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# ARTIST

**Our 2011 Painting Workshop  
Holiday Schedule** SEE PAGE 66

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AUSTRALIAN ARTIST



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LEARN HOW TO PAINT IN  
**watercolour, oils,  
acrylic and pastels**



Taking inspiration and wisdom from quotations from "The A to Zen of Life" by The Dalai Lama, who wrote "Live one day at a time and make it a masterpiece", this 3 Part series shares inspirational thoughts from A to Z for artists, including an alphabetical watercolour glossary of tips

Part 1

# The A – H of Watercolour

by Malcolm Carver

A

*"avoid negative sources  
people places habits"*

At times we become despondent with our painting and are easily discouraged. Pursuing any endeavor requires commitment, yet as you become more confident, you might seek comments from those around you. Beware, however, when seeking comments about your work, of negative sources and seek constructive positive feedback progressively from more informed sources, preferably not family, nor close friends. You do need a balance. Comments sought can sometimes become disparaging and can result in giving away the very thing you are pursuing. Find a 'place' or 'places' you enjoy painting in and immerse yourself to focus in that zone.

C

*"consider things from  
all angles"*

Look before you leap. A dog doesn't just lie down; they wander around in circles before settling. Similarly, thinking about what, why, where before you paint, can significantly improve your painting. For example, the time of day to look and paint is particularly important, as the light (which after all is what we are painting), is more exciting in the early morning or late afternoon.

B

*"believe in yourself"*

I believe rightly or wrongly that we can all draw, albeit that some are better than others. Most things in life are learnt, despite what some say as they encounter me in a laneway, sketching around the world... "you're so lucky, you were born with that skill". This, in my view, is a myth - if you are passionate about something like music or art, you can in fact learn to reach a degree of skill, achieving great personal satisfaction. You don't need to please anyone but yourself. Sure, you may need something extra to become Mozart. Do not despair, believe in your intrinsic talents, and always seek to learn and think positively.

D

*"don't give up,  
don't give in"*

We are sometimes too quick to throw in the towel. We often set high goals and resent our work when expectations are not met, becoming discouraged when faced with failure. I often say in many workshops, "it's only a piece of paper". Nothing ventured, nothing gained, provided we learn from our errors, of course. The Dalai Lama also said, "when you lose, don't lose the lesson".



E

*"everything you  
look for lies  
behind the  
mask you wear"*



*Union Street, Paddington, watercolour on Arches 300gsm HP paper, 760 x 250mm*



*Underwood Street, Paddington, watercolour on Arches 300gsm HP paper, 760 x 250mm*

It's not so much about painting as 'learning to see'. The definition of an expert is "someone who doesn't think they know it all". Continuing each day to explore, assess, review, analyze and question why, is the path to constant improvement, and not the pretense and mask of over-confidence. Each day can be a new disaster or another gem - I reject more than 50% in the pursuit of something worthy of a signature. The rest is destined to be burnt.

**F**  
*"family and friends are hidden treasures  
— seek them and enjoy their riches"*

True, they are the special people to us, though they can inadvertently cast unsolicited views upon our work which can discourage and disillusion us. Many a talented person has given away the pursuit in response to the infamous remark "it's good but"...you got the mouth wrong! People, particularly family, mean well, yet put their views into perspective and take it or swallow it, always seeking more knowledgeable evaluation for balance.

# GLOSSARY OF WATERCOLOUR TIPS

## A - H

### G

*"give more than you planned to"*

It's fair to say also that 'practice makes perfect' and that commitment is the only difference between those that try and those that succeed. When someone once asked Edgar Degas how to learn to draw, he just said "draw, draw and draw more"; a biography mentions he spent the early years of his life just copying the Masters in the galleries every day.

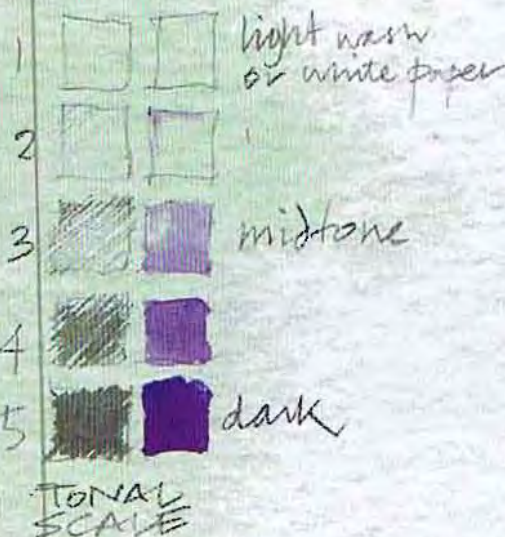
### H

*"hang onto your dream"*

Having attempted many mediums in art in many forms, I have come to believe in watercolour for many reasons. Firstly, it sits well with my love of and keen pursuit of travel. It's portable, lightweight and invariably only needs a sketchbook on one's lap. Secondly, it's relatively quick and easy to capture a special moment. Thirdly, its never-ending, and phenomenally intriguing, to be enthralled with the passion of this medium - to literally paint itself. This is possibly due to its unique quality; being such an unpredictable, experimental medium. Success can never be guaranteed, but give more than you intended by experimenting and as someone else said once... "better to have attempted something and failed, than never having attempted it at all".

### A

- An analysis of your image before you paint will assist your composition, enabling you to see positive and negative shapes.
- An understanding of anatomy will assist in figurative work. It also helps if you have a little building knowledge in seeing how buildings work, where and how shadows are cast etc.



### B

- Use a **backing board** that you can tilt, moving the flow of pigment and water in different directions.
- Use **back lighting** to great effect.
- Keep your travel gear **bag** small to reduce weight.
- Ensure your washes always have a loaded **bead**.
- Allow pigments to **bleed** together to connect shapes and soften edges. Add clear water to wet edge to allow **bloom**.



Bleed



Bloom



Looking Glass Bay

- Use **Bluetac** in lieu of expensive kneading rubbers to remove pencil graphite.
- Use the right side of your **brain**.
- Minimise the number of **brushes** you use - try one all rounder in a suitable size up to A4, say, No 6 round, up to A3 say, and a No 8 Brush round.
- Minimise **brushstrokes** - less is preferable than more, as each stroke can render overworking the pigment, losing freshness and leading to mud.
- Use a stiff **bristle brush** and clean water to lift out areas, to whiten or lighten.
- Tape up sheets to reduce paper **buckling**.

C

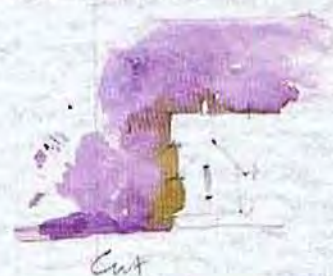
- Painting is about **capturing** the essence, mood or what is interesting.
- Work with **cauliflowers** as they can be effective and are a unique characteristic of watercolour, especially in landscapes.
- Use **clean water** for fresh vibrant painting.



- Use a perspective **clock** to ascertain angles and depth.
- **Cold press** paper has a rough texture.



- It's not about **colour** - it's about **tone**.
- Use a **computer** as an aid to seeing options.
- **Copy** your own images rather than faking and distorting others.
- Try **complementary** colours on a limited palette.
- **Cover sheets** can help loosen your style. Adjust your final composition by painting larger than you want to, enabling flexibility in cropping at the completion. Try raw pigment on paper, then add water with **conviction**.
- Identify and use a balance of **cool** colours with warm colours.
- Occasional minor use of **crayons** can retrieve lost highlights. Use a brush to **cut** around light shapes with darker tone.



## GLOSSARY OF WATERCOLOUR TIPS A - H continued

### D

- Don't **dabble** or overwork the shapes.



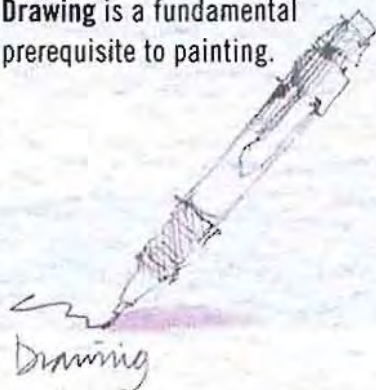
Overworked

- Look for **dark shapes** to define other shapes, to create light.
- Relative **darks** help achieve light. Dry brush strokes need to be **definitive**.
- Acknowledge **depth of field** to ensure things in the distance are softer and fuzzy.
- Attempt landscape to begin with, as an achievable level of **difficulty** - paint a portrait with true likeness next year.
- Suggest indicative **detail** but don't overstate.
- Try **dip-dip** by putting the brush into two pigments, then directly onto paper, and not via the mixing palette.



