

Margie Samuels Studio Newsletter

www.margiesamuelswatercolor.com

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This newsletter is informal, in almost a blog format. I want it to be a vehicle for the expression of thoughts relating to the fine arts. I encourage your responses so that we have a written conversation through our arts community.

Why Make Room for Painting in Your Life?

I hear it all the time.....I'll paint when I retire, or when my children go to college. I'll paint when my life is simpler. And for many, they never get around to painting. Ironically, it's choosing to set aside the time to paint that will make your life less pressured.

Henry Ward Beecher once said, "Every artist dips his brush in his own soul and paints his own nature into his pictures." The studio is the place to listen to what your own inner voice is saying. It is during the act of painting that you can develop your artistic voice, listening to what your soul is saying to you. How do you want to approach a certain landscape? What colors feel right to you for the mountains in the background? Each small decision that you make is part of a larger statement about who you are and how you view the world around you.

Learning to paint is about challenging your own self-awareness. Too often painters depict what they think something, such as a tree, should look like without really looking at that tree. Learning to paint is about learning to see.

Take a moment.....put down the paintbrush.....really, really look at the tree. Can you see the rich texture of the wooded trunk, where the purples and deep blue shadows play against the warm browns? Can you detect the subtle color changes of the leaves, darkening softly as they overlay against each other? And can you find the small niches within the leaves, places where the branches poke out and the sunlight dances among them? This is the same tree next to your driveway that you pass each day; yet, when you really look at it, it beckons you with a world of artistic possibilities.

Learning to paint is about expanding.....your skills, your thoughts, your awareness and your vision. Your abilities will grow with each technique you master. Will the bold color choices that Stephen Quiller employs for his landscape watercolors work for the landscape that you are painting (www.quillergallery.com)? What about the movement that Don Andrews creates in his paintings (www.donandrews.net)? Would you choose to use a similar composition now so that the viewer is moved easily through your painting? Cezanne used with broad brush strokes when he painted his apples; is that approach one that works for you now as you paint a fruit still life (www.expo-cezanne.com)? Learning to paint is gaining new knowledge of art history, increasing your understanding of how other artists approached the same situation that now is on your drawing table. Each time you look at an artist's painting, you will find insight into yourself and your own work.

Finally, learning to paint is about the learning. It is about the dedication of time for yourself, for allowing yourself to obtain new skills. It is about the quiet moments that are spent in the studio that, when over, feel restorative to the soul. Ursula le Guin, an author, best sums this up, "It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it's the journey that matters in the end." What will you allow yourself to learn on your journey?