



Brush Strokes



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ADVANCE AND RECEDE – WARM AND COOL

This headline sounds like an army gaining and losing ground in winter and in summer. Could these words also be used about color?

They certainly can but only if you know what colors make “advancing” colors and their temperatures, and which colors recede and what temperatures they are as well. The painting below shows a good example of both these words. The colors used to bring your eye into the center of interest are mostly warm colors and show as azaleas painted in hot colors. You can even see warm colors in the evergreens (yellows) in the lower right foreground.

Conversely, the receding colors are dull greens, dark greens, and lavenders and their placement in the painting. Going one step further, even the red maple tree near the center of the painting has both warm reds and cool reds to keep it more neutral.

Now that you have seen where the colors are and know which ones are the warm ones and which ones are the cool ones, let me direct your eye through the painting on the path that I have designed for the viewer.

Before we go there, let me point out that there’s a whole collection of photos from Victoria’s Bchart Gardens going the rounds on the Internet. I’d like to add, however, that those photographs are not copyrighted because this is a public place and I too was standing at the same photo-op place in British Columbia on a day in spring when all these plants were in bloom taking this picture and other breathtaking vistas there. If you’ve been there, no doubt you’ve also heard the story of how this particular garden came to be. It was once a quarry, and after the owner’s death, the widow decided to have a landscape architect build her a garden, making the focal point the quarry filled with water and reflecting all the beauty planted around it. In the painting I started with the azalea bushes on either side of the water, then added the lily pads and painted the water and reflections around them. The waterfall in the background I left white to lead your eye back into the painting with both it and the red bridge being the focal point.



The secondary focal point is the Japanese lantern, and to make it even more complex, I added the yellow azaleas just above the bridge and the Japanese maple tree is also a large part of that focal point. I don’t think the landscape architect used the same flowering trees and shrubs for his art, but this was the way it was interpreted by me—a transparent watercolor artist. Know the temperatures of your palette and which of the colors come forward and which ones recede.