Dip - Dip

- **Drawing** is a fundamental prerequisite to painting.



Drawing

- **Drips** and runs are OK sometimes.
- **Dry brush** can be an effective brushstroke.

### E

- Fixed **Easels** are too restrictive unless they are multi-directional tilt types.
- It's all about **edges**; hard edges to define shapes, soft edges to lose shapes.
- Angled **elevation** of your back board is crucial to allow water to flow.
- Take an **enlightened** approach as it's all about seeing and painting the light.
- Try an **erasing shield** when lifting out.
- The **eye-line** is the first line to draw.



Fusion

### F

- Occasional use of a **Fan brush** is suitable for foreground trees.
- Well drawn **figures** provide a useful scale and depth to landscapes.
- **Flicking** can sometimes loosen tight shapes and too many hard edges.



Flicking

- Use a temporary mount to see work in a **frame**. **Framing** is critical to complete the painting.
- **Freshness** comes from clean water, fresh juicy pigment and minimal stroke making.



Fresh

- Allow **flow** of water. Allow **fusion** of colour by mixing on paper, not the palette.
- Remember it's supposed to be **fun**.



Foley's Point

## GLOSSARY OF WATERCOLOUR TIPS A - H *continued*

### G

- Greys are like flour and bind the fruit or colours together.



Greys

- A **gradated** wash can either be tonal dark to light or a subtle change of colour.



graduated wash

- **Granulation** of pigments settling on paper is a unique, remarkable watercolour phenomenon.
- Occasional minor use of white **Gouache** can retrieve lost highlights.
- Premixed **greens** should be avoided in beginner's hands.

### H

- **Hanging bead** allows a temporary stop to occur in a wash.
- Soften some **hard edges** with clean water.



Soft & hard edges

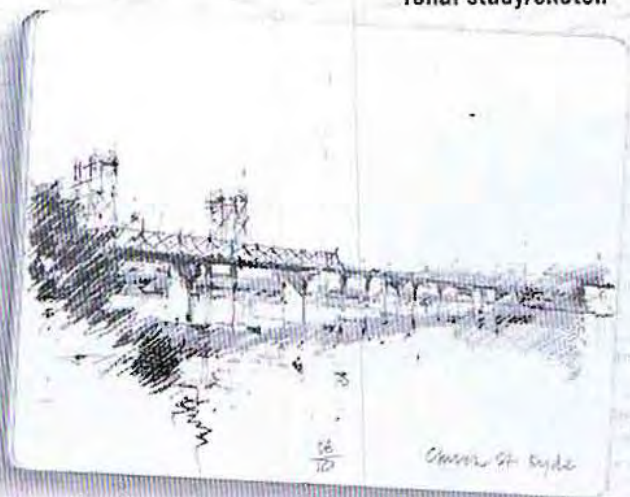
- **Highlights** are important tell-tales in a painting.
- **Horizon line** is the second most important line to draw and invariably can also be the eye-line.
- **Hot Press** paper is smooth and allows water and pigments to flow more freely.
- Painting anything **human** is the highest level of difficulty.



### Reference photo

A black and white photocopy of Church Street Bridge, Ryde, removes colour and accentuates the tones.

### Tonal study/sketch



## my art in the making Ryde Bridge



### Stage 1 positional and tonal placements

The eye-line, (which is also the water line in this instance), is the horizon and is the first line to draw - marked red. Don't forget to remind your framer that the water line needs to be horizontal and parallel to the top of the frame.

Lightly sketch simple shapes only, freely without a ruler and lighten with 'Bluetac'. Before painting, do a tonal study on a separate piece of paper in a maximum of 5 tones.



### Stage 2 gradated wash

The sky was laid down as a gradated wash, from Violet through to an early morning Raw Sienna light above the bridge deck. Elevate your board to enable the flow in 2 strokes, with conviction, right across the paper, changing colour as you go.



## What the Artist Used

### Support

Cartridge paper in Winsor & Newton Sketch Book

Larger work on hot press Arches 300gsm watercolour paper

### Brushes

Nos. 5 and 12 Arches Travel brush

### Other Materials

Pentel 'Twist Erase' Pencil 0.7 led 2B grade

Mitsubishi Uniball Pen in white for highlights

Schmincke Aquarelle Masking Fluid in travel pack size 730

Spray Bottle

Kneadable Rubber or Blu Tac

Tissues

### Artists' quality watercolour

Cadmium Red

Quinacridone Gold

Raw Sienna

Burnt Sienna

Brown Madder

Cerulean Blue

Cobalt Blue

French Ultramarine Blue

Ultramarine Violet

Tools of the trade



### Stage 3 softening and illusions

Lightly introduce colour in 'tone 1' and the background foreshore shapes in 'tone 2' using a variety of colours mixed only on paper. Remember to soften the edges on distant background shapes, to help create the illusion of depth.



### Stage 4 adding a tone

Lay another graduated wash for the water ('tone 1' in Ultramarine Blue and Violet) from the white of the paper and using clean water, begin adding stronger pigment ('tone 3') in the foreground, again with conviction.



### Stage 5 shaping the darks

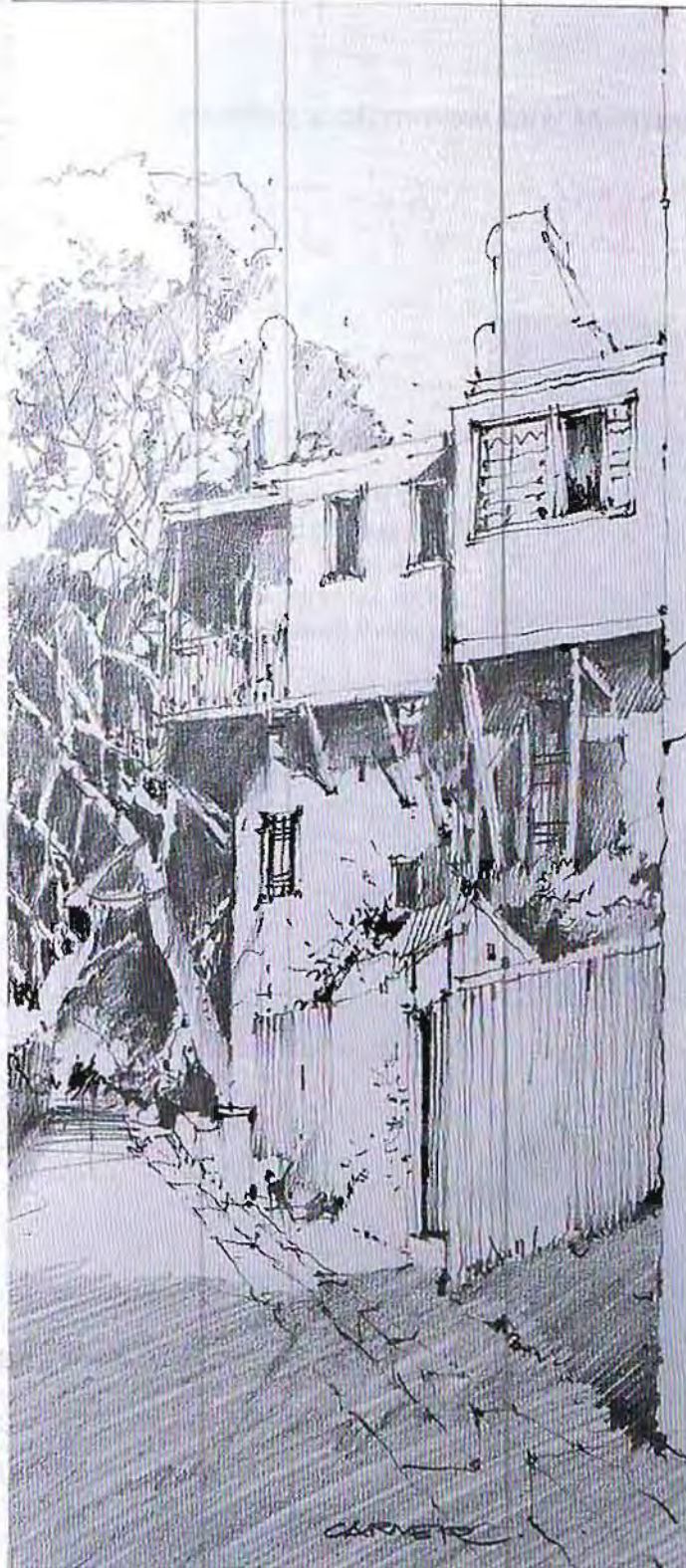
Now to the fun bit. Painting in watercolour is just like drawing, but with a brush! Stroke and block in the dark shapes using Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine Violet in 'tone 4 and 5', while preserving the highlights in 'tone 1'. A strong tonal range creates early morning light.



