. Greer uses one-stroke brushes. Another vestige of his illustration background, these brushes have long bristles and are often used by sign painters and typically hold more paint than traditional flat brushes. These brushes come in a variety of sizes from 4-inches to 1/8-inch. He often paints details using the edge of the smallest of these brushes, but sometimes uses a script brush as well. Greer cautions that these synthetic brushes are not durable, and will wear out quickly. Once they become frizzled or damaged, he says, be sure to replace them, as a worn out brush will inhibit your painting ability.

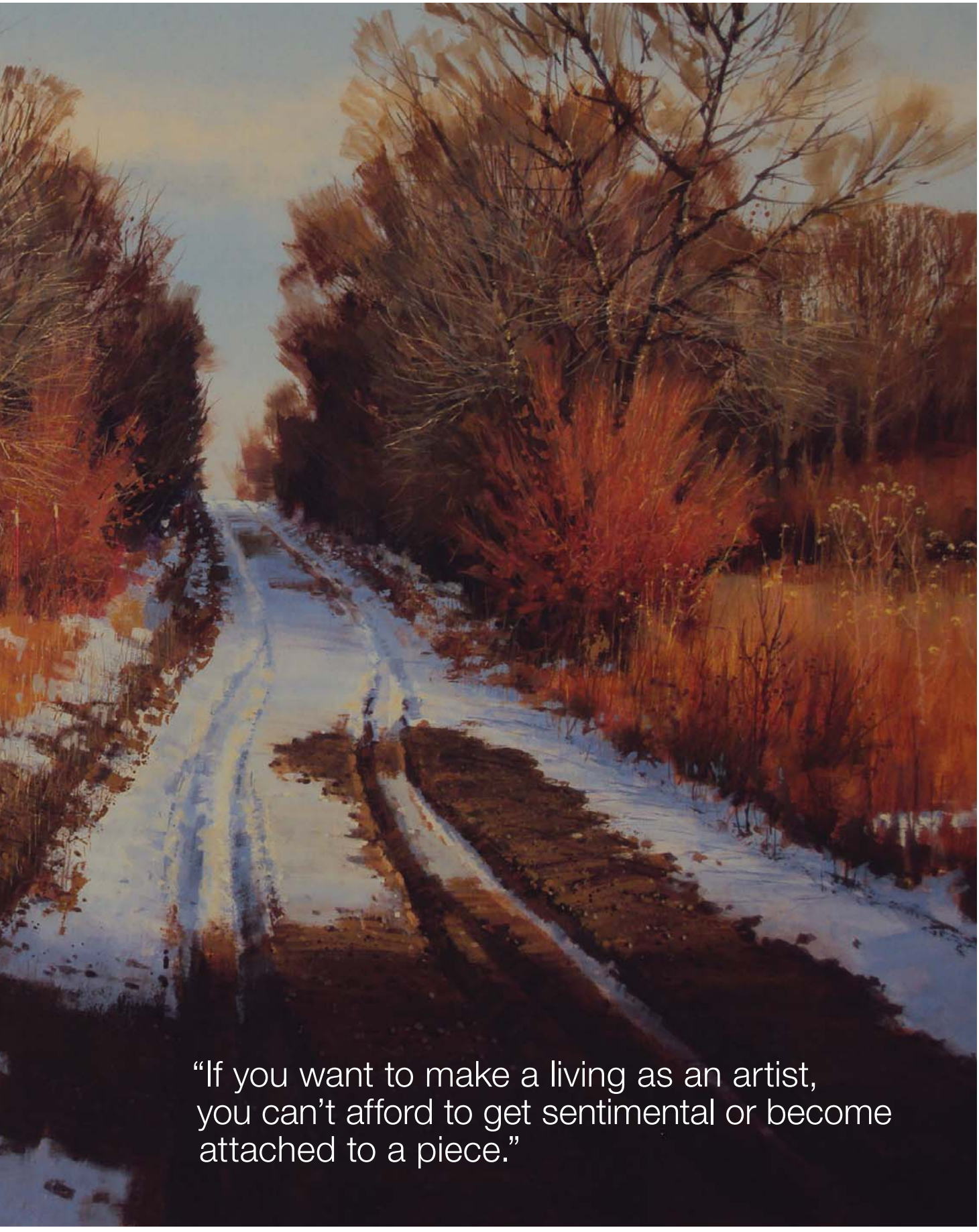
Meet Hugh Greer

Hugh Greer graduated from the University of Kansas with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. He worked for more than 40 years in the architectural field in Wichita, Kansas, where he still resides. "Because I make my living by selling my art, I find a need to paint subjects that will appeal to buyers, but the subject has to appeal to me first. So I roam the countryside in the early mornings and late afternoons, when the light creates interesting colors and shadows, looking for a combination that just might meet both our needs. Seldom do I find a perfect scenario, and that is when artistic creativity comes into play. I also approach each painting with the intention of making it a better one than the painting I've just finished. I began using acrylic paint in the 1960s—today I use a limited palette of five colors of fluid acrylics. From these five colors I can mix any color I need, and by mixing my own colors I get a more vibrant and harmonious result." Greer received three awards in 2014 for *Mennonite White* (page 71). Watercolor Missouri International honored Greer with its prestigious "Missouri Artist Award" for *Mystery Road* (page 74). Visit the artist at www.hughgreer.com.





Greer doesn't mind getting out in the field and getting his feet dirty to capture a scene he's attracted to painting, but he doesn't want to get his rear-wheel drive pickup stuck in the mud. "This scene was intriguing to me, but I didn't dare drive down that road. There are so many roads in this part of Kansas that are only used by farmers. I like to imagine what is at the end of this road." Hence, Greer named this painting, ***Mystery Road*** (acrylic on board, 20x30).



"If you want to make a living as an artist, you can't afford to get sentimental or become attached to a piece."

To start, Greer mixes a large puddle of wash on his palette/mixing board—he uses a simple plastic kitchen cutting board, but says a porcelain pan works well, too. He uses Golden liquid acrylics to create a "simplified palette" with five basic colors, from which he mixes any color he needs: diarylide yellow, quinacridone magenta, anthraquinone blue and cerulean blue, plus titanium white

With his largest brush, he then tones his entire painting surface. He varies the color and transparency of this ground depending on the subject, and sometimes chooses to paint on a white gessoed surface. Often, when his ground is going to be opaque, he tones the surface before he transfers the sketch.

Once he has his surface toned and his sketch in place, Greer works all over the painting, layering transparent and semi-transparent washes one on top of the other, blocking in color all over the painting. As he builds up layers, Greer notes, the layers "interact with one another," as light penetrates the top layers, and the bottom layers reflect up, pushing the feeling of dimensionality.

A master of composition, Greer uses aerial perspective to create the illusion of depth, "Anything in the distance is grayed and blue," he says. Anything in the foreground is high chroma—pure, vivid colors.

As he paints, Greer uses a variety of techniques to manipulate the paint. "I paint any way you can imagine," he says. He sprays the surface with water to keep it wet, softening edges along the way. He will lift areas of wet layers out using a variety of tools from paper towels to cotton swabs, or what he calls a "lift out tool." Greer explains, "I am now using what is called a 'colour shaper' in gray. It comes in black, gray and white—the colors relate to the stiffness of the rubber. I use the 1-inch and the ¼-inch—both chisel points."

