

Tip #1

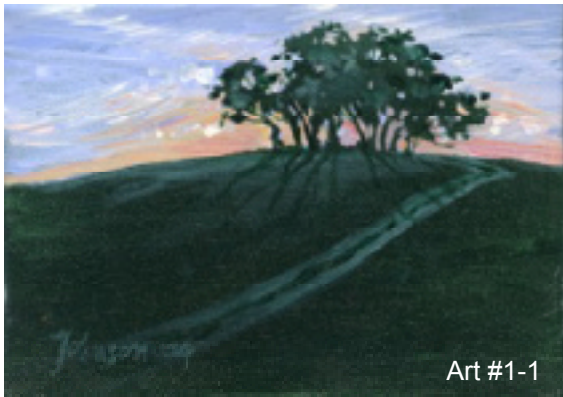
Punching Sky Holes

When using opaque paints for landscape, whether oil, acrylic, alkyd or gouache, it's not necessary to paint every branch and twig, particularly if the tree in question is silhouetted against the sky-just punch holes in it! Keep in mind the basic logic of shape and volume, and you should create very believable trees without overworking them.



Art #1-1

In this small 5 x 7" painting, the entire canvas was covered with a varied dark green, then the sky was painted around and between the distant trees silhouetted against the luminous sunset. Don't worry about painting the opaque sky over details you want to keep--you can always go back in with the dark color to pick out a few small limbs, and add a few small dots of color at the edges of the tree shapes to suggest foliage and leaves.



Classically, artists painted shadows with transparent colors and light-struck areas with opaque. That's how this little landscape works, with a few details added with slightly lighter green, made by adding a touch of white.

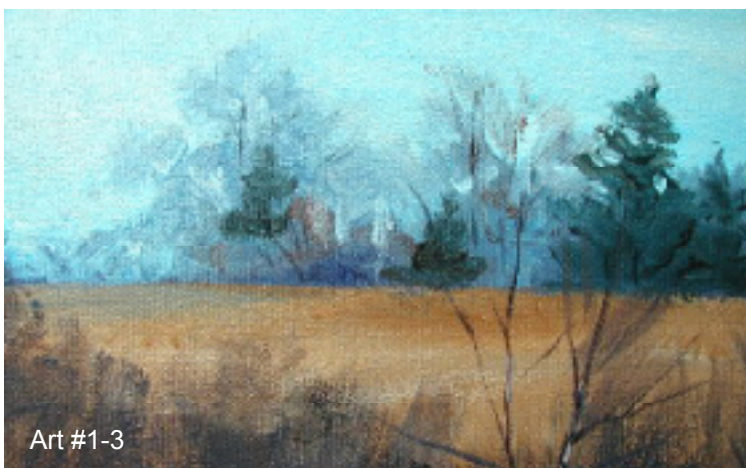
Art #1-2

The technique works well in heavy forest, too--here in this detail of a larger painting, the distant trees on the hill are suggested relatively simply, with holes punched out to give them definition. The foreground tree is painted much more completely. (See more of this in my Sierra Club Guide to Painting in Nature, http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/_/0871569345/qid=1092431030/sr=1_1/ref=sr_1_1/102_8505051_0620126?v=glance&s=books)



Art #1-3

This technique works to suggest bare winter trees, as well, as shown here--this is a detail of a larger painting that will appear in my new North Light book, upcoming in 2005, Painting and Drawing Animals.



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