

WAYS TO RENEW or RE-INVENT YOUR WATERCOLOR WORK

Every artist at some point hits a plateau or just gets bored with their work. How do you kick-start your studio time so that you are excited about what you're doing and can't wait to get started on the next painting? Try working through these exercises. One of them may be the catalyst that can take your work to a new, more satisfying and creative level.

IDEA GENERATION

- pick a "jarring" or "wrong" color scheme
- throw out or deliberately "break the rules"
- paint a one-inch square part of a subject BIG (extreme enlargement)
- key your palette (extremely light or extremely dark)
- use a dramatic light source (side/back/spotlight)
- use reverse aerial perspective (light unsaturated foreground, dark saturated background)
- make a small subject fill your picture area and extend past the edges (extreme cropping)
- use an extreme point of view (worm's eye, bird's eye, distorted perspective)
- use common mundane subject matter but paint it *uncommonly*
- use analogies/metaphors to generate ideas
- use a limited number of colors and mix them to create other hues
- create a painting by arbitrary association (example: things that begin with the letter "p", things that are red, etc)

GETTING OUT OF YOUR PAINTING RUT

- paint larger than you normally do
- use a bigger brush or just one brush for the whole painting
- work standing up and away from your paper (arm's length)
- hold your brush like a conductor's baton (at the very end of the handle)
- work wetter or drier than you normally do
- work for a shorter or longer period of time than you normally do
- don't draw first, or do draw first - *break your routine approach*
- correct "mistakes" - scrub out, rinse off, lift out, use collage, etc. instead of "starting over". You may not keep the painting, but you'll learn something about the process
- do a real miniature painting - 4x6 or smaller
- work non-objectively if you normally are a representational painter or vice versa
- try a new technique, paper, medium
- take a workshop from someone whose painting style is completely different than yours
- concentrate on the process not the end result