



Brush Strokes



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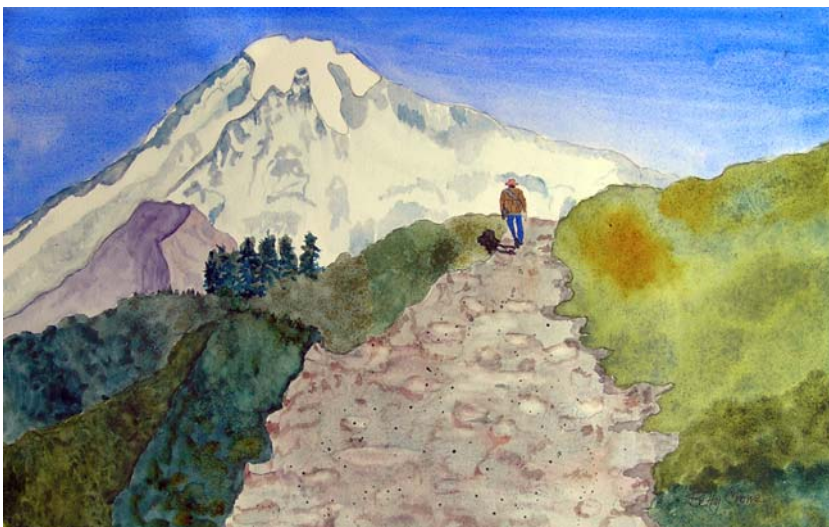
GOOD DESIGN--THE BEGINNING OF THE PAINTING

Let's think about this! You mean I have to be a graphic designer before I can paint watercolor? No, but it helps to have a plan with a good, solid design.

Note these two paintings by Betty Crowe. The one on the right titled "Rainbow Umbrellas" was thought out totally in the beginning. There are color complements throughout, space, room to breathe, and shapes that are glorious. This took a lot of planning to make this painting come together. Betty's career includes her time as a music teacher, and just as she taught rhythm and clarity, it repeats itself in the dancing umbrellas.

Now look at the painting at the bottom titled "Hiking in Mt. Ranier." This too is excellent and there was a lot of thinking and planning going into this painting. That's Betty's son and no doubt he sent her some photographs of his trip, but it took an artist to interpret these photos into a strong painting using the whites of the mountain to solidify the balance of the shapes. The soft furry evergreen trees are placed in exactly the right area to pull the mountains together and many of us would be totally baffled on how to handle the area on the right which is full of greens.

This is where the green chart plays such an important part. If you haven't studied the green charts in my book, *Wonderful World of Watercolor* you need to go there and check it out. My last two paintings this year were completed just to practice using every single green listed. That same painting titled "Tomato Soup" inspired me to also use every red created in the red chart.



Magic can happen with these goals in mind and you can begin to design your paintings so that the results will lead your eye into the painting, stimulating your mind to use a variety of colors, complements and strong values. Success is the name of this story.

Center your thoughts on what you want to paint—have good examples of the objects if you aren't painting on location, and put together a winning piece of art with strong and clean, clear colors leading to the focal point.