### Stage 6 finishing touches

The final touch is to use brighter colour (Quinacridone Gold), on smaller elements, but just give the hint of rust stains. Use dark, dry brush strokes for the foreground foliage and finish the painting with a fine white pen to create some sparkle.

“ Attempt landscape to begin with, as an achievable level of difficulty - paint a portrait with true likeness next year. ”



Gurner Lane, Paddington

## MY DESIGN AND COMPOSITIONAL TACTICS

- The tonal sketch and outline drawing is essential. No matter how skillful a painter, you cannot correct a distorted or ill-conceived base drawing. It's all about seeing the light and reinforcing the light throughout the process.
- Determine a primary strong light direction and seek consistency and continuity throughout, particularly with shadows. Seek out reflective light also, from water acting as a mirror.
- Create depth with softer, cooler colours in the distance and more intense colour as you come forward to the foreground.
- A little masking fluid on boat shapes enables wash to flow without the need to cut around small shapes.
- Allow the transparency of the white paper to be present in large sky and water washes. The water is only reflecting the sky, so the colour and tone needs to be consistent.

### about the artist

Malcolm Carver is an Architect and has over the past 30 years travelled extensively in Europe, Australia, Asia and the Americas. He has devoted these experiences to creating travel sketch books, providing valuable inspiration for his painting workshops and studio work in



watercolour. He also leads contemporary architecture tours each year to special places around the world.

Malcolm has an enlightened and passionate approach to sketching, drawing and watercolour painting. He believes that we can all draw to a degree and we can learn to see, like other life skills. He seeks to reinforce the fundamental skill of seeing and sketching before painting, by simplifying detail in drawing techniques and learning to see shapes.

Member of the Australian Institute of Architects

Member of Royal Institute of British Architects

Member, Australian Watercolour Institute

Member, Royal Art Society

President of Ku-ring-gai Arts Society

Patron, Grafton Artsfest

Gallery website [www.aquarellegallery.com.au/malcolmcarver](http://www.aquarellegallery.com.au/malcolmcarver)

Website [www.malcolmcarver.com.au](http://www.malcolmcarver.com.au)

Email [mcarver@me.com](mailto:mcarver@me.com)

### FUTURE WORKSHOPS

Kiama Art Society, Kiama NSW

19-22 February 2011

Albury Art Society, Beechworth VIC

18-20 March 2011

Australian Artist Painting Workshop Holidays

Tuscany and Amalfi Coast, Italy

20 April - 2 May 2011

call Travelrite on 03 9729 8722

### MALCOLM CARVER'S NEW EXHIBITION

"Two Architects, Ken Woolley AM & Malcolm Carver, Taking a line for a walk through Paris & Paddington"

Exhibition opens from 2nd to 19th February, 2011 at the Peter Pinson Gallery, 143 Edgecliff Road, Woollahra, NSW

In this second part of a 3 part series, Malcolm Carver, taking inspiration and wisdom from quotations from "The A to Zen of Life" by The Dalai Lama, shares his continuing watercolour glossary from I to Q, with tips and a demonstration

## Part 2

## The I to Q of Watercolour

by Malcolm Carver

**I**  
"if opportunity didn't knock, build a door"

If you haven't found time to do the very thing you desire, then there is nothing to prevent you starting again at whatever age. It's never too late to take another angle, change medium, change priorities, do a workshop, buy a book, adopt a new approach, visit a few galleries, or become inspired to make a commitment to allocate time.

**J**  
"judge your success by what you give up in order to get it"

A Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu once said, "a journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step". I suggest you keep samples of your work to look back and see progress, as it can be very rewarding. Small steps lead to success and reflect the time focussed on your pursuit. Be encouraged to find a creative environment or like-minded friends to be with.

**K**  
"keep trying no matter how hard it seems"

Never give up - keep trying, despite disparaging comments or facetious remarks. My next painting will always be an improvement on yesterday. It's about an attitude or approach to see other ways, and modify your techniques. Don't paint what you think you see, paint what you can see. Think about it, as it might save some frustration or apparent sense of failure.

**L**  
"love yourself"

Your approach is everything - a positive mental attitude and belief in yourself is essential to move forward. It also braces you for inevitable failures, allowing you to attempt new positive challenges every day.

**M**  
"make it happen"

"Procrastination is the thief of time" said poet, Edward Young (1683 - 1765), and there is of course no time like the present. Begin with a few small steps, keep it up and pursue your endeavors with passion. Don't let excuses be like that cartoon.... "I'm going to paint when I retire" and then it's "when I get off this life support system"!

**N**  
"never lie, steal or cheat"

It's fair to say we can all be inspired from looking at other painter's work, providing we learn, analyse and interpret what we see through our very own eyes; as so eloquently said by John Godfrey SAXE (1816-1887), 'Tis well to borrow from the good and great'; 'Tis wise to learn; 'Tis God-like to create!

**O**  
"open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values"

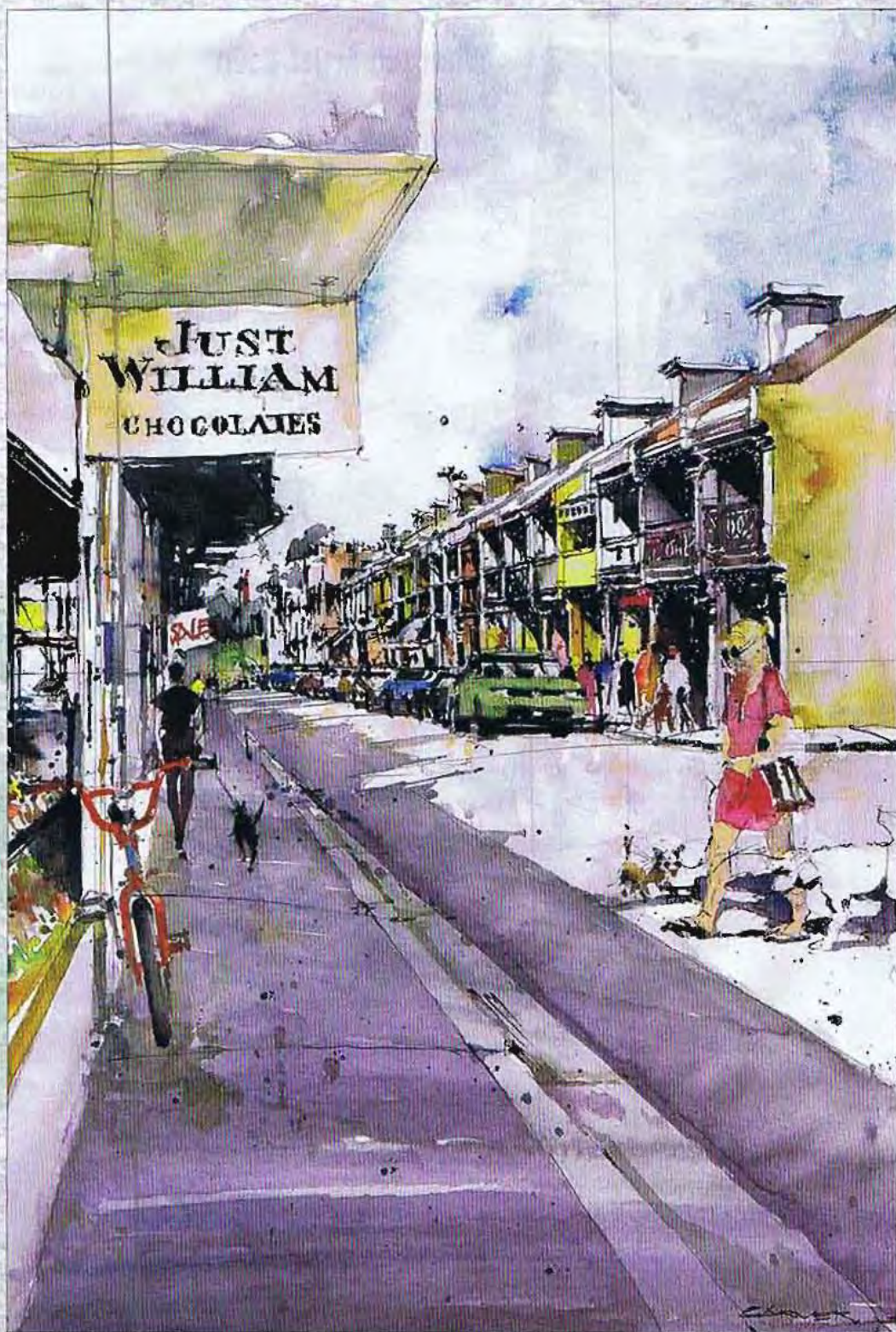
Having all, at some time, been caught in a rut with seemingly no progress, I suggest you stand back from your work, cast a critical eye, seek constructive evaluation from learned friends and adjust techniques. Try another path, change your paper or find new directions. Watercolour is in itself an experimental medium and lends itself to find new directions, for example, let the water/pigment move - don't fiddle with it.