He also scrapes color out of areas before the paint has cured. Acrylics are dry to the touch in about 5 minutes, but until the paint cures—that is, reaches maximum hardness, usually 12 to 24 hours—it is possible, if you know the techniques and materials you need, to still lift and scrape up paint.

He creates form both by applying and lifting shapes. When he wants to speed up the drying time of an area, he uses a hair dryer. As the painting progresses, he typically moves to smaller and smaller brushes. For his final details, including brushwork in the foreground, he uses increasingly less transparent washes, painting in both positive and negative shapes (for example, painting back in areas of dappled light between trees in a forest). He saves his most vivid, opaque layer for his trademark strong center of interest.

Greer doesn't bother mixing up and saving washes. Instead, he notes that as he runs out of a wash he mixes a new version, if he's off slightly,

In ***Redbuds Showing Off*** (opposite; acrylic on board, 20x30), Greer cast the foreground in a cloud shadow typical of a spring day, and left the background in full sun. He lifted color out and painted white and gray in to give shape to the clouds.

Painting a vast, open space like the Flint Hills depicted in ***East of Beaumont*** (above; acrylic on board, 20x30) isn't easy. To achieve depth, Greer focuses on subtleties like textures in the foreground and pops of color in the trees.

"I try to plan out a sky in my head before I paint it," says Greer of paintings like ***Soaring over the Prairie*** (left; acrylic on board, 20x30). "I never use a pencil in the sky area because it will show through."

Santa Fe is a big tourist town, and tourists love to take home an original painting. ***The Blue Pot*** (above; acrylic on board, 8x12) hits the mark for tourist/collectors because it's small and more affordable; and, it incorporates local colors the buyer will fondly remember.

Greer often does smaller studies before he executes a full-size painting. ***Study for Santa Fe October*** (right; acrylic on board, 12x16) is an example—although he sells his studies too. Studies allow him to work out composition details and colors, and speeds up the final painting process.

The detailed brushwork in the foreground of ***New Mexico Village*** (opposite; acrylic on board, 8x12) invites the viewer to enter into the scene.

"it just makes the painting interesting." He doesn't hesitate to alter a scene for dramatic effect. He admits, "If I thought a building needed a red roof on it, I wouldn't hesitate to add it."

Painting Sizes and Subjects

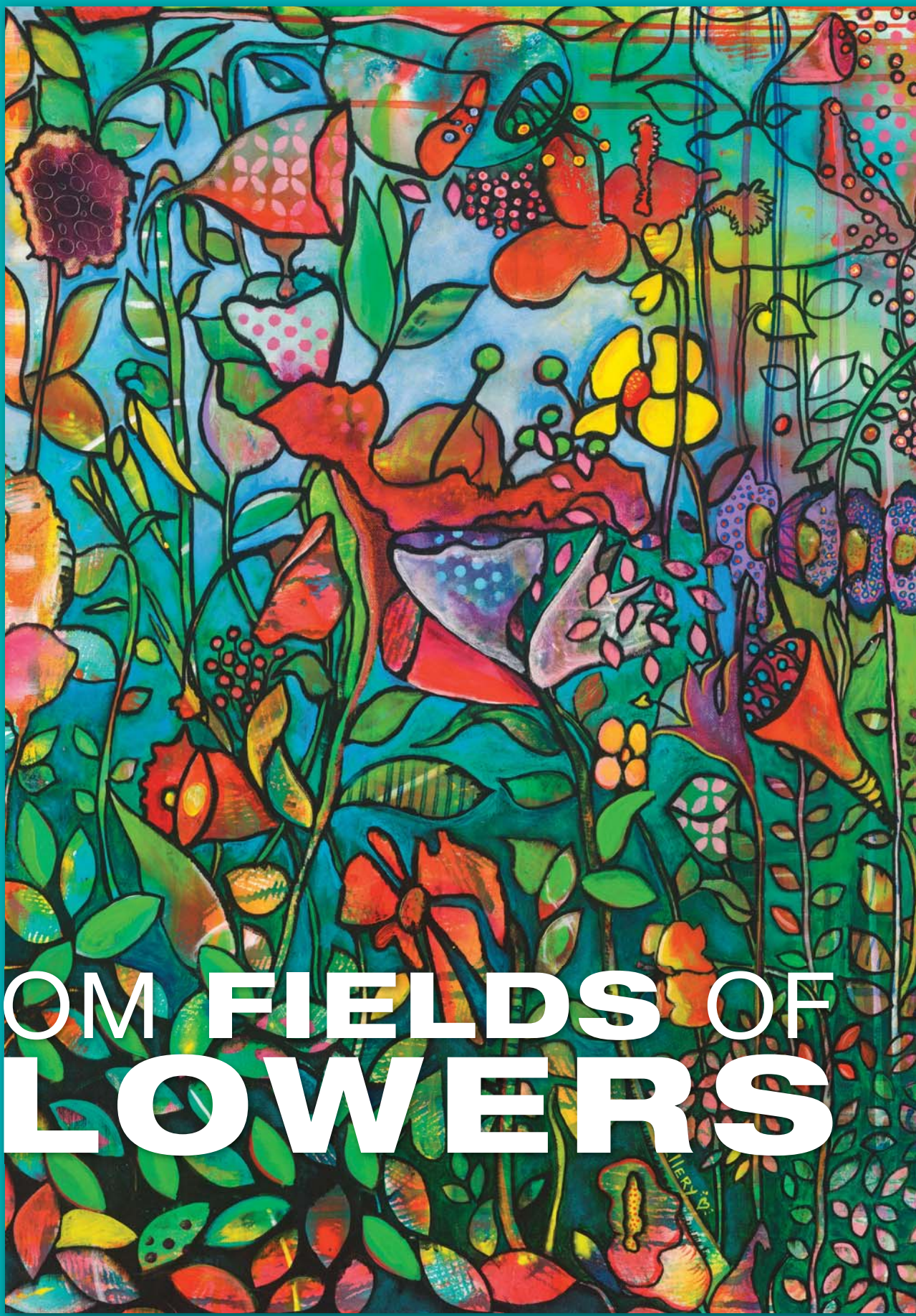
Greer works in a variety of sizes, depending on the subject, but also for market considerations. It's good, he says, to offer a variety of sizes, and therefore varied price points to your collectors. For example, for the works he sells in the Santa Fe, New Mexico, gallery, smaller paintings of local scenes are most popular (see *The Blue Pot* opposite).

Greer often paints a smaller painting as a study for a larger piece. Starting with a study, Greer explains, allows him to, "work out details and colors," at a smaller scale. The final, larger painting then goes much more quickly. He typically sells both paintings. In fact, Greer rarely keeps his own pieces. "If you want to make a living as an artist, you can't afford to get sentimental or become attached to a piece," he says.

