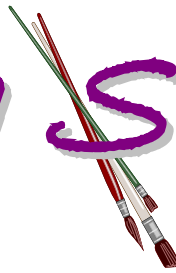




Brush Strokes



By Mary Baumgartner

June 2016 Vol. 9 No. 6

PLANNING A PAINTING

Most artists don't think about final results when getting excited about what they will paint. The final results however are what allow the painting to be shown to the public or receive an award.

This painting by Mary Baumgartner is called "Majestic Hunter," and it's apparent the planning that went into it. First of all the shapes and how they fit together. And I'm not just talking about the wings of this big bird.

The water and color that surround the bird are all part of the success of this piece of art. The boldness and shapes in the water are as important as the color and shape of the bird fishing in the water.

No doubt this bird caught whatever he was fishing for as it appears in the color of the water there's a fish down there somewhere. The wake in the water also gives the appearance of the movement and the depth of what the bird is standing in.

I'm starting a new painting now and have worked on the planning for several hours already. I chose the subject first because hydrangeas are in bloom now, sketched it out roughly in the sketchpad, and adjusted it several times. After visiting many art shows over my lifetime, the usual powerful paintings are the ones that stand out on the wall, and to be powerful they must have contrast. Even though I am a realistic painter my watercolors can still be powerful and "attention-getting."



Color alone isn't the answer. The answer lies in the contrast between the darks and lights and where they appear on the paper. Many colors can be mixed that will portray darks. In the palette assigned to my classes, no black paint is allowed nor is white paint. However, in my book *Wonderful World of Watercolor* there's a dark chart which gives a reference point on the how to mix black. We have also found that using a staining color which is usually chosen indicating transparency and adding another color or two which contain more pigment and aren't as transparent, we can make darks just about any color we wish them to be.

Planning is the main event in this painting in progress. I've laid out the composition, added colored pencil where needed to guide me, and used the side of a pencil to indicate background. In the July issue I will show you the finished painting and more about how I arrived there and stuck with the plan all the way through.

Be aware of the above comments when planning your next painting. Also be aware of color complements which are just as important.