



Tips & Demos

**Watercolor and Watermedia
painting tips & demonstrations
by Ellen A. Fountain, N.W.S.**

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Abstracting from Nature

Simplification is one road to abstraction. The “real” world we live in is complex and three-dimensional, and as painters, we have to do *some* abstraction just to reduce our subject matter to the two-dimensional form it takes on paper or canvas. In my *Southwest Series*, I like to take things a little further, simplifying everything into more basic forms, and then recreating a complexity of my own with pattern, shape and the illusion of texture.



This photo of a puddle alongside the road after a winter rainstorm, with its reflections of dry grass and weeds inspired my interpretation (shown below). I exaggerated the cloud shapes and repeated them in the puddle shape. I stylized the plant forms, and overall kept the grayed, subdued colors in my painting, “*After the Rain*”.



Can you spot the dark lizard on the lichen-covered rock in the photo above? He didn’t stay still very long, as he was after another lizard. Their chase inspired my painting, called “*Tag, You’re It*”. I used stylized plant forms in the background and foreground, and played off this busy pattern with the bands of color in the rocks and the more curvilinear lizard forms.



A horrible photo (except for the cat’s silhouette) generated the idea for my painting below, called “*Window View*”. The cat looks out onto a color filled desert scene, while more colorful plant tendrils and wallpaper patterns fill the interior space.