Finding Your Unique Style

"My painting style has steadily evolved over 50 years," Greer says. "Learning about acrylics, and everything I could do with them, happened very slowly." Greer encourages every artist to make developing a unique style his or her goal. "Every artist progresses every time he or she paints," he says. "You're exploring and learning something new. You're making mistakes." Greer notes that he, too, has made his share of mistakes. "Some are good-looking mistakes," he notes. He also sometimes will put a painting aside for months, "getting some space and perspective," he says. Later, he can pull it out and often successfully complete it. Another piece of advice from Greer: Don't try to change your style rapidly, especially if you have a market or a following—and especially if you're in a gallery. /aa

ANN EMMERT ABBOTT writes frequently about art and artists. She lives in Cincinnati, Ohio.



FROM **FIELDS** OF **FLOWERS**

Kim Ellery uses her art as a form of storytelling by painting in series.

By Patty Craft

When I started in acrylics, I bombed," confesses artist Kim Ellery. Her statement sounds odd given her current artistic successes which include exhibiting at ArtExpo New York 2015, having one of her paintings hanging in the recording studio of Christian-rock band Third Day, and two different companies licensing her images on products. Yet that straightforward statement is classic Ellery—she tells it like it is. There's no linear, smooth climb to success in this story. Ellery is a wife and mother who has honed her creative skills through a lifetime of training, who is burdened by anxiety and depression but has found a way to thrive and succeed through her artwork.

"I went crazy creating textures for the underpainting of ***Fields of Flowers #1 / Serendipity*** (acrylic on canvas, 30x30x2½)," say Ellery. I started by creating the leaves in the bottom, left corner. I looked for areas of complementary colors and textures, outlining the shapes with a Molotow marker. Then I painted in the negative spaces among the outlined leaves."

Inside the Supply Box

Kim Ellery loves playing with products to discover how they perform, and to find new ways to use them in her paintings. With the ebullience of a happy child she says, "Anything goes when it comes to art supplies!" Together with tools and paints manufactured specifically for artists, Ellery also includes everyday items in her supply box:

- Caps from plastic water bottles
- Chopsticks
- Dental tool (for etching)
- Golden High Flow Acrylics
- Golden Light Molding Paste
- Holbein Violet Drawing Ink
- Liquitex Freestyle Splatter Brush
- Molotow refillable markers
- Montana acrylic refillable markers
- Princeton Catalyst Wedges in various sizes
- Q-Tips and 91% Isopropyl Acohol
- Rosemary & Co. Shiraz brushes
- Stencils: handmade and store-bought
- Watercolor paper cut and collaged onto canvas
- Wood-graining tool

To create the butterfly in ***Alicia's Garden*** (above, left; acrylic on canvas, 24x18) Ellery laid down an underpainting of cool colors. Once the underpainting was completely dry, she dripped Golden High Flow Acrylics in titanium white, quinacridone magenta, and indigo directly onto the canvas. She let the colors flow together, then used a catalyst wedge made by Princeton to swipe some of the paint away to create the linear effects.

The Early Days

Ellery recognized her artistic abilities in seventh grade when the art teacher asked her to create a painting to be given as the grand prize in a school raffle. "I had never thought in terms of being good at art, but when my teacher acknowledged my skills with that honor I knew I was good at something that I loved," she says. That grand-prize painting was an interpretation of the then-popular song "Stairway to Heaven" by Led Zeppelin. Ellery laughs as she recalls, "It was a painting about finding God, complete with clouds and a rainbow. Thinking back, though, it shows my connection to God before I even realized it.

"It can be very uncool to speak of God in the artist community," concedes the artist. "But God gave me my passion for painting to ease my anxiety and depression. He is in every aspect of my life; I'm not excluding God from this story." Ellery doesn't throw her faith in your face as a challenge, but she's also unwilling to back down from it even at the suggestion she may lose business by sharing her beliefs.

Ellery dabbled in clay in high school, then while at university she took up stone carving. Having worked with tactile materials like clay and stone informs the paintings she does today in acrylics

as she layers and adds textures. She's no longer stymied by how acrylic works—those early days of rapid drying and the frustration it caused amuse her since now she uses a heat gun to, among other things, speed up the drying process.

This Is How She Does It

Ellery calls her painting technique "cloud painting," named after the experience many of us had as children looking intently at the clouds and discovering shapes among them. Most of her pieces begin with an abstract underpainting that consists of many layers bursting with colors, out of which she finds the images that she pulls forward into the final painting.

She paints on Blick Premier Heavyweight 1⅜-inch Profile Cotton Canvas that comes treated with three coats of gesso, so there's no need for her treat the surface before she begins painting. She alternates layers of warm colors with layers of cool colors, usually a total of four layers. When she starts on the third layer of this underpainting, she begins her mark-making process. Anything goes for Ellery as a tool to create marks (see Inside the Supply box at left). She uses everything from splatter tools to torn pieces of corrugated cardboard to lay down marks.

"I even use the hot-air gun to push the paint around for different textures. I use a straw sometimes but that method makes me dizzy," she laughingly admits. She's recently added Golden High Flow acrylics to her materials stash and says, "It's probably my favorite paint. I wanted the viscosity; it's like water but the pigment load in any Golden product is huge."

After completing about four layers and having made her marks, it's time to step back and assess where the painting is going—hers is an intuitive approach that allows for the painting to lead her to the next phase. "From an underpainting that kind of looks like a mess, I stop and really look, and then all these shapes appear," she says. Ellery finds the flower shapes in her underpainting, and then begins the next step of sketching in the flowers using a round paintbrush or a marker filled with Golden High-Flow Acrylics in either black or white.

The flowers in the lower, left corner of ***Field of Flowers #17/Joyful Chatter*** (above, right; acrylic on canvas, 12x12) were inspired by a Gustav Klimt original the artist saw hanging in the Neue Galerie in New York City.

Love Begins Here (above, middle; acrylic on canvas, 16x16) exhibits what the artist calls "the reveal" in the top, left corner. The colorful layers of the underpainting, and the marks made to bring texture, remain visible. The reveal brings depth to the painting and is evidence of the evolution of the work.

The birds in ***Finding Love*** (right; mixed media on canvas, 24x30) were cut from watercolor paper upon which Ellery created a layered underpainting. They are adhered to the canvas with acrylic medium. To remedy the too-harsh line between grass and sky, Ellery used fluid paint to create the drips that define the blades of grass.

Ellery pulled the heart in the bottom, left-hand corner of ***Happy Place*** (opposite; acrylic on canvas, 24x36) forward with shading, and by creating a textured outline using Golden High Flow Acrylics in carbon black.

The diptych, ***Fields of Flowers #3 and #4*** (below; acrylic on canvas, 36x72), was painted to hang in the artist's living room but a collector loved the pieces, so Ellery "let them go."

In almost every painting Ellery leaves a section she calls "the reveal." Frequently the reveal is a corner, and in this section she'll leave the chaos and marks of the underpainting to show through, revealing the progress of the work. The reveal for *Love Begins Here* (on page 83) is in the top, left corner. There you can see the colorful layers of the underpainting and the clear marks covered lightly in translucent color. The reveal gives the viewer a glimpse into the core of the painting as well as the story it's telling. No story is simple, and the reveal gives a nod to the dizzying chaos that frequently underlies the most seemingly innocent tale.

