

Tip #132

Using Thumbnail Sketches - Part Two



As promised, a wee bit more on using thumbnail sketches!

Of course they are useful (and quick, and paper-saving), when you're planning just what you want to do. Whether you're working in your journal, planning a more formal painting, or even doing a mural size work, some small, very quick studies can firm up your thinking and save you time. Last time we mentioned choosing a format – horizontal or vertical, etc. – planning a composition, and working fast. (See Art Tip #131)

Personally, I don't like to plan TOO much ahead, doing numerous detailed studies; it kills the spontaneity for me – so thumbnail sketches are just right.

132-1

This kind of small, quick sketch is really useful when you're traveling, too. You may not have a lot of time as you zip through in a car or train (or in a plane! I've often sketched from plane windows...) You may be traveling with others who prefer to shop, golf, surf, fish, rock climb, hang glide, visit galleries – so you may feel rushed and perhaps even frustrated. Well, how long does a thumbnail sketch take? You'll be surprised at how they can call up the memories of a time and place, with a few well-placed lines.

Helps you decide what you want to focus on for a larger work, too!



132-2

What colors do you want to use for your finished work?

Sometimes working on the spot tempts us to try to exactly reproduce what we see--and we may overwork it, trying too hard. A quick color sketch or two, capturing different moods or themes, can really help in the long run. Try out a few options!

And of course sometimes all you have time for is a tiny color sketch...the middle one was from memory at a stop light, the bottom was a fleeting sunset. Working small IS faster...



As you saw last time, our friend Steve Penberthy sometimes does a few thumbnail sketches right in the margin of his field sketch...it's handy and a really nice graphic effect. See more of his work at <http://www.stevepenberthy.com>.

I'd love to have you visit my newly re-born artist's blog at <http://cathyjohnsonart.blogspot.com>, my Etsy store at <http://www.etsy.com/shop/CathyJohnsonArt> where I'll be offering some of the demos from my classes, my catalog at <http://www.cathyjohnson.info/catalog.html> where you can find instructional CDs and downloads for artists, or drop by for a visit on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/cathy.johnson1>! Check out my YouTube videos for lots more art tutorials at <http://www.youtube.com/user/KateJosTube>.