P  
"practice  
makes perfect"

Another view by Winston Churchill  
:"To improve is to change; to be  
perfect is to change often". It goes  
without saying, yet confidence  
grows from success and failure.  
When you hit a brick wall, go  
around it and take a different  
approach or tack, as all sailors  
inherently know, there is no point  
in becoming becalmed.

Q  
"quality  
not quantity  
in everything  
you do"

My approach has always been to  
start small and end big, meaning  
the sketch captures a moment  
and may lead to a larger painting.  
Not many sketches make the  
studio, yet they all vie for  
attention and the discipline of  
seeking out new imagery is a  
constant pursuit necessitating  
lots of travel, to create new and  
fresh ideas. Quantity is relative -  
best to do lots of good small work  
and then, a meaningful quality  
large work based on a solid  
foundation.



*Just William, William Street, Paddington*

## my art in the making Lord Dudley Hotel, Paddington



### Photo Reference

A black & white reference photocopy of the Lord Dudley Hotel, Paddington, removes colour and accentuates the tones.

### What the Artist Used

#### Paper

Cartridge paper in Winsor & Newton Sketch Book

Larger work on hot press Arches 300gsm watercolour paper

#### Brushes

Arches' Travel brush No 5 and No 12

#### Other Materials

Pentel 'Twist Erase' Pencil 0.7 leads 2B grade  
Mitsubishi Uniball Pen in white for highlights  
Schmincke Aquarelle Masking Fluid in travel pack size 730

Spray Bottle

Kneadable rubber or Blu Tac

Tissues

#### Colours

Quinacridone Magenta Cerulean Blue

Cadmium Red Cobalt Blue

Quinacridone Gold French Ultramarine Blue

Raw Sienna

Burnt Sienna

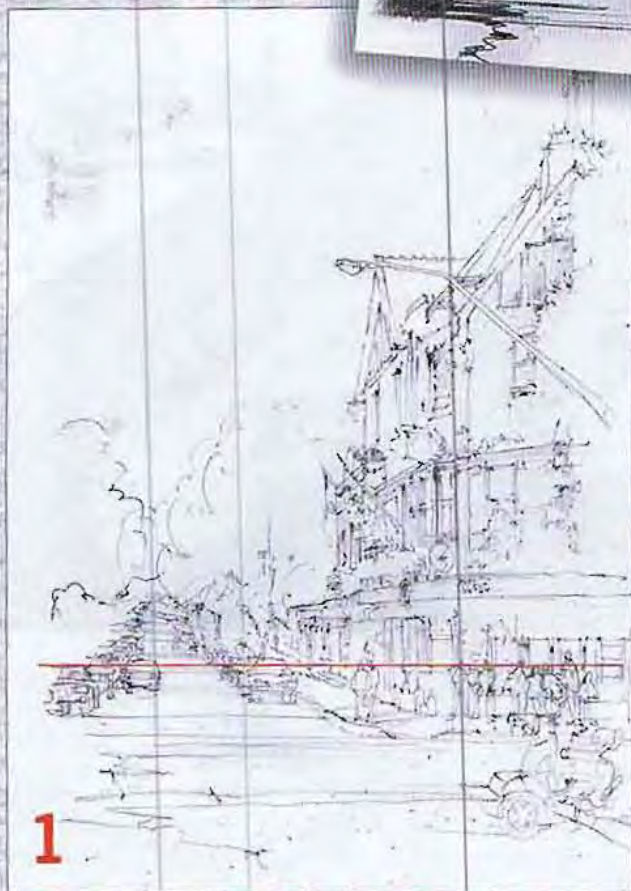
Ultramarine Violet

Brown Madder

### Tonal Study



### Detail Tree Wash



### Stage 1 Perfect planning

Your eye line is the horizon and the first line to draw is marked in red. Lightly sketch simple shapes only freely, without a ruler, and lighten with 'Bluetac'. Apply masking fluid sparingly to areas on the building to be left white. Before painting do a tonal study on a photocopy, or on separate piece of paper, in a maximum of 5 tones (see Detail 1) and tonal scale diagram.

### Stage 2 Contrary darks!

Contrary to some watercolourists, I have laid down the darks first and painted the scooter shape. This establishes the foreground, the lightest tone (1) and the darkest tone (5). A wash across the pages creates the main painting shape and ties everything together.

### Stage 3 Strategy and illusion

Lightly introduce sky colour (in tone 1 & 2), with a few strategic splats of Cerulean and Ultramarine Blue, mixed only on the paper, then add clear water to disperse the pigment with soft edges. See Detail 2 for the tree wash along the street, to create the illusion of depth, and a touch of splatter to create variety of tones in the trees.

### Stage 4 Mingling and touches

Lay again a mingled wash for the building, with a touch only of yellow, brown and reds to the paper, then adding clean water. Do not paint the bricks and ensure a variety of colour.

### Stage 5 Sparkles and hints

Painting in watercolour is just like drawing, but with a brush! Quickly stroke and block in the shadows using Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine Violet (in tone 4 & 5), yet preserving the highlights (in tone 1). A strong tonal range reinforces light. Maintain the white of the paper at all cost. Add the finer details and the people in colour, to bring it to life. Add a little white using a fine white pen to create sparkle and retrieve the trees. Add a seagull or two! Note the mere hint and minimalist use of the green!



# GLOSSARY I-Q OF WATERCOLOUR WITH TIPS

- A creative **idea** is the magic behind the painting.
- An **image** can be a vista, a photograph, indeed anything that captures your attention that may lead to an interpretation.
- An **impression** feeling or effect is what to seek to paint, not a photo realistic copy.
- Try to **indicate** rather than overstate.
- Get **inspiration** from anything around you, look and see, as an image that can lead to an idea as a consequence of your observation.
- It is your **interpretation** that counts.
- Use **Ivory Black** as an additive to other pigments but not alone and use then sparingly.

## J

- The watercolour pigment needs to be moist and **juicy**, not dried out cakes.
- **Join**, suggest or connect dots or marks to create or suggest shapes.

## K

- **Key** is the lightness (high key) or darkness (low key).
- What is appealing about the image, what intrigues the photographer to click? These **keypoints** or highlights can become the magic in your interpretation.
- The pencil sketch and outline drawing needs to be knocked back with a **kneading rubber** and I've found 'bluetac' to be effective and cheaper.

## L

- **Lifting** in watercolour is the removal of pigment by, say, a tissue when still wet or after it has dried by applying clean water and, say, a bristle brush with or without a mask or template.
- The **light** and interpreting the way light falls, is critical in every image. Paintings without clear knowledge and understanding about **light** invariably fail.
- A **lightbox** or window is useful to see the simple dark and light shapes without distorting the image in the interpretation.
- The brush is often abused through over-stroking, so try a **light touch** and let the water/pigment flow keeping the brush behind your back.
- **Lightfastness** is the durability of a pigment to resist fading.
- Successful paintings often have a **limited palette** or limited range of colours.
- **Light and loose** is a goal or approach to strive for, as opposed to excessive detail and overworking.
- **Lost edges** is another word meaning soft edges.
- Occasionally create a desirable quality of **luminosity** in an area with bright light, especially adjoining a dark shape.