The next step in Ellery's process involves negative painting around the flowers, frequently with opaque paints. Sometimes the flowers will remain full of the busy colors and marks of the underpainting (see *Field of Flowers #17/Joyful Chatter*, on page 83), and other times the flowers will be painted with more opaque colors.

Meet Kim Ellery

Kim Ellery is a storyteller as much as she is an artist. Born and raised in Rhode Island in the '60s, she studied at both Rhode Island College and the Rhode Island School of Design. Her early artistic years found her working in sculpture, but no material was off limits as she explored her creative abilities. Those initial 3-D sculpting experiences inform the paintings she creates today as she layers and adds textures. Ellery calls her intuitive method "cloud painting." Just as you might discover shapes in the clouds, she starts most paintings with an abstract, graffiti-like underpainting of alternating warm and cool layers from which she finds the images that she will pull forward into the final painting. Ellery's website is found at www.kimelleryart.com. You can also find her on Twitter @kimellery and Facebook at kim.elleryartist.

Creativity Strength Training

To stay in top creative shape, Ellery is convinced that she must constantly learn from other artists. One of her first art mentors, Wyanne Thompson, offered an eCourse called Paint Free that Ellery took for a couple of years. Watching YouTube videos, looking at other students' paintings, and reading art books are all ways Ellery seeks to trigger new ideas. "I need to be looking at other artists' work, even if it's a different medium or not the same style of work I do. It keeps my mind open, and I'm always thinking how I could incorporate what I like into my own work," Ellery admits. "I recently visited MoMA to view Matisse's cut-outs. I came home wanting to repeat the shapes; I was inspired to think in terms of shape," she explains.

The artist reveals her own interpretation of ***Fields of Flowers #27 / Secret Garden*** (above, left; acrylic on canvas, 20x20): "This is a child and her protector in a safe haven, deep in the fullness of a garden where no one can see them or hear their whispered stories. It's a place I go to in my mind with the ones I have loved and lost."

C'mon Get Happy (above, middle; acrylic and oil pastel on canvas, 16x16) is part of the "Love Stories" series, depicting two beings in a garden sharing their deepest truths.

"I could have named ***Eternal Love*** (above, right; mixed media on canvas, 20x20) "The Toy Box" because I think I used everything in my studio to create this painting," Ellery laughingly suggests. She created an underpainting using strictly warm colors, then saw the tree and pulled it forward using complimentary colors.

Where the Magic Happens

With her studio inside her home—a former bedroom with natural light—Ellery paints four or five days a week. Each day that she paints, she spends about six hours creating, and frequently has a number of different paintings she's working on that are at different stages. At the time of this interview Ellery was preparing for a solo show near her hometown in Rhode Island that would serve as a preview of her New York City show later in the year. "Today I'm working on four 10x10 paintings that the local gallery will be able to sell so they'll make money, too," she said. "I plan to sketch in the dark lines. Normally I use a paintbrush, but today I'm using refillable markers with Golden High Flow."

While she prefers the paintbrush stroke for the consistency of the line, markers are convenient, and after painting many layers over them, the difference is so subtle as to be virtually unnoticeable. "Plus, the markers and these small canvases allow me to take my work with me if I'm headed out, like to a football game, where I'm not so interested in what's happening and want to work," Ellery admits.

What determines the size of the canvas for each painting? Price point is a huge consideration. Many viewers will love the bigger canvases but not all can

afford to take them home. Smaller, more economically priced canvases are a necessity. Pricing artwork is a hot topic fraught with alternating viewpoints, and Ellery counsels, "It's so important to be consistent in pricing no matter where you sell."

Ellery voices deep gratitude for the fact that her husband, Mike, supports the family financially. "Any money I make I reinvest in my art. I buy more paint. I take more courses. I always say I began selling my paintings to support my painting," she jokes.

Painting in Series

Until the "Fields of Flowers" series came into being, Ellery painted, almost exclusively, trees and birds. "In a series I'm telling a detailed story, so painting something outside the series would distract me," she says.

Flora Bowley, another of Ellery's mentors, introduced her to painting intuitively. "Intuitive painting is so freeing, and when I'm doing it I don't want to go any another direction," says the artist. Since the intuitive technique is about painting in a spontaneous, bold, and fearless way as a process of discovery, it perfectly describes how Ellery paints.

The impetus for the "Field of Flowers" series arose out of a deep, personal loss—the death of Laurie Muddiman, Ellery's closest friend. At the end of a painting day during that time of grief, Ellery was surprised to find her large canvas covered in flowers. Not birds or trees, but flowers, which were Laurie's favorite things. That painting, *Field of Flowers #1 / Serendipity* is on page 81.

Then somewhere close to the #30 painting in the "Field of Flowers" series, the birds Ellery had previously painted began to show up in pairs. Thus begins the "Love Stories" series. The birds represent two people in a love relationship: husband and wife, mother and child, best friends. They are in the garden telling each other their most important stories.

Ellery stands firmly on her credo, "Creating is like breathing and eating for me. I must do all three to survive, and I thank God for this talent which allows me to battle against depression and anxiety while giving joy to others." /aa

PATTY CRAFT is editor-in-chief of *Acrylic Artist*.

Michael Riddet's exacting drawings, thin coats of color and accurate detail add up to a labor of love—a love of making viewers chuckle.

By Amanda Metcalf

Trompe l'oeil

Population Dynamics (left; acrylic on panel, 20x24), ***Illusion*** (opposite, top; acrylic on panel, 14x18) and ***The Barber Shop*** (opposite, bottom; acrylic on panel, 10x8) all include butterflies, thereby showcasing the artist's love of wildlife as well as his abilities as a photo-realistic painter.

Trickster

Michael Riddet is changing the rules for trompe l'oeil painters. That troupe of illusionists prides itself on fooling viewers as close as two feet, but he wants to bring people closer. If you bumped your nose on one of his paintings trying to get a closer look, he'd get a kick out of it, except that manners dictate you should never touch a painting.

"Adults should know better," Riddet says. He gives kids a pass, but he's caught grown-ups trying to lift the edges of pieces of paper represented in his paintings. Violation of tact (and tactility) aside, Riddet's goal is, in fact, to mess with you. "If you can fool them and put a smile on their face, that's what it's all about," he says. On preview night for an exhibition this past fall, a stamp collector demanded to know why Riddet had glued a Lindbergh airmail stamp onto *A Brief History of Flight in America* (opposite, bottom).

The moment when he fools himself, though, when he passes an unfinished painting and his own mind thinks the still life is alive, is when he knows the painting will be a success. "The wow effect is only momentary," he says, "but when it happens, I think, 'It's working.' "

Riddet has been painting since he was ten years old in 1957, professionally since 1975 and full time since 1979. Just 17 of those 40 years as a pro have been spent doing trompe l'oeil. But the first one was so fun, he says, that now he paints in that style almost exclusively. He favors arrangements of small objects, whether of sentimental value to a commission client, as in *Abundant Life* (above), or from his personal collection, amassed over a lifetime, as in *Confessions of a Young Birder* (see page 92).

