



Brush Strokes



By Mary Baumgartner

August 2015 Vol. 8 No. 8

PAINTINGS BASED ON COMPOSITION

How does a painting begin? Would you believe there is a pattern to all successful paintings? First you must have an idea which you then develop into a painting.

I just finished a painting based on a pomegranate that one of my students brought me. There it was lying on the table for a week or two. She asked me if I had eaten any of it, and I called and said, "What part? The red or white?" I know this was a stupid question but I had never seen inside a pomegranate. I knew they were grown in the Middle East and some in California but I had never seen how they grow.

This led to research online and then to borrowing a lovely glass pitcher from the student and just letting the painting take place from the composition as I made it up.

After I had the pitcher drawn and decided it was to be etched glass, I decided to have a glass, the pomegranate with the slice out, a bottle that may have been wine, and of course the cluster of pomegranates growing from their tree.

Now the question remained, how do I make this into a painting that has contrast, an odd number of shapes, a center of interest, and color balance which means various darks and lights? And what will my background be?

The next step was to get it all down on paper, and preferably tracing paper so that I could transfer it to the real thing meaning watercolor paper with the aid of Sally's transfer paper which is like carbon paper. First I did the pencil drawing, then filled in the various colors with colored pencil, but realized I had to have a base for it all. So I chose a wooden table which balanced the blue/green cloth under the fruit and pitcher, and with the wine bottle in the background I was almost finished with the composition. I saw from pictures online how the fruit grew and was surprised that the fluffy spiky top was really the bud that was growing by a stem on the other end attached to the tree.

So now the pleasurable work began!

First, have I met the requirements I set for myself in the July issue of *Brush Strokes*?

Identified Center of Interest or focal point—White glass against darkest dark or table in this case.

Foreground is subject or pomegranate with slice

Time of day in this case was about noon with the light behind the table

Perspective is in check with the bottoms of the objects receding into the background

There are an odd number of shapes with 1 being pitcher, 2 pomegranate 3 glass 4 bottle 5 fruit

This whole painting evokes a sweet memory of my friend's pitcher with its etching, the fruit she gave me (pomegranate), the wine bottle I named, and the hanging pomegranates.

One last thing, the painting is not the type of art that might be snatched up at a show, but it will certainly be recognized as one that's original and dramatic. Also I think an audience might be able to feel the emotion I felt while selecting and painting the objects above.