## M

- **Masking fluid** (frisket) or masking tape is resistant to water but use carefully and sparingly to retain white of paper.
- A **mark** is a recognizable spot.
- Experiment with different additive **mediums** e.g. gum arabic for various effects.
- Try **mingling** by adding another pigment into a wet wash or let two or more colours mingle together with clean water.





- Reflect a small travel mirror over your head in lieu of standing back to see your work from a distance. As water reflects the sky like a mirror, use similar tones and colour.



- **Modeling** is the colour and lighting effect to make an object appear 3D.

- Capture the sense of mood - is it early morning, raining, foggy, misty, sunny, hazy, or sultry? Colour can be confusing, so try a black & white photocopy to see more clearly the tonal range.

- **Monochromatic** a single colour in all tones.

- Use a **Morse Code** technique to break up uniformity of lines.

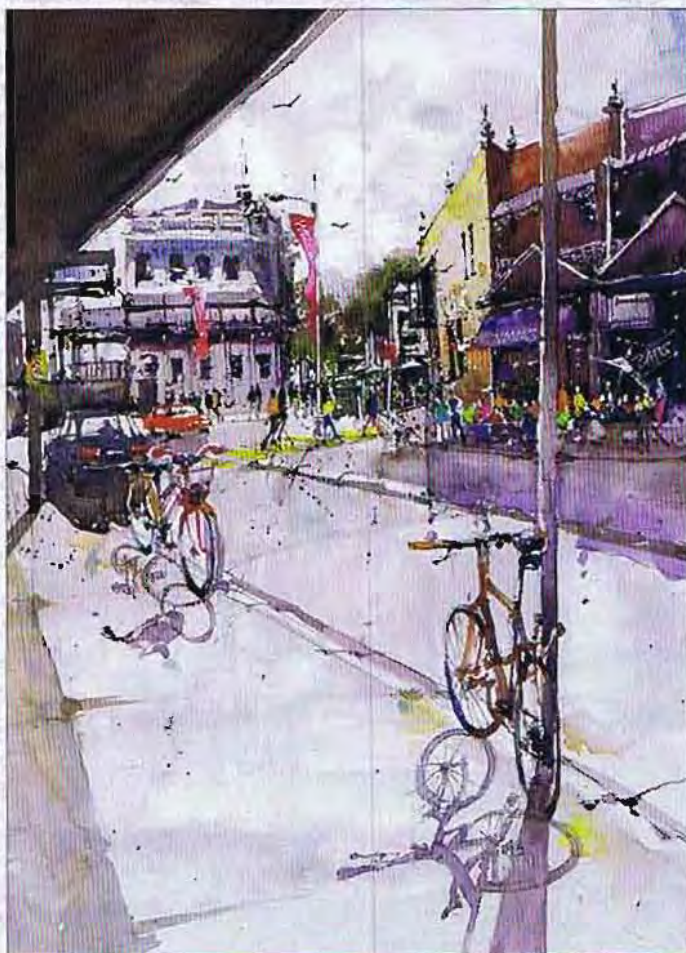


- Be flexible with composition, paint larger than the image and move around a temporary mount to find the optimum composition.

- When colours go to mud, you are overworking the pigments in a palette and/or using excessive brush stroking on the paper. Mud can also result by overlaying dull washes over another.

N

- Identify **negative shapes** in dark or light backgrounds to create other positive shapes and objects.
- **Neutral colours** usually refer to greys, preferably mixed and made from a little of each primary pigment or a primary and a brown. Avoid premixed greys alone.

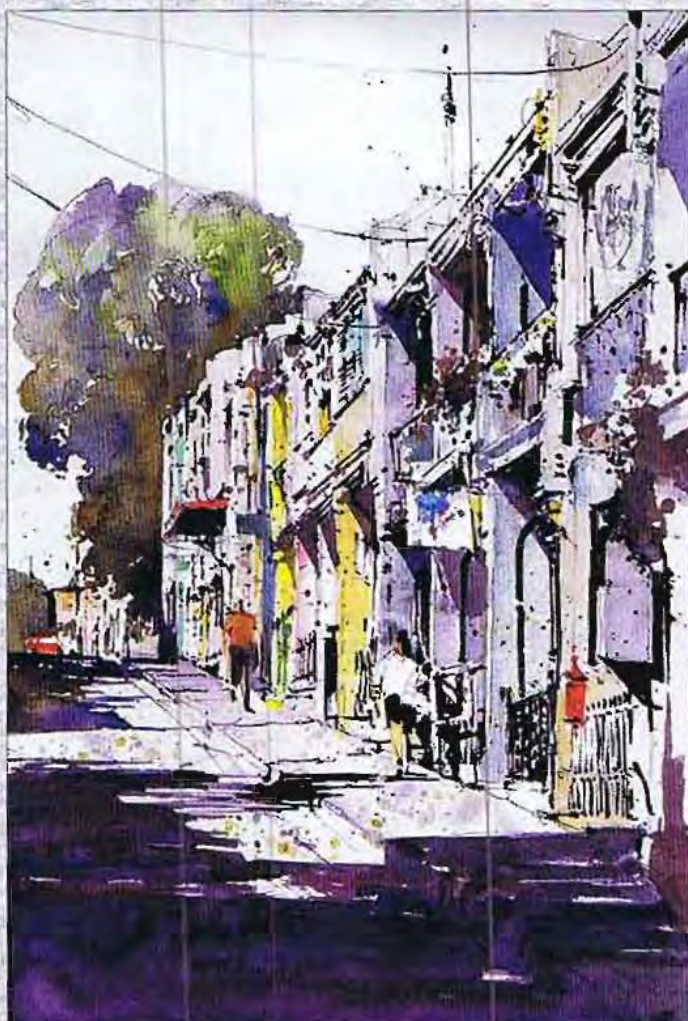


Glenmore Street, Paddington

O

- Try not to paint each object in a painting but learn to see backgrounds and other shapes to tie the work together. The unique quality of watercolour is transparent layers and I suggest opaque or heavy use of pigment be used sparingly.
- **Observation** is about looking, drawing what you see and getting it in proportion without distortion.
- **Opaque** paint is not transparent. Ensure the first layer is dry before using **overlay washes**, in a transparent way, to allow under wash to glow.
- To enhance the illusion of depth use 'out of focus' technique with soft and lost edges.
- **Overworked** results almost invariably from excessive brush strokes or overlaying on a damp wash.

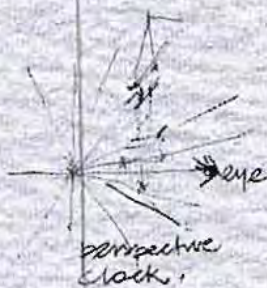




Glenmore Street, Paddington

## P

- To **paint** is to depict an image or make a mark.
- A **paintbox** is a container holding dry pans or pigment in tubes squeezed from a tube, which can often include a palette.
- A **palette** enables the pigments to be arranged in an order from warm to cool colours.
- Watercolour **pans** need to be kept moist.
- Purpose-made watercolour **paper** provides the best results.
- A door **peephole** enables the painting to be viewed from a distance.
- I suggest a propelling or clutch **pencil** in 0.7mm thick 2B leads.
- **Perspective** represents 3D objects and volumes in space on paper, to create the illusion of



depth, and can be simplified through reference to the Perspective Clock.

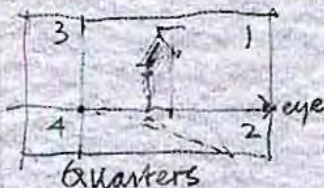
- **Photos** are an excellent reference, yet tell only part of the story. A **photograph** is a great reference, but you still need to draw. Lots of photos provide a bank of images to help you select a distinct special image.
- **Pigment colour** is the hue and may vary in character from transparent to opaque.
- Computer programs like '**Photoshop**' enable images to be viewed in many options as a useful tool.
- Try painting outdoors or **plein air** to capture directly the immediate idea. Back up with photos for references, e.g. shadows.
- **Positive shapes** defines the object's outline.
- **Primary colours** are red, blue and yellow, which together yield all other colours in the spectrum.
- **Posterise** is a computer technique that mirrors your eyes' capability to squint' by converting an image into a prescribed number of tonal layers.
- Leaving **puddles** on a flat surface creates soft loose shapes with tide marks.



puddle

## Q

- Divide your scene, then your paper, into **quarters**, to read the image using the eye line as the horizontal, and where you are along the line to establish the vertical.
- Do not presume...but look, see and always test or **question** the mark relationships. Keep checking, ask or **query** relative proximity of elements in the image.
- **Quinacridone** pigments are highly transparent and can be vibrant.