The Magician Reveals His Secret

Airtight accuracy in lighting and scale are what make the illusion of reality work, so Riddet spends plenty of time, sometimes hours, nailing down the composition of his still life. A single light source that casts strong shadows is best. When it's time to draw and then paint, Riddet works from as much reference material as possible. A photograph keeps his doubt in check, and having the objects on hand helps with scale and detail. That's especially important to avoid criticism from people familiar with the objects.

Abundant Life (opposite; acrylic on board, 15x17) hangs as part of the collection of King of Kings House. The client allowed Riddet to hold onto the $3,000 mandolin for reference so that the artist could master the subtle wood grain.

The strong light and shadow of ***Full House*** (above; acrylic on panel, 14x18) might distract some viewers from even wondering how that coin got stuck in the fencing.

At an exhibition recently, ***A Brief History of Flight in America*** (left; acrylic on board, 9x20) fooled an avid stamp collector into thinking the valuable Lindbergh airmail stamp was real.

Confessions of a Young Birder (right; acrylic on board, 40x30) is a snapshot of Riddet's life in 1953, when he came down with the German measles and was quarantined at home for three weeks. During his hiatus from school, his fellow students selected instruments they would play in a class concert, leaving just the violin and the triangle from which Riddet cold choose. His mother forbade the violin, so Riddet chose the triangle and had one note in the song. During the concert, he swung and missed the triangle and his note, and so he hit it again, albeit a bit late. Acrylics, it turns out, allow the do-overs that music doesn't.

Magpie Collector (opposite; acrylic on board, 14x18) hangs in the collection of Miller Art Museum, Sturgeon Bay, Wisc.

He learned that tough lesson in the mid-1970s, when painting cedar waxwings via specimens provided by The Field Museum curator emeritus of birds Emmet Reid Blake. When Riddet showed Blake the painting, Blake told him he'd included one too few primary flight feathers. That wouldn't rank high on the embarrassment scale for many, but it put Riddet's feathers in a bunch, and he went right home and shoehorned another feather in. Years later, he learned Blake had been wrong, and Riddet still isn't sure whether he was being tested. A lesson stuck nonetheless: "Artistic license doesn't apply to natural history."

So Riddet sketches and refines on layer after layer of tracing paper to get the drawing just right, then uses graphite transfer paper to transfer the drawing to a basecoated hardboard. A former oil painter, he never liked the spring of canvas, and board is a stable surface for his exacting application. He preps the surface with several thin coats of acrylic gesso, sanding between each. After trying a number of different

brands, he keeps returning to Liquitex, which accepts a good sanding. Then he basecoats with a subtle tint. Cadmium yellow and black produce a subtle green that's pleasant to look at while working, as is the pale brown of umber. These tones are easy to paint over, which is helpful considering Riddet doesn't like to mask out shapes. They also produce less glare than pure white, which distorts the color he sees and thus his color choices. Consider the effort another nod to the god of accuracy in trompe l'oeil.

He labors over color mixing as much as he does over composition. If you're really lucky, he says, a pure pigment matches what you need, but that's rare. Near his easel, he keeps a smaller board with the same basecoat and palette as his painting, and he uses it for experimentation and comparison to his reference material. He layers thin coats of acrylics, which are dry to the touch within 15 minutes and help maintain the trompe l'oeil effect even up close (see Glazing With Acrylics at right). Riddet was astonished at a recent exhibition of his 17th-century trompe l'oeil forebears. From three feet away, the illusions are magnificent, he says, but closer, the visual texture "hits you in the face."

Once he's methodically filled in the color, Riddet uses a hard pencil, a No. 6 or 8, to draw in the smallest

Glazing With Acrylics

Thanks to thin coats, Riddet's trompe l'oeil illusion lasts even as the viewer approaches within inches of a painting, so he builds color with thinned pigment. A dab of acrylic polymer emulsion acts as a supplemental binder to urge layers to adhere. Bonus: The emulsion prevents mixed pigments, especially natural earth colors, from separating.

Meet Michael Riddet

Michael Riddet's paintings have been shown in more than 80 museums, Christie's South Kensington in London, and other venues. He's won three Wisconsin Waterfowl Stamp Design competitions, and has appeared for 15 years in the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum's Birds in Art exhibition.

He is a member of The Society of Animal Artists, the Palette & Chisel Academy of Fine Arts, and The International Guild of Realism. His trompe l'oeil works hang in the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, the American Numismatic Society, and Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. Visit his website at www.riddetstudio.com.

Materials List

BRUSHES: Grumbacher and Winsor & Newton (reserving his Winsor & Newton Artists' Water Colour Sable round brushes, a gift, for rare use)

MEDIUMS: Liquitex gesso for surface prep and acrylic polymer emulsion for glazing

PAINT: Liquitex Artist Colors, Golden Open Slow-Drying Acrylics, Winsor & Newton and Maimeri Brera acrylics

SURFACE: Hardboard (usually Masonite) coated with acrylic gesso, sanded between layers

VARNISH: Winsor & Newton Artists' Picture Varnish

details, such as the image on a stamp. Even the number of ridges on the coins he paints is accurate, as in *Afternoon at the Pub* (above). To fool the viewer's eye, he's got to paint more than the eye can see, and so he wears binocular magnifiers over his glasses. For the finest details, he looks through a large-format camera lens and uses a needle to remove paint.

Real-Life Realism Mentors

Riddet grew up surrounded by nature on Walney Island in England's Irish Sea. In 1953, his Aunt Dottie hit the Christmas-gift jackpot with a condensed copy of John James Audubon's *The Birds of America*. Riddet went to sleep with the book for innumerable nights. A year later, she proved her gift-giving chops with a set of oil paints. Riddet's first painting came soon after: a copy of Audubon's cardinal. In 1956, he and his family immigrated to La Grange, Ill., 15 miles southwest of Chicago, where he attended Oak Avenue School. There, he and his fellow students sold magazine subscriptions to raise money to buy art for a collection, 95 percent of it Realism, that hung on the walls of the school. Under the leadership of principal Nettie McKinnon, Oak Avenue collected artworks from 1929 to 1960, the year Riddet's 7th-grade class acquired a John Singer Sargent. The Nettie J. McKinnon Art Gallery, comprised of more than 120 works of mostly American art, includes Hudson River School painters like John Frederick and Impressionists Edward Henry Potthast, John Henry Twachtman, and Guy C. Wiggins, as well as future Riddet mentor Charles Vickery.

A few years later, when he was 18, he saw a series of Andrew Wyeth drawings at The Art Institute of Chicago, where the artist's simplicity of line and pencil work blew Riddet away. He studied art for two years in junior college but switched to biological sciences for a bachelor's degree from Roosevelt University. He then worked for two-and-a-half years as an industrial engineer in the time and motion department of Western Electric, keeping up his art on the side. He ultimately left the white-collar world to join a wildlife art stable and then parted ways with that group to be an artist naturalist for the DuPage County, Ill., Forest Preserve.

Riddet calls his five years at the preserve the best job he ever had, combining all his loves: nature, art and future wife, Karen, who was a fellow artist. But by 1979, enough commissions were coming in that Riddet became a full-time painter. He and Karen got a bargain on 50 acres in Wisconsin's Driftless Area (so named because the Ice Age glaciers spared the region, leaving its hills, woodlands and waterways intact). They built a house and studio, and are still there 35 years later.

