



# A DAY IN THE ARTS

## Making art accessible to all

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### ISN'T WATERCOLORS HARD?

By Joanne Osband

It seems that each time I show my watercolor paintings at shows or events, someone will say to me, "Watercolors are hard."

I smile and ask, "Why do you say that?"

#### THE MYTH

There is a myth circulating that painting with watercolors is difficult. Why? Is it because watercolors can become uncontrollable and people tend to want to be in control? Is it the effects of the medium? Or, what, I do not know? This myth continues to fascinate me and who knows, maybe, someday, I will have an answer.

#### THE TRUTH

Watercolor painting is not unlike other disciplines. Whenever a person undertakes a new experience there seems to be a "training period" where learning and skills are acquired. At this stage in the game, most people seek out an experienced person who they admire and who possesses that which they would like to emulate. This is true with any endeavor, so why

not watercolor painting?

What makes watercolors different?

What makes them so different is that you never know what will happen. Are you a person who likes surprises? Watercolors will surprise you each and every time you paint. A colleague of mine has a favorite saying which is "Let's see what will show up when I paint today." It is absolutely fascinating what water and pigment will do. To repeat an effect is challenging or not possible. Each time it is unique.



There are established techniques for watercolors as with any other art medium. These skills are helpful yet not necessary to express yourself in watercolors. Many artists, and I believe everyone is an artist at heart, freely paint and allow what appears to tell them where to go or what to do next. Sometimes "what is" can be pleasing by itself. There are **NO RULES!** It is my belief that artistic expression lies in all of us and requires only a sense of trust and the freedom to allow the flowing for magic to happen.

A favorite way I freely express myself

### WORD OF THE DAY

#### SQUINCH

A small arch, corbeling, or the like, built across the interior angle between two walls, as in a square tower for supporting the side of a superimposed octagonal spire.



"Practise what you know, and it will help to make clear what now you do not know."  
- **Rembrandt**

### ART AEROBICS

Practice you drawing skills

Take your sketch pad to a pet store. Draw 3 animals from life. No time limit. 📧

with watercolors is to paint Mandalas. Basically, painting within a circle, a mandala, creates a meditative state whereby a person freely paints anything they wish. In my experience sharing mandala painting with students, we have witnessed an array of all beautiful, unique mandala creations.

The one thing that sets watercolors apart from other painting media is that it is a spontaneous method. First impressions are vital. You cannot go back and change it, or rarely. This might be a little intimidating to people, yet it can be very refreshing, too. I have found that my favorite paintings have had this light, first impression touch which magically flows, no effort. It is just there.

Not every piece is a masterpiece. Of course, there is always more paper. I must admit that I have turned less successful paintings into new paintings with collage. Watercolor paintings are full of happy accidents. You will never know what to expect and this is the nature of watercolors and most likely fuels the myth.

#### ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

The fun of creating is what it we are all about, right? It is our connection with our soul. I feel as if I learn everyday when I sit down to create a watercolor painting. Watercolors change, I change, the subjects change. People tend to avoid change because it requires letting go of external layers of beliefs. Maybe the myth is true that watercolors are difficult, what do you think? 🐦

*Joanne Osband is an accomplished artist and registered art therapist who is a kind and masterful guide for assisting others to discover the gifts that live within us.*

*<http://www.ColoringOutOfTheLine.com>*

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## ART NEWS

### ANCESTRY & INNOVATION

The **Delaware Art Museum** presents **Ancestry & Innovation: African American Folk Art from the American Folk Art Museum**, featuring a dazzling array of quilts, paintings, and sculptures, on view May 9, 2009 – July 12, 2009. This wide-ranging exhibition explores the artistic expressions of self-taught African

American artists from the rural South and the urban North.

Ancestry and Innovation: African American Art from the American Folk Art Museum was organized by the American Folk Art Museum, New York, and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

Comprising 39 works of art in various media, Ancestry and Innovation spans three generations of creators. The elder artists, working in the early and mid-20th century, include Clementine Hunter, who—in her lifetime of over a hundred years—transformed the hardships of her



Playing Cards, c. 1970, Clementine Hunter (1886/1887–1988), Melrose Plantation, Natchitoches, Louisiana. Oil on canvas board, 18 x 24 inches, Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York, gift of the Mildred, Hart Bailey/Clementine Hunter Art Trust, Photo by Gavin Ashworth

Louisiana community into small, lively paintings. Also in this group is Sam Doyle, a Gullah artist of St. Helena, South Carolina, whose figures, many made with house paint, were often displayed in his yard. Artists now in their maturity include father and son Thornton Dial, Sr. and Thornton Dial, Jr. Their highly expressionistic works frequently refer to social conditions and relationships. Among the youngest generation's artists is Kevin Sampson, whose urban environment in Newark, New Jersey, informs his sculptures, which often honor members of his own community who have died. "I rescue other people's memories left in the objects they leave behind," he says of these almost totemic works.

## POMPEII AND THE ROMAN VILLA

**Pompeii and the Roman Villa** at the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art** focuses on the breadth and richness of cultural and artistic life in this region. The exhibition, organized by the National Gallery, Washington, D.C., includes works of art from the imperial villa at Oplontis and from aristocratic villas such as the Villa San Marco at Stabiae and the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum, as well as works from the opulent houses of the urban elite in Pompeii, whose very name conjures up ancient Rome and other towns along the bay of Naples. The objects proposed for this exhibition are a carefully selected group of approximately one hundred-twenty works of sculpture, painting, mosaic, and luxury arts, some of them long-familiar works, others generally unknown to the public. Recent discoveries from around the Bay of Naples that have never before been exhibited in the United States will complement more familiar finds from earlier



Garden Scene, 1st century BC–1st century AD, Pompeii, House of the Golden Bracelet, fresco, 78 3/4 x 140 5/8 in. (200 x 375 cm), Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei, Ufficio Scavi, Pompei, photography © Luciano Pedicini.

excavations. In particular, the exhibition focuses on the influence of Classical Greek culture around the Bay of Naples, where wealthy Romans displayed impressive art collections in sumptuous homes. <http://www.lacma.org>

## FASHION EXCAVATED

For the first time in the **Haggin** museum's history, the hidden treasures of its historical costume collection will be revealed. Rich with clothing and accessories, the special exhibition **Fashion Excavated** represents the Victorian, Edwardian and modern woman at the height of fashion.

Special pieces from notable and

famous designers, such as Paul Poiret and Charles Frederick Worth will be spotlighted in the exhibition, alongside custom designs created for the most fashionable women of their time. Rich textiles, embellishments and finery showcase the evocative and decadent life and style of the women who wore them, giving an insight to the importance of fashion and its role in the lives of socialites.

Starting with late Victorian pieces, the exhibition will include fashion from 1910-1920, and provide a window into the ever-changing trends of the 1920s, the very fashionable 1930s and into the stylish 1940s. ➤

<http://www.hagginmuseum.org>