Quinacridone



*The Iconic Tower, Paddington*

## MY DESIGN AND COMPOSITIONAL TACTICS

- Placing the building in context was important in a typical tree-lined Paddington street. Take time to see and draw the building, as no matter how skillful the painter is, you cannot correct a distorted or ill-conceived base drawing and tonal sketch.
- Determine a primary strong light direction and seek continuity out of all shadows, and portray consistently from one direction.
- A little masking fluid on building shapes enables a wash to flow without the need to cut around small shapes.
- Allow the transparency of the white paper to be present in large sky and road areas. Remember, you are painting the light, not a building, so look, see and maintain tones as they are critical.

### about the artist

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### FUTURE WORKSHOPS

*Australian Artist Painting Workshop Holidays*

Tuscany and Amalfi Coast, Italy ..... 20 April - 2 May 2011

Western Australia ..... November 2011

call Travelrite on 03 9729 8722

Bathurst Mitchell College ..... July 2011

Grafton Artsfest Spring NSW ..... September 2011

Travelrite, Japan China Architecture Tour ... October 2011

In this final part of a 3 part series, Malcolm Carver, taking inspiration and wisdom from quotations from "The A to Zen of Life" by The Dalai Lama, shares his watercolour glossary from R to Z, with tips and a demonstration

## Part 3

# The R to Z of Watercolour

by Malcolm Carver

**R**  
*"remember silence is the best answer"*

The magic of drawing and painting is that you can communicate in every language on earth. All observers of the process seem intrigued as you sit in silence and just draw with their amazement heightened as the subject is revealed. Napoleon said "a picture is worth a thousand words", yet it also seems to be priceless, as it is not inhibited by language barriers.

**S**  
*"stop procrastinating"*

Start today.

**T**  
*"take control of your own destiny"*

Through a process of observing other artists, their work, practice and commitment, you inherently discover your own 'style', which needs constant nurturing, review and further development under your absolute creative control. Believe in yourself.

**U**  
*"understand yourself in order to better understand others"*

Through discovery and experimenting with the medium you gain an inner knowledge, which can assist in understanding other techniques and approaches. The extraordinary nature of watercolour seems to have endless interpretations on the use of the medium. Originality in the medium of watercolour continues to fascinate and innovate creative solutions.

**V**  
*"visualize it"*

Stop, think, review, squint, appraise something that catches your eye or imagination. Then visualize what you might do to accentuate, soften, or interpret an image. A quick sketch can sometimes capture the very thing that may never evolve from a long painting process. Think before you leap into painting.

**W**  
*"when you lose don't lose the lesson"*

There will always be frustration or unpredictability with watercolour, which is also its inherent charm, so its not so much about winning, but exploring and learning from those mistakes. I also suggest you become aware of your own positive strengths and weakness, so that you can at least acknowledge and correct aspects of your work.

**X**  
*"excellence in everything you do"*

Setting the bar a little higher, raising the standard with every drawing or sketch, or taking every opportunity to strive for something with excellence, will make a difference.

*Five Ways & Hanley Street*

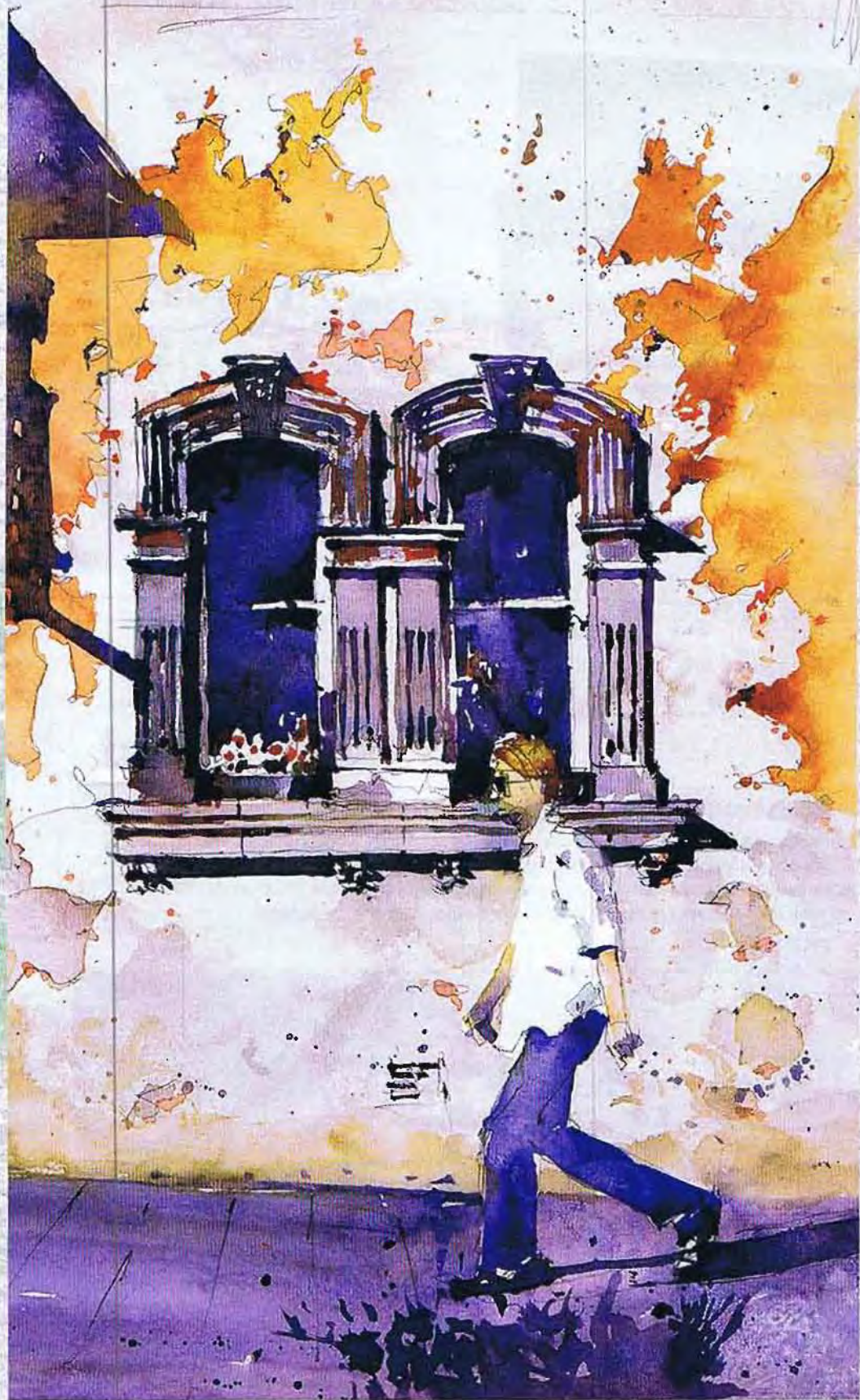


Y  
"you are unique,  
nothing can  
replace you"

No matter how you may be influenced, inspired or encouraged by others, consciously or otherwise, you will develop your own unique style over time. Experiment, seek out information and learn like a sponge. Rewards come from exploration and effort.

Z  
"zero in on  
your target  
and go for it"

Apeles the Greek Painter said Nulla dies sine linea - Not a day without a line. Do something every day! Whilst always having a keen respect for other artists and having dabbled in multiple mediums, my intrigue, love and enjoyment of this thing called watercolour, is never-ending. In order to be successful with anything, one has to enjoy doing it. You will forever need to feel accomplished, get rewards, reminders and encouragement along the way, yet aim high and be prepared to accept the highs and lows. I hope these quotations provide you with inspiration and the motivation to also become passionate about this medium.



Five Ways Wall Patina

## my art in the making Castello di Meleto, Tuscany



### Photo Reference

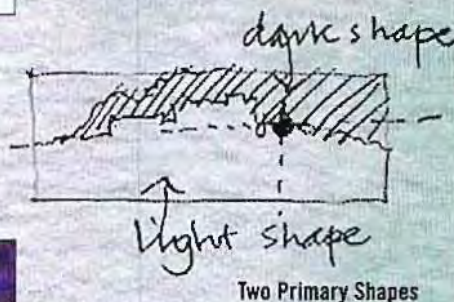
Castello di Meleto, Tuscany.  
Italy is the destination for my next workshop.  
A black & white reference photocopy removes colour and accentuates the tones.

