

MESSAGE FROM ERIC

– November –

OVERCOMING MUDDY DARKS

I enjoy adding dark tones to my paintings as they make the painting “pop” – the contrast in value with the mid tones can really add life to your painting. Traditional watercolor painting suggests that to achieve darks, layer the mid-tones over the lights, and then the darks over the mid-tones. This will create a nice harmony throughout the rest of the painting because transparency allows the successive layers of color to come through.



However, there is a problem with successive layers of color, especially when dealing with dark values: Darks can get muddy quickly. After about three washes of color, the darks lose their transparency and quickly attain a flat, muddy look. This is especially true with poor brush handling or over stroking.

If your darks tend to get muddy, try applying them directly onto the white of the paper. When applying mid-tones and entering a passage that will eventually be a dark, consider transitioning seamlessly into the darks at that point, rather than running the mid-tone wash through and applying the dark wash later.

Think about keeping your darks fresh and lively by putting them directly on the white of the paper.

Keep your brush wet,

Eric