

Tip #43

The Value of Thumbnails

Sometimes I'm asked WHY do thumbnail sketches-those small preliminary drawings that can be literally not all that much bigger than a thumbnail! (Well, that's a bit of an exaggeration. Usually they're as big as 1" x 2" on up to 3" x 5", if you wish.)

There are almost as many reasons as there are decisions to be made ... but the bottom line is that they save time and frustration, and even space! You can do 5 or 6 of these little planning sketches on a single sketchbook page.

Art 43-1

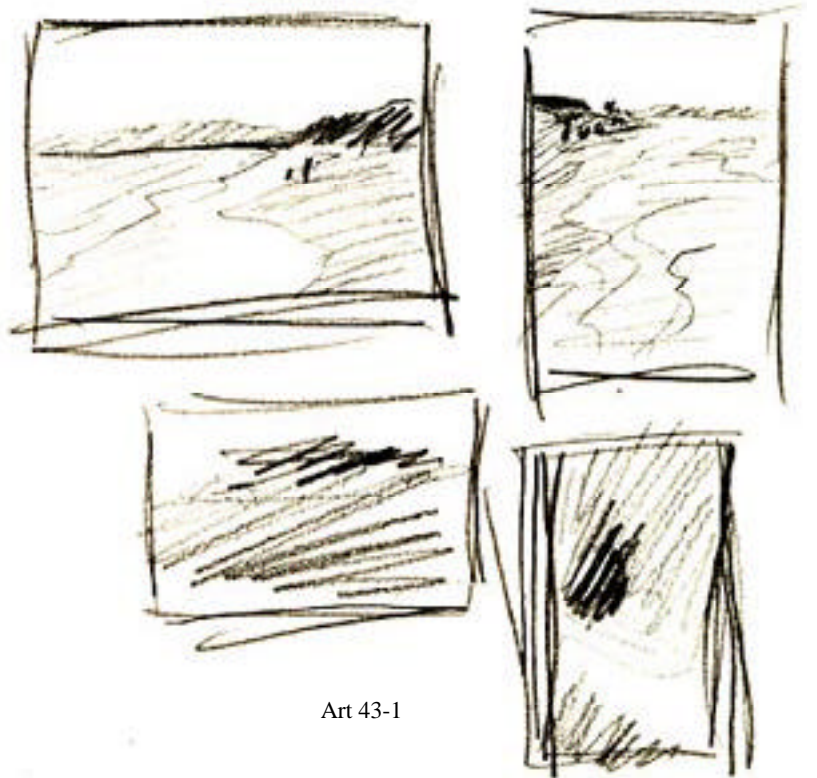
There's no need to do a lot of detail on these...a quick squiggle will be enough to help you decide on a larger work.

Focus in on your subject. You can explore 3 or 4 possibilities in only a few minutes, with these little sketches. Maybe you want an extreme closeup, like a detail study, or a more distant landscape...thumbnails will help you find your way.

Art 43-2

Decide on a composition...it takes only a few minutes, with thumbnail sketches!

Plan your format, quickly...do you want to do a vertical format (portrait) or a horizontal one (landscape)? Some subjects lend themselves better to one than the other...and some moods as well. Verticals can be more dramatic, compositionally, and horizontals can feel vast, spacious, or restful, depending on what the subject is.

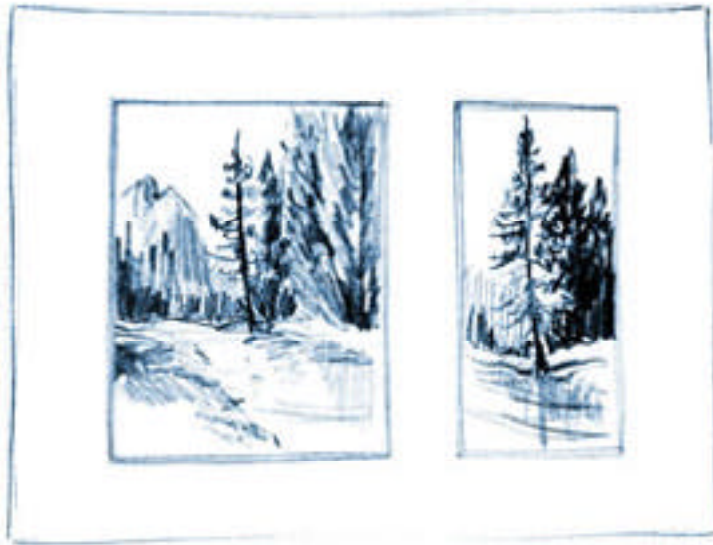


Art 43-1



thumbnails help you
decide which format
goes best with your
subject!

Art 43-2



Art 43-3

Art 43-3

An extreme format allows all of the above options, in spades! A tall waterfall, a broad expanse of plain...fit the subject to its quick thumbnail format to see what feels right.

Consider your values. What mood do you want to express? Light-filled and cheerful, dark and moody? A quick value study, thumbnail size, will help you with that, too.

You can even do thumbnail sketches in color, if you wish, to plan out color temperature, intensity, and so forth.



Art 43-4

Art 43-4

Consider a monochromatic color scheme...



Art 43-5

Art 43-5

Or stick to what you see before you. Either way, these little color sketches are still quite small and very quickly done.

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