### Tonal Sketch



### Stage 1 Simplify the scene

It is important to understand the complexity, observe, yet simplify the scene, then draw accurately. Lightly sketch simple shapes freely without a ruler and lighten with 'Bluetac'. Before painting, do a tonal sketch on a sample piece of paper in a maximum of 5 tones (see Detail 1) and tonal scale diagram. Lay down sparingly, some masking fluid on white highlight.



### Detail of Darks



## What the Artist Used

### Paper

Cartridge paper in Winsor & Newton Sketch Book

Larger work on hot press Arches 300gsm watercolour paper

### Brushes

Arches Travel brush No 5 and No 12

### Other Materials

Pentel 'Twist Erase' Pencil 0.7 leads 2B grade

Mitsubishi Uniball Pen in white for highlights

Schmincke Aquarelle Masking Fluid in travel pack size 730

Spray Bottle

Kneadable Rubber or Blu Tac

Tissues

### Artists quality watercolour

Cadmium Red	Cerulean Blue
Quinacridone Gold	Cobalt Blue
Raw Sienna	French Ultramarine Blue
Burnt Sienna	Blue
Ultramarine Violet	

### Stage 2 Darks first

Contrary to popular convention, I have identified and laid down the darks first and painted in Tone 4 and 5, cutting and painting negative shapes around buildings. This ensures the extreme tonal range is achieved to enable sunlight to be created from the left. My darks are splats of Ultramarine Violet, Burnt Sienna and sometimes Ultramarine Blue. See 'Detail 2 of Darks' on how darks may be connected by runs.

Detail of Chapel



Detail of Tower



### Stage 3 Colour freshness

Paint clean water on buildings and add splats of fresh juicy colourful pigments into wet areas in Tone 1, and in background and foreground shapes in Tone 2. Do not mix colours on the palette, but allow colours to mix on the paper to attain freshness. See Detail 3. Remember to soften edges on distant background shapes with a bristle brush or tissue to help create the illusion of depth. Use recessive Cerulean Blue for distant landscape.

### Stage 4 Overlay washes

Lay again some further overlay washes for the main shapes behind the building, to suggest layers of landscape. Add further detail and create an area of interest in the courtyards around the castle turret with bright colour. Be wary of the intensity and potency of green. I have actively avoided green and used it sparingly. Occasional splatter of colour ties the painting and connects areas. See 'Detail 3 of Chapel'.

### Stage 5 Suggestive detail

Now for the fun bit - painting in the final touches, ensuring shadows are consistent. See 'Detail 4 of Tower'. Work from the centre with less detail and colour toward the perimeter. Use brighter raw colour (Quinacridone Gold) on smaller elements, but just give the hint of stone. Finish the painting with a fine white pen to create some life in the darks and a touch of suggestive detail, but don't outline anything in a black pen.

# GLOSSARY R-Z OF WATERCOLOUR WITH TIPS

## R

- **Radial lines** emanate from the perspective clock.
- **Recessive tones** or values of colour. Blue is a **recessive** colour often used for distant mountains.
- You always need a **reference**, as drawing from memory is fraught with distortion.
- Constantly recheck the **relationship** between one point and another.
- Look for **reflected light**; it's the light and colours from an adjacent surface. Study the **reflections** and interpret the movement, the shapes, level of distortion, softness and colours.
- A **Rigger brush** can be useful with tree branches, masts etc.
- **Rocking** the painting back and forth can help the pigment granulate.
- The term **rough** refers to textured watercolour paper, also known as Cold Press.
- A small square of **rubber crepe** is useful for removal of masking fluid. Occasionally allow runs to connect shapes. A **rubber** or eraser was invented so that we can correct mistakes.



radial lines



reflections

## S

- A sprinkle of salt can be a useful texture, but not if you want your paintings to last.
- Check colour and/or tone on a **sample sheet** of the same paper.
- Create birds or a **seagull** from wayward dots.
- **Granulation** or **sedimentation** is a natural phenomenon of certain pigments such as Burnt Sienna.
- To retrieve a highlight try **scratching** a dry dark wash shape with a sharp blade to reveal the paper colour.
- **See** and all will be revealed.
- Beware of the **sensitivity** of certain strong pigments by first testing effects on a sample of the same paper.

- The **shadows** move when painting outdoors and need to be photographed as a future reference, to complete the work in the studio.
- Use **shampoo** regularly to clean your brushes.
- Minimise the major shapes to a few only and **stitch** the other minor shapes together.
- It's about **simplifying detail**, not overworking.
- A **sketch** is a freehand visualization of a subject. Your **sketchbook** is like a diary and essential to always be with you, but keep it small, say A5.
- **Smooth** refers to smooth watercolour paper, also known as Hot Press.
- Create apparent **smoke** in a landscape through judicious use of white gouache over a darker background.
- **Smudge** a wet edge with your finger to soften a hard edge.
- Paint manufacturers have a **specification** for each pigment.
- **Splat** is a flick of a loaded brush on paper, in one stroke on wet or dry paper. **Splatter** is a spot or trail of paint by loading a brush and keep tapping with your index finger.
- A small **sea sponge** can be useful to lift out and for texture.
- A small **spray bottle** can keep paper damp and **soften edges**. Use only clean, clear **spring water!** To squint your eyes is your natural ability to see tones, by accentuating darks and light by removing mid tones.
- **Stipple** texture effects can be achieved through using a stiff bristle brush or old toothbrush.
- An ultra-lightweight **stool** can be handy, preferably fixed to your art bag. Avoid student grade and cheap watercolour paint.
- Be **suggestive** with your marks rather than being too literal with excessive detail.
- Remove pigment stain on your palette with ceramic cooktop cleaner, then rinse.
- Occasionally **stamp** the whole brush and fan out the hairs.
- Don't stay too close - **step back** from your painting or use a mirror or peephole.
- Create the illusion of **sunlight** by painting shadows.
- Test colour **swatch** on sample paper.
- **Swipe** at a wet pigment on paper with clear water and drag away.



sketch book



smoke



soft edges



swatch



- Practice your drawing skills by **tracing** or even use **transfer paper** or a **lightbox** to see major shapes without distortion, which can occur from copying the image freehand.
- To enhance your diversity in subject matter do more travel and capture images for future work. Use a small travel kit to paint anywhere, anytime.
- **Trailing edge** is a mark or series of marks left after the brush stroke.
- Use a **tripod** to support your easel outside.
- **Watercolour tubes** are preferable to pans as they stay moist and juicy.



travel kit

## U

- Where background coloured paper is inappropriate, try a pale transparent **under wash** (or **underpainting**) over background shapes, where sometimes it assists luminosity, with use of complementary colours for the next overlay wash.
- **Underwhelming** occurs where tonal range is weak and lacks light.

## V

- **Value** is the relative degree of light to dark in a particular colour.
- The **vanishing point** is the point where receding parallel lines appear in perspective to converge i.e. centre of clock.
- A fishing **vest** is useful for keeping bibs and bobs.
- **Vibrance** is the quality of striking bright light.
- **Viewpoint** is the point where something is viewed from.
- A **vignette** is a painting shaded off around the edges.
- The **centre of vision** is the point looking perpendicular to the horizon line from the viewpoint. To **visualize** is to imagine and create a mental image of the scene, visible to the eye.

## W

- **Clean water** = fresh and vibrant painting.
- **Watercolour paint** colours vary between manufacturers.
- Identify and use a balance of cool with warm colours.
- A **wash** is the technique of painting a transparent layer in a 'z' stroke to fill a shape.
- **Wet-on-wet** is a technique of painting wet pigment onto wet paper.



wash

- **Wet sponge** is useful to dampen an area or mop up excess water or beads.
- **White paper** is your 'best friend' and highest light value, which needs to be preserved.
- **White Gouache** is an opaque medium often used to recover or retrieve a highlight, yet needs to be used sparingly.
- **Wild 'n Woolly** is also about being Light and Loose.
- **Why paint it?** is the very first question you should ask before painting as it provides a purpose.
- A high **WOW** factor is the goal for every sketch drawing and painting.

## X

- The inherent special nature of watercolour medium is **eXperimental** and allowing two or more pigments to collide on wet or dry paper creates an **eXplosion**.

## Y

- A Japanese printing paper (or plastic sheet) known as 'Yupo' is worth an experiment to appreciate the movement and interaction of the watercolour medium when there is no absorption. It can be recycled and can help to free up rigid techniques.

