



Brush Strokes



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SO, YOU THINK THIS IS EASY!

Many paintings captured in transparent watercolor look like a very easy job to interpret the setup or the scene. Think of it in a new and more time-consuming way: what is your subject, reason for painting it; color involved; textures necessary to complete the painting; and arrangement or composition.

The painting shown started out to be a lesson for me in the above. The first thing I wanted to learn to do was paint “white on white.” The curtains, wall and window offered this challenge big time. Then there were the different subjects: wood, silver, pewter, and cloth, woven wood on the chair back, ceramic, many types of fruit, a flower and a metal plant holder.



This composition started, then shifted, then started again, and had I not made my four small thumbnails, it might never have been completed. The objects were all in my house, and I set them up in various ways in order to paint them. The surprise was the picture of me painted right into the silver pitcher and I didn't even realize it until I finished up the painting. I'm left handed, and of course this is a mirror image made by the silver so it shows me as right handed. Did you ever wonder about many of the “old masters’ depicting left handed people so many times? That's because they often painted from a mirror which put the people in perspective, smaller than they were and easier to draw.

The purpose of this newsletter is to lead you through what comes first and show you that it isn't a one day task if you are a realistic painter. In this case, as I followed my chosen thumbnail, I also realized I had to make a value study as well. Even the color had to be in the right place to draw the viewer through the painting. Textures in the chair back, and patterns in the material had to be considered and set in perspective with the other objects. The fruit looks ready to eat, but placing the fruits in the bowl was another tough decision-making objective. Painting silver is a matter of values and layering and use of the white paper. Also the curtains and window trim became a use of values and the white paper.

Next time you go to an art exhibit, stand and think about the steps the artist had to go through to achieve the finished work. When you start your next painting, ask yourself why you want to paint it, and will you have enough patience to see you through to the end, including having it matted and framed? Then will you have enough courage to display it either in your house or in an upcoming show? After all, as artists we always feel it isn't good enough. We must get over that fear and set it aside a few hours or days and then take a second look. It's always a surprise to come to the conclusion that “I really did that! And I'm proud of it, and I feel as if I have met my goals in painting it.”