

## Tip #47

### *Shadows -- where and how to use them*

Shadows can be all-important to a successful piece of art! They explain a lot, but remember-they're not just all one color. Buying a tube of "neutral tint" really won't get it, nor will using a pencil called "Shadow." That's too boring, and too static. You may use a cool blue wash for a shadow, but vary it! Edges may be sharp to soft, and the value of the shadow -- its lightness or darkness-keeps it interesting, as well. Depending on the direction of the light source, shadows may be long and angular-almost Art Nouveau-or dark and pooled at the feet of your subject.

#### **Art 47-1, Chiaroscuro Tree**

Shadows can define your subject-they almost become the subject itself! Find something with very strong lights and darks to draw, map them carefully and then lay in what you see. This tree suddenly looks dimensional, with only two values, black and white!



Art 47-1



Art 47-2

#### **Art 47-2, Reflected Light**

Shadows often contain reflected light, from whatever is nearest that the light source is hitting. Use that phenomenon to make your shadows lively and interesting. This little nuthatch might be exaggerated just a bit, but then again, maybe not!

### Art 47-3, Arrowrock

The palette knife worked great for the fine lines of the twigs, here!



Art 47-3

### Art 47-4, Winter Shadows

(from my first North Light book, *Painting Nature's Details in Watercolor*)

Think about whether you're dealing with cast shadows—those that run away from your subject—or body shadows, those on the subject itself. Notice the subtle differences. Body shadows are where you'll find most of the reflected lights, and cast shadows are those that stretch out forever when the sun drops low in the sky. I chose a backlit subject for this painting so I could show the effect of cast shadows—sharp and crisp nearest their subject, softening and broadening as they get farther away.

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Art 47-4