## Z

- The brush needs to be well loaded with a bead of pigment and water, then move in a 'Z' stroke in a wash without leaving the shape. If a bead is left then reload pigment/water above the bead, then continue the wash.



Early Light, Albury

- Try a **swivel** or ball joint to a tripod or desk easel for multi-directional flow of washes. Also try a swivel brushstroke action with a loaded brush.



swivel fitting

- T**
- Use **masking tape** to fix paper to a backing board, at least to corners.
  - Try different **techniques** to vary your mark making.
  - Look for **telltails** that will attract specific interest and attention.
  - Vary the **colour temperature** by moving colour balance from warm to cool or vice versa.
  - Experiment with a variety of **textures** but don't use your full repertoire on each painting.
  - Not essential, but try to use the **rule of thirds** to create interest in composition.
  - A **tilted surface** is essential to create flow of washes.
  - **Thumbnail sketch** is a quick doodle to capture a scene or idea.

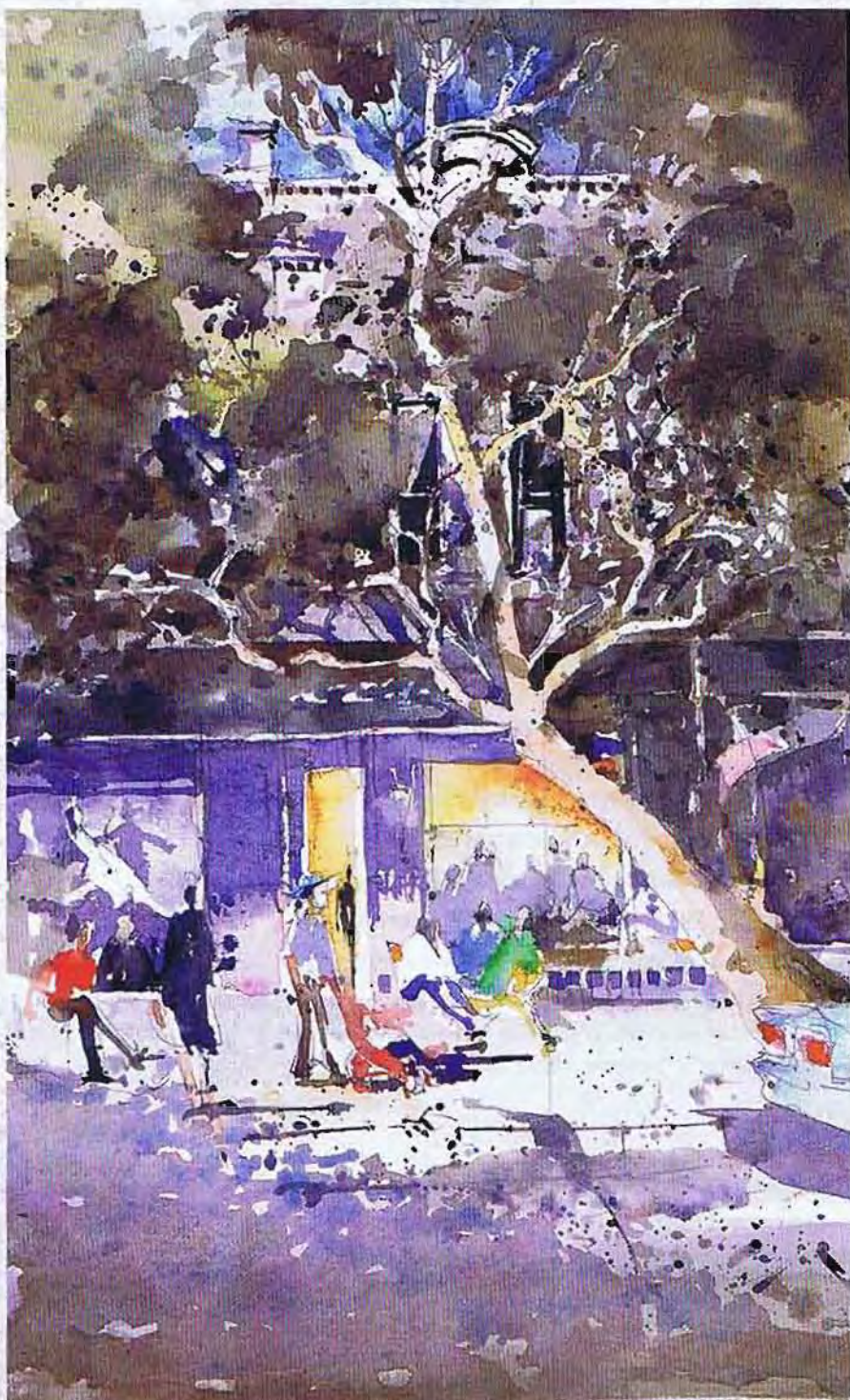


tide

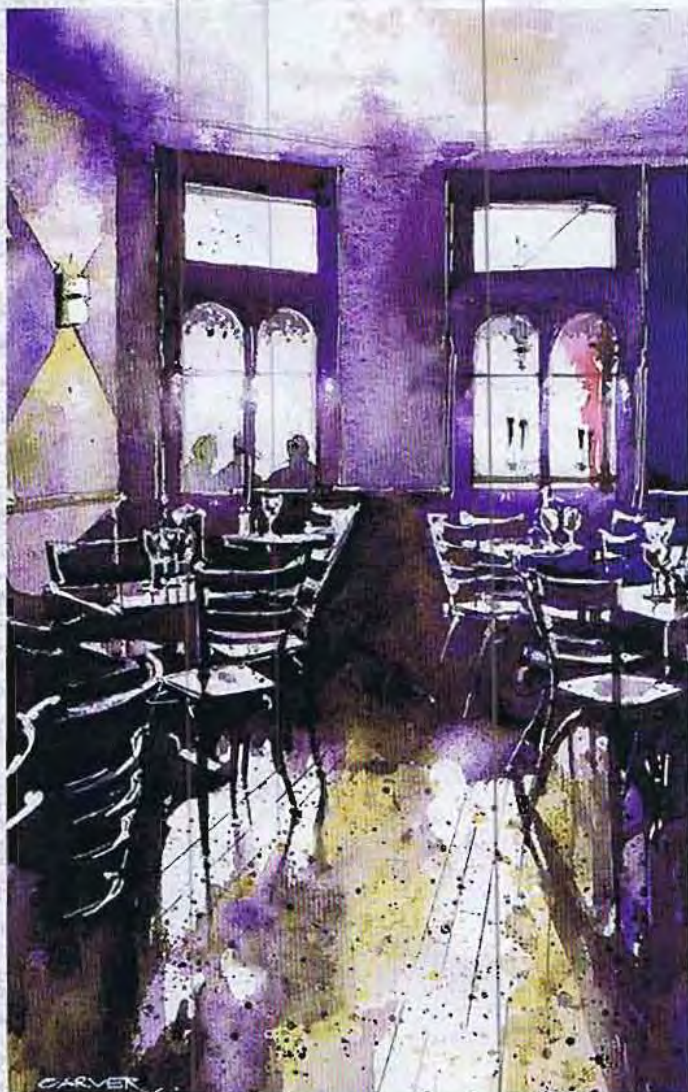
- **Tide marks** occur around a wash when the board is flat.
- **Tissues** are essential to your kit for blotting, but take care in use as texture.
- **Tone** is light and dark values of a colour.
- **Tonality** is the colour scheme or range of tones used. Keep a **Tonal Scale of 5 tones**. A tonal range is critical to all drawing and painting.
- **Translucent washes** allow light, but may blur objects.
- **Transparent washes** allow light and clear objects or marks behind to be seen.



TONAL SCALE



Alimentari Café



Royal Hotel

## MY DESIGN AND COMPOSITIONAL TACTICS

- The notion of light does not appear magically at the end. Capture the light from the very first step and then preserve it, enhancing it till the end.
- A limited colour palette is intentional, to reduce complexity using primarily complementary colours of purple and yellow.
- The scene was changed to turn the driveway toward the viewer, leading the eye down and into the painting.
- Don't paint each building. This painting has two primary shapes; a strong background shape and a light shape incorporating the buildings and driveway. See Shapes diagram.
- The composition has a centre of interest one third from the right and one third from the top.
- The tonal sketch and outline drawing is crucial to see the background shape.
- Protect the primary strong light direction and seek consistency and continuity throughout, particularly with shadows. Seek out reflective light and soft tones and colours in buildings.

### about the artist

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