In ***Afternoon at the Pub*** (opposite, left; acrylic on board, 10x8) Riddet painted Irish coins from his personal collection. He entered the piece in a trompe l'oeil exhibition but spent enough time on the details of the animals on the coins (detailed at opposite, right) to be able to enter the painting in a wildlife show, too.

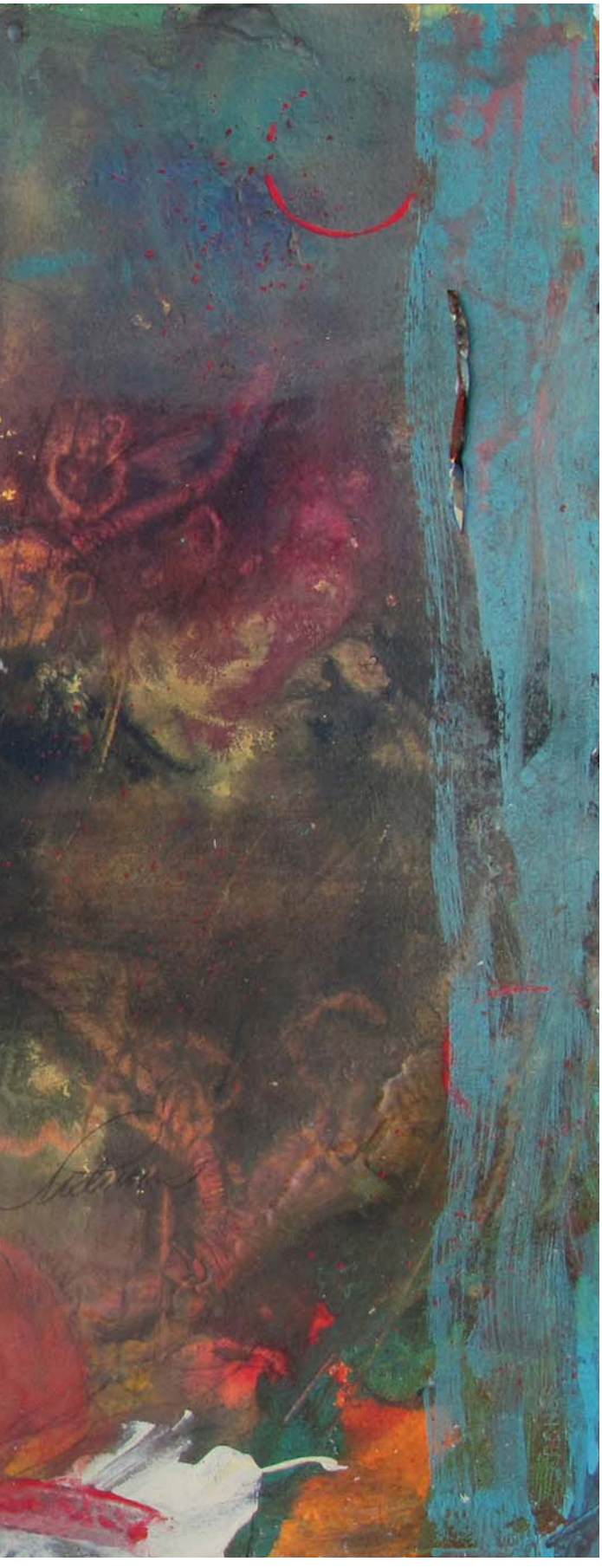
A single light source for ***New Jersey Memorabilia*** (left; acrylic on board, 11x9) casts strong shadows.

Almost all of Riddet's time is spent on acrylic trompe l'oeil paintings now. He hasn't painted in oils since his wife converted him to acrylics in 1977, but he's fiddled with extended-drying acrylics, which appeal to his frugal side. He also has at least one more oil painting in him—to fulfill a longtime goal to exhibit at Palette & Chisel Academy of Fine Arts, Chicago's oldest art academy. Riddet's teen-years mentor, Charles Vickery, had encouraged him to submit, and 32 years later, in 2001, Riddet finally found the courage to walk in with his portfolio. He was accepted within a month. Now he wants one of his paintings to hang there, though whatever oil painting he submits will be a re-creation of one he's already mastered in his real love: acrylics. /aa

AMANDA METCALF is a Brooklyn-based arts and business writer.

PAINTING TEXTURE

A number of mark-making tools and techniques were used to create texture in ***Interrupted Relief*** (mixed media on canvas, 16x20).



Hone your mark-making skills to create tactile elements or the illusion of texture in your work.

By Jean Pederson

TEXTURE CAN BE THOUGHT OF IN TWO WAYS: THE ACTUAL PHYSICAL, TACTILE QUALITY OF A SURFACE OR THE ILLUSION THAT WE CREATE WHEN MAKING MARKS ON A SURFACE. THERE ARE many ways to achieve the illusion of texture in your paintings. A few to consider include: splattering rubbing alcohol, paint or water on a wet or dry surface, agitating partially dry acrylics, adding gravel or sand to matte medium, adding salt (not recommended), mixing light-bodied paint with heavy-bodied paint, and scraping the surface of the paper (either wet or dry) with a tool.

As percussion in music adds richness to the song but is not the main melody, texture adds a similar interest to the visual effect. Texture is an auxiliary way to add interest—like icing on the cake. The physicality of a rough or smooth surface will affect your brushstrokes and the overall visual result, so know your intention.

Texture is a great supporting element of design. Because it is defined by either value or color, it is destined to live in the background as a secondary accoutrement. When the viewer is drawn in for a closer look, the texture is waiting to offer detail and enhance the overall image. In *Cover Story* (see page 107), texture becomes an important element once the basic structure is laid in with values, shapes and colors. Building up the layers of textures was enjoyable, and the results are satisfying.

Mark-Making Exploration

The possibilities are limitless when it comes to potential mark-making tools. Here are just a few examples:

A roller from the local hardware store creates predictable marks.

A nut and bolt dipped in fluid teal acrylic makes a unique stamp. A stencil was used to create the J.

This piece of metal, found in the garage, makes strong mechanical lines.

The foam plate inside the packaging of a steak, and a no-skid pad for the sink make patches of gridded dots.

A large spring rolled through your color pallette will leave random, linear marks.

Trowels and palette knives make large, strong marks with visible texture.

Make Your Mark

The way that you make a mark is as individual as the way you write your signature. The tools that you use become an extension of your arm.

You can use anything that you don't mind getting paint on to make marks. I raid the garage and pick up interesting things at yard sales and hardware stores. Nothing is off limits to me with regard to tools for making marks in a painting. Once I have a pile of tools I will play around with the objects, holding them in different ways, rolling, rocking, scraping, dragging them across the wet painted surface. I practice making marks using the tools as stamps, using brushes loaded with paint and using sticks to make lines.

As I practice, I make note of the variety of marks achieved with different pressures and different techniques. Once I have experimented with my tools, then I think about where those marks might look good. I consider which application will work best for my next landscape or still life, and which marks would be best for an abstract image or a referential one.

