



Brush Strokes



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MORE WATERCOLOR PORTRAITS

Combine Nature with Your Portraits

This artist has taken on a huge job. To integrate the beauty of nature with the beauty of her daughter was a formidable challenge. Also the success of the painting is worth noting. I jokingly called the painting “Outstanding in Her Field” but I’m sure the artist, Doris Dunn, will wish to make it more personal.

Achieving the perspective of the scenery was the first challenge. You will note that there are many “warms and cools” in the painting and this required a lot of study of the temperature of the paint. This is covered in detail in my book, *Wonderful World of Watercolor*. All colors in the spectrum have a temperature, and the artist must know if it is neutral, warm or cool. Also using transparent watercolor achieves the results above. So many colors were applied, color on top of color, and the results are apparent.



Study your subject before attempting a complex painting like the one above. Study some of the old masters as well to see how they achieved the same results in oil. Remember, however, that they could paint color over the top of color to cover up the color below whereas watercolorists using transparent watercolor must think about what their colors are covering due to the transparency. Doris Dunn is first of all a master at portraits, but now I would consider her a master as well in carrying out her scenery.

Another factor to look at in the painting above is the basic composition. The path could easily have led the eye out of the painting in the right hand bottom corner. The artist very cleverly laid in some more shrubbery and plant growth to stop the eye. Both the right lower corner and the left lower corner are different as well since the right is dark and leads into light colored plant growth and the left is light and leads into dark plant growth. There are also shadows leading across the path to nail down the horizontal flow of the painting. Notice as well how the fence posts get lighter in value and they go back in space.

Planning a painting such as the one above requires skill and much thought. Setting tree limbs into the foreground as Doris did on the upper left also requires a great deal of courage to make it work. We all need to congratulate Doris Dunn on a job well done. This is definitely a winner for a watercolor show.