



Brush Strokes



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BRUSH SELECTION FOR THE WATERCOLORIST

When you buy your supplies for the first time, or even if you have to replace your supplies, why in the world do you need so many brushes?

The answer to that is simple. You paint a variety of paintings, a variety of sizes, and you need a variety of brushes to apply the various strokes.

Just as you wouldn't paint in a sky or a wash with a #10 round, you wouldn't paint tree leaves with a 1" flat. Manufacturers prepare our tools for many different tasks.

Several brush makers are around now that compete with brushes made by Winsor Newton. The best way to test brushes (after you determine they are not made with squirrel hair) is to get a cup of water and dip the brush in and if it is a round, see how it holds its point. Art stores standing behind their products will allow this test.

The bare minimum of sizes should include a #10 round, #6 or #8 round, and three or four sizes of flats. As you can see from this display, there are several sizes, and in my book I recommend a range of sizes as well.

Another necessity is a set of three scrubbers. They are packaged that way and allow you to remove your watercolor when you feel you have made a mistake. Having the three sizes allows you the



freedom to work in different places in your painting where there are different size areas of correction.

The painting at left could not have been completed without many sizes of brushes. The wash on the left was done with a one inch flat brush. The detailed bow was done with flat and round brushes, and the tiny details in the sleigh ornament were done with #2 and #4 rounds. This will be my Christmas card



in 2011, and it is titled "Gifts of Christmas Past." It is a little unusual but certainly effective and proves my point about the variety of brushes needed to paint a painting. The size of the painting—22" x 30".