A Studio Art Experience:  
Painting Landscapes in Watercolor  
Teacher In-service  
March 29, 2008  
Memorial Art Gallery  

**Dick Kane, Instructor**

Watercolor – the FUN medium!

- **Great color!**
- Fun to **blend** colors! (wet-into-wet)
- Fun to create **glazes!**
- **Spontaneous** effects!

**BUT…**
A challenge to use because it’s a “direct” medium that “stains” the paper.

**The solution…**
Learn the Basics! Practice! Practice! Practice!

Respect the medium but don’t fear it!

**Agenda**

1. Review of:
   - Characteristics of Watercolor
   - Watercolor Materials
   - The Watercolor Process
   - Important Basics

2. A Painting Demonstration

3. Painting by Participants

4. Discussion/Critique of the day’s work

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A Class Monochromatic Painting Exercise 

It is interesting I think for each of us to try a different technique now and then. There can be much to be learned that way. 

I really enjoy painting with limited colors occasionally, however I don’t consider the challenge, discipline or technical aspects of it to be my main reason for doing it – not my main reason. My primary reason is to express myself by creating an unusual mood and/or dramatic treatment of the specific subject matter. 

Monochromatic, or any number of limited colors give us these advantages to be aware of: 

1. Evoking a particular mood. 
2. Unifying the painting – “paint the whole” as I implore my students. 
3. Recognizing and using values to full advantage. 
4. Using limited color to fully express yourself from within. 

THINK SIMPLIFICATION! THINK MOOD!
Painting Landscapes in Watercolor – Tips from Dick Kane

★ Have proper materials.
★ Use heavy enough quality watercolor paper to reduce problems with puddling of water, and buckling of the paper. Watercolor painting has enough challenges without having the paper be one of them.
★ “Student quality” paper may be fine, but as students advance in their experience they are better served to be working on good grade paper. 140 lb. is “OK,” but 260 lb. is much better for control, etc. I even recommend 300 lb. for more advanced students, and it helps to know that the better papers could be used on both sides if need be. (The “start” side is the right reading watermark side). My favorite paper is D’Arches brand.
★ Watercolor palettes should have paint wells and a good mixing area. Standard plastic palettes average about 11” x 16” in size.
★ Brushes should have “spring” in them when wet. I recommend transparent, tube watercolor paints. The Art Store can help you decide between student or professional quality, depending on level of experience and ability.
★ The painter should be motivated by the subject that they paint. “I want to paint this.” “This really hits me!”
★ Preparation is key to a good painting. I highly recommend first doing thumbnail sketches to study out the painting.
★ “Keep it light ‘til its right.” Sketching in on the watercolor paper should be light to allow for easy eraser corrections and to avoid dark pencil lines showing excessively in the finished painting.
★ Use kneaded erasers for watercolor. They avoid messy crumbles and are gentle to the paper surface.
★ Keep painting board propped up on an angle. It helps in judgment of perspective, etc.
★ Try to have student painting reference material be “original.” They are better using photos they or their family have taken (on vacation trips, etc.) rather than magazine or calendar type reference.
★ Painting from memory or imagination now and then also results in some very “loose” and creative landscapes.
★ Students love and need demos by the teacher. These can be “spot” demos of a specific technique or detail, or could be a watercolor done from start to finish. Students learn from doing but also from watching!
★ One of the most helpful basics of a landscape painting is to recognize the importance of seeing, and creating a foreground, middleground, and background. Three dimensions!
★ Drawing is the first requirement of landscape (and most) forms of painting. Drawing skills must be developed. Keeping a working sketchbook is important.
★ Observation skills must be developed. “Look at the great light on that tree,” “look at those cloud formations.”
★ Most effective paintings have a center of interest, or focal point. All the other elements in it contribute to the center of interest.
★ Sketching and painting outdoors is very helpful to students. There is nothing like learning in the “great school of nature.”
★ Students should learn to “paint the essentials and eliminate the superfluous.”

MEMORIAL ART GALLERY
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

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**MEMORIAL ART GALLERY**

**Creative Workshop**

**LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN WATERCOLOR**

*with Dick Kane*

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**KEYS**

*After your subject has been chosen, regardless of what it is, the foundation of your landscape painting relies heavily on these basic keys:*

A. Design/Composition  
B. Value Arrangement  
C. Center of Interest  
D. Direction of Light

I have found the best way to develop these keys is to begin with a series of *thumbnail sketches!*  

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| • Get you into the subject  
• Allow you to explore several design options  
• Save you correction time on your paper |

*Good painting!*
MAKE YOUR PAINTING A STRONG SIMPLE STATEMENT!

START (TOO CRAMPED)

WIDER VALUE BREAKOUT

WIDER YET!

OPENS UP BETTER!

FOCAL POINT

CLOSE VALUES!

IMPORTANT THAT A

Panorama HAVE 3 DIMENSIONS!

FOREGROUND-MIDDLEGROUND BACKGROUND

RICH AREA!
CREATIVE WORKSHOP DEMO
"KEY WEST CORNER"

LANDSCAPES
IN WATERCOLOR
Dina Kane

WATERCOLORS OF TRIPS & LOCATIONS CREATE SPECIAL MEMORIES!

WHEN TRAVELING—KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR SUBJECTS THAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO PAINT.

STEP #1 FOR MANY OF YOUR PAINTINGS!

LIKE THE DEPTH IN THE LONG VIEW BUT IT TRIED AN UNREAL VALUE ARRANGEMENT

YOUR THUMBNAI LS HELP TURN YOUR PICTURE INTO A PAINTING!
SEASCAPES IN WATERCOLOR

CREATIVE WORKSHOP WITH Dick Kane

"Nor'easter at Bass Rocks"

KEYS:
- FORCE!
- CONTRASTS!
- MASSES!