Tools from other disciplines can be useful; ceramics tools make unique marks. Notice how the scraping tool exposes layers of color under the opaque paint.

A large, serrated trowel creates wide swaths of linear designs through the opaque paint and reveals patterns of color underneath.

Even a simple stick from the garden can become a mark-making tool to scrape in calligraphic lines.

A large palette knife used to spread and scrape paint onto the surface provides unusual marks.

Flocked material is great for stamping patterns onto your surface. The flocking can also be used to lift paint off your surface.

At the end of a mark-making session of exploration you've likely created a surface that can be used for a future painting, full of texture and layers of color.

Techniques for Creating Texture

Using the materials listed in the box below, experiment with drips and doodles to create texture.

Step 1: Cover dry paper with a layer of fluid colors and white gesso mixed to provide a variety of transparencies and viscosities.

Materials for Texture

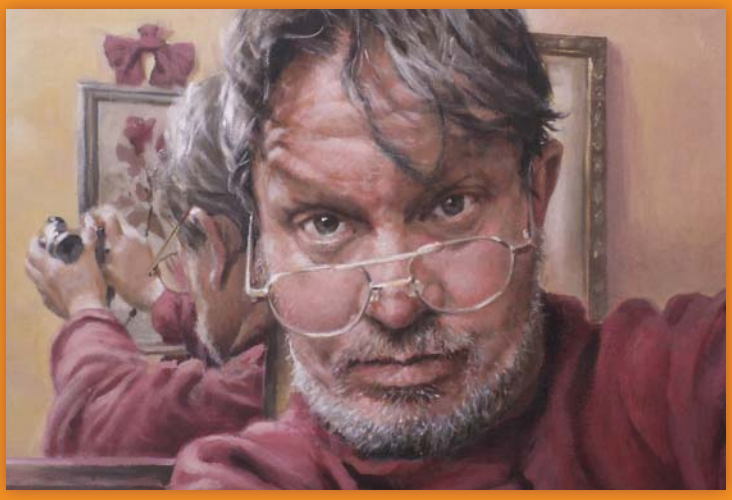
- ½-inch nylon brush (or brush of your choice)
- Colored pencil sticks
- Fluid acrylics: cobalt blue, quinacridone magenta, quinacridone nickel azo gold, teal
- Gesso (white)
- Pencil
- Rubbing alcohol
- Arches 140-lb. paper
- Watercolor crayons
- Watercolor sticks

Step 2: While the paint is wet, make marks with a watercolor crayon. The paint will be pushed aside by the crayon; notice how much crayon pigment may be left behind. If you enjoy line as an element of design, here is an opportunity to use line in wet paint.

Step 3: Try adding more pigment to the surface with a watercolor stick. The width of the mark will be broad and will give you an opportunity to infuse pure pigment. Using a brush, practice softening edges, mixing the pigment into the wet paint or eliminating unwanted marks.

Step 4: Place more fluid acrylic and gesso mixtures on the surface to obscure and integrate the marks that you have made. Try a colored pencil stick and observe the difference in the marks, and in the amount of pigment that transfers to the surface, compared to the water-soluble crayons and sticks. The watercolor crayons and sticks are much softer

acrylic artist



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- Methods, techniques, tips or sources of inspiration you've discovered that have made a powerful difference in your art, and why.
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How to Submit

You may suggest yourself or another artist. If suggesting yourself include 10-15 hi-res JPGs of your work along with links to your website, galleries showing your work, blog or Facebook page. If suggesting another artist, include a link to their art, as well as a brief description of why you think we should feature them. Email us at **aaedit@fwcommunity.com**.

From top to bottom: ***Me With Glasses*** (acrylic, 11½x18) by Harry Burman; ***Italian Monastery*** (acrylic, 15x22) by Richard M. Greene; ***Summer Breeze*** (acrylic and holographic additives, 33x45) by Charles Gibbons

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than the pencil sticks, and they tend to leave more pigment on the surface.

Step 5: Continue to add the gesso and acrylic mixture in different viscosities and opacities. Try splattering a bit of rubbing alcohol.

Step 6: Add more doodles with a pencil—this time to create a variety of lines. Then layer additional semi-opaque acrylics over parts, being careful to allow some of the lines and colors to peek through subsequent layers. The surface is maturing. It's becoming more interesting with subtle variations to entice the viewer to look more closely.

Step 7: Here, the area where the paint has repelled has rubbing alcohol beneath it. This layer of acrylic paint is more transparent.

Step 8: The final result could be used for an interesting background, specific areas in a painting like a garden, material in a person's clothing or as a great ground surface on which to paint.

Meet Jean Pederson

Jean Pederson is an accomplished artist who balances painting with teaching and writing. Although well known for her mastery of watercolors, mixed media has become an important vehicle for her creative expression. Her traditional practice includes referential imagery of people, still lifes, landscape and non-referential imagery. She is a contributing editor to *The Artist's Magazine*, and her work has appeared in several books and magazines. Included in Canada's *Who's Who*, Pederson is a signature member of The American Watercolor Society (AWS), California Watercolor Association (CWA), the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA), the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolor (CSPWC) and the Alberta Society of Artists (ASA). Most recently, Jean was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for contribution to the arts. This feature was excerpted from Pederson's book *Mixed Media Painting Workshop*, which is available online at www.northlightshop.com. Visit the artist's website at www.jeanpederson.com.

Wrapping It Up

Follow along with this portrait tutorial, where I incorporate the mark-making and texture-making techniques just discussed.

Materials

- 140-lb. Arches cold-pressed watercolor paper
- board (Gator board was used here)
- brushes (¼- and ½-inch flats, and 1- and 1½-inch rounds)
- bulldog clips
- fluid acrylics: teal, diarylide yellow, Hansa yellow, phthalo blue red, pyrrole red, quinacridone red
- gesso (black and white)
- paper towels
- pencil crayon (black)
- rubbing alcohol
- self-leveling gel

Step 1: I used Hansa yellow, phthalo blue and quinacridone red as the first layers of paint. Because we are using transparent acrylics, we can cover any areas with opaque paint to sharpen shapes and tweak the image as we go. Cover the surface with paint and don't be concerned about going over the lines of your drawing. Next, integrate opaque paints into the mix so the transparent and opaque wet paints can mingle. I added both white and black gesso to my paints and then applied to the paper to punch up the opacity.

Step 2: I continued to cover the surface with transparent and opaque mixtures of Hansa yellow, phthalo blue and quinacridone red tinted with black gesso. Don't worry about the drips; they enrich the surface and they can always be painted out.

Step 3: A bit of definition is a good idea, especially since we are painting referentially. Here, I loosely defined the features of the face.

Step 4: Sometimes a good glaze over a surface will help to unite the image. Using pyrrole red and diarylide yellow, I covered the surface and then quickly wiped off the excess paint with a paper towel, leaving behind a warm yellow-red stain.

Step 5: Notice how much warmer the image appears after glazing. I boosted the light shapes with opaque tinted gesso.

Step 6: With your brush filled with paint, brush lightly over a piece of flocked paper and then stamp it onto the surface of the painting. I hit the scarf wrapped around her head with the pattern from the paper. Be careful with how you use stamping and how much pattern is left. Overdoing some techniques can appear contrived.

