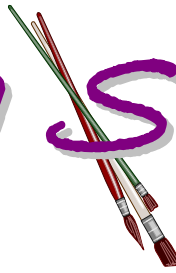




Brush Strokes



By Mary Baumgartner

February, Vol. 4, No. 2

PAINTING SNOW SCENES

Now that winter is full blown and snows abound all through the country, get your paint brushes started and learn to paint white on white.

The first step is to pencil in your tree shape. Looking at trees, evergreens especially, they aren't Christmas tree shape. They are ragged in appearance and their limbs droop as they are filled with snow.

The sky, the snow covered hills, the barren trees and the rooftops are all cool and lend to a bluish cast in color. The only things showing on the evergreen are the tree's needles hanging out from the branches. There also has to be some volume built into the tree by having limbs that are attached in the front of the tree trunk.

The only way in watercolour to show white on white is to paint a color behind the white. To do this on a snow covered limb necessitates using a masking fluid and preparing the whitest whites in advance. I have always recommended Winsor Newton masking fluid because it has a yellowish tint and can easily be seen when painting. However, another brand has turned up on the market that is easier to remove and easier to see. It is called Pebeo drawing gum (liquid frisket), and can be found at most hobby and craft stores along with art supply stores in the area.

Paint or draw the masking fluid on the limbs of the tree, let it dry, and then paint a light wash over the rest of the area. If you wish to make a real snow scene out of this exercise, draw the entire composition on the paper thinking carefully of all the elements that will contribute to a good painting. Before taking off the masking fluid, paint in the evergreen needles and limbs along with parts of the trunk so you have a good shape to your tree before moving to the next step. The same process is done on the trees and bushes that are also in the painting. Snow collects in the "v" shaped areas of limbs joining trunks and of course in leafless bushes nearby.

Like a miracle, when the masking fluid is removed, you have a beautiful snow scene. Just a 10% to 20% variation in color between snow covered limbs and background of snow on the trees is there everywhere you look. All the painting in the composition should be done before the masking fluid is removed, though, and that includes the sky, the hills and valleys where the snow collects. The painting above is by **Penny Reasor**.

