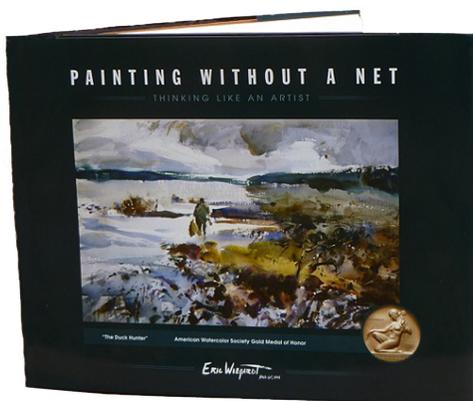


ERIC WIEGARD

AWS-DF, NWS

VISUAL PLEASURE FOR GENERATIONS

Bookreview by Beth Verheyden Painting Without A Net - Thinking Like An Artist



As a compilation of articles written by Eric over the years, the topics and concepts covered in *Painting Without A Net*, challenge the mind to think and plan “like an artist” and also encourage the heart to paint with abandon. Deep insight into the human spirit is playfully juxtaposed with bits of humor and history, making my time pure joy as I read in front of the fireplace.

Appropriately so, Eric begins our journey through his book by encouraging us to paint what we love. „Life is too short to drudgingly paint or draw an uninspiring subject for academic reasons.“ Ah, I feel better already.

Happily, I read and turn the pages, gleaning tidbits on the value of value studies and patterns vs. allowing color to get too much glory. As much as I love color, I agree whole-heartedly that „value does all the work and color gets all the glory“. Now, how to tackle that value plan? Eric’s mantra is to keep it simple and concentrate on the pattern of light, middle, and dark values moving through the drawing. „The value study also takes me away from the tyranny of the photo,“ he says. „As artists, we have to constantly fight the seduction of reality. We are called upon to design independently of our subject.“ And he also says that it’s ok for the value study to be ugly. He’s made me feel good about myself, again.

On design Eric says, „Regardless of the demands of the subject, design is most important and it determines the final strokes,“ As a matter of fact, „Design carries the painting, not the subject.“ On color harmony, Eric recommends using just three to six colors; the choice of which colors is yours to make. Throughout the book, however, Eric drills this point home, „Color can be anything as long as it is reasonable, but the values must be well organized.“

On what’s most important - he says, „Have fun! If we’re having fun, we can get up the next day and tackle another painting. We must learn the discipline of painting. With time, our own voice will begin to speak, and we need to pay attention to that.“

Painting Without A Net is a book you’ll go back to time and again. The chapters are divided by topic, making it easy to find what you’re looking for. Written with truthfulness, bits of humor to lighten the spirit, and history to lend a timeless foundation, this one won’t gather dust on the shelf. In April, Eric will be a vendor at the Florence convention; selling and signing his books. I’ll be first in line, book in hand for an autograph! I dare you to beat me there. - *Beth Verheyden, President Watercolor Society of Oregon*