Step 7: After I applied pattern to the scarf I wanted to add more texture, so I applied another layer of transparent paint in the background and then splattered it with rubbing alcohol. Yikes! Good learning experience: too much of a good thing can give you a headache. Don't give up when things aren't looking visually pleasing; this is just the awkward teenage stage that you are painting through. Keep going and remember that every layer will only make the final painting more interesting.

Step 8: I used a pencil crayon and incorporated calligraphic marks on the surface, then added a layer of self-leveling gel. To simplify and tone down busy areas: Mix two different batches of paint to subdue the textures. Mix one to be a dark transparent and the other an opaque, light paint. Use the dark paint to glaze over three-quarters of the

Jean Pederson shares ideas on creativity at **www.artistsnetwork.com/articles/inspiration-creativity/music-painting-harmonious-relationship**.

background. This reduces the value contrast of the texture while allowing some shapes to show through. The opaque paint can be watered down a bit and applied to the top, left quadrant of the background to obscure more of the textures and offer some variety. I applied additional calligraphic marks on top of the new opaque area.

Step 9: Every step leads us to another choice and another adjustment. I toned down the value contrast

Cover Story (left; mixed media on paper, 16x20) exhibits a variety of mark-making and texture-making techniques.

of the top, left corner so it does not draw so much of the viewer's attention. More adjustments were needed within the face of the girl to both define and soften the features. I decided to glaze over parts of the right side of the face and left shoulder with some phthalo blue.

Step 10: I felt like the portrait still wasn't quite finished; there was not enough push and pull between lights and darks, warms and cools. I corrected by glazing with Hansa yellow, phthalo blue and teal.

Step 11: Continue glazing to darken the right side of the face and the clothing. Trust your decision-making ability and push forward. Often at this stage I will stare at the painting to assess what looks out of place and what feels right. I felt the scarf was too uniform around the girl's head. I went in and shifted the edges in or out to lose the dominant horseshoe shape. A few more darks were added in areas of shadows to help define shapes in the material folds in the finished version of *Cover Story* above. /aa

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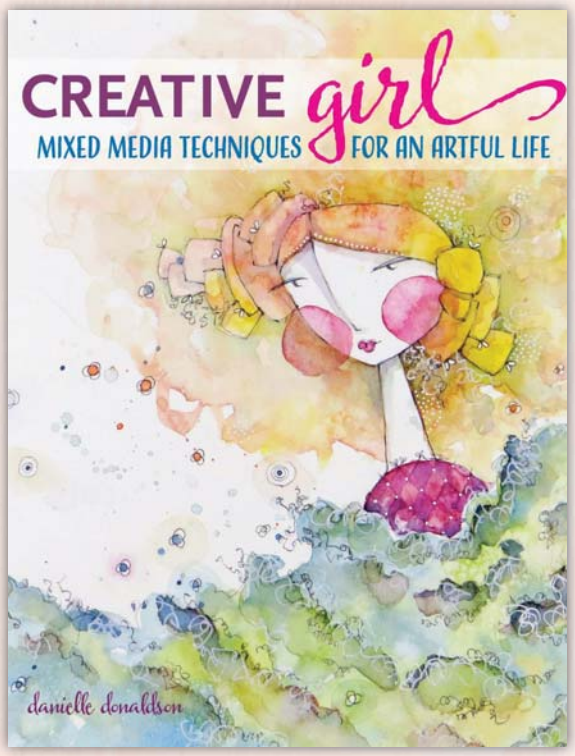

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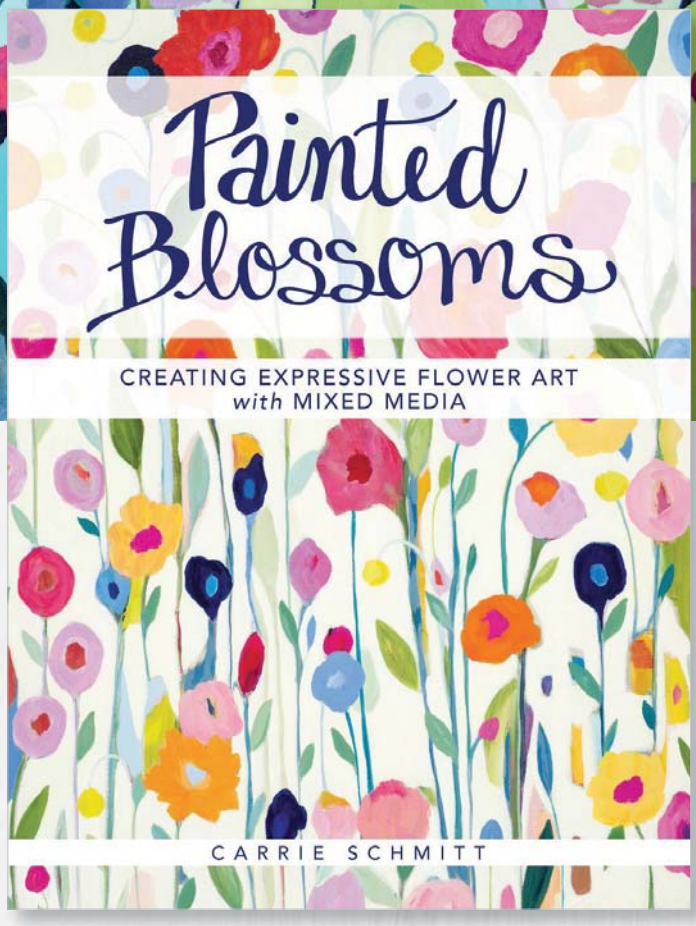

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Looking Ahead / **Danielle Richard**

Canot Docile (Docile Canoe) (acrylic on canvas, 56x36)

"We had a lake cottage where we spent our summers," says Danielle Richard. "The magnificent lighting effects on the water at day's end drew me. The dark background provided by the trees caused an aura to appear around my model. My reference photos were blurry because of the constant motion between our two canoes, but the fuzziness of the images allowed me to fill in the missing details with my imagination," Richard explains.

The artist's body of work follows the Realist movement, and conveys a sense of accurate detail as she captures moments of ordinary life. She expertly depicts "the eternal feminine" of her subjects, while giving the viewer a clear sense of mood and motion. Her ability to reproduce light, as well as the visible motions caused by the unseen wind, enchants her collectors.

Watch for a full-length feature on Danielle Richard and her techniques in an upcoming issue of *Acrylic Artist*. /aa

Visit the artist's website at **www.daniellerichard.com/en**.

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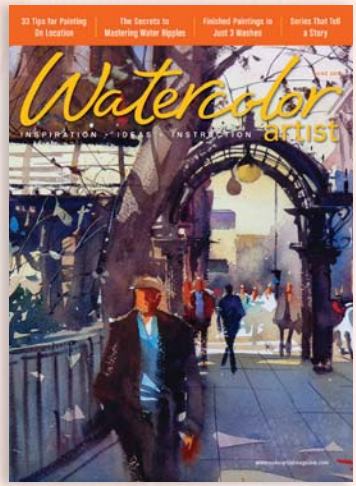

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