



Tip #49

Fantasy and Myth

Imagination and our mythic history go hand in hand. If you've read any of Joseph Campbell's books or seen the television series, *The Power of Myth* with Bill Moyers (now available on DVD), you will understand. It's been said that we NEED myths, to survive - that need is certainly one thing that sets us apart from the other animals on this earth.

How can you use the mythic in your work? How can you let it spark your imagination? Well, first by familiarizing yourself with it - or in the case of many of us, remembering it from our childhood. Many "fairy tales" are simply a way of dealing with the mythic. The hero/heroine, the quest, the goal, the dream of flying, the search for truth and beauty, the reward for virtue or valor ... the search for the spiritual ... this is a rich vein of imagery, whether we choose to mine it overtly or suggest it in more subtle ways.

Art 49-1, Maiden Crone

Many cultures have their mythic beings or images-the wise and playful trickster, Coyote; Yggdrasil, the World Tree that connected the nine worlds of Norse mythology; the Celtic Maiden/Mother/Crone-all these and more can figure in your work and help you to say what it is you need to, with a kind of graphic shorthand.

Notice the strokes made here-mix a rich puddle of paint, and dip your palette knife into it. Drag it across the paper at a low angle and you'll get a nicely tapering line as shown! Scratch with the edge into a wet wash and you'll get fine, sharp lines.



Art 49-1

Art 49-2, Autumn Greenman

The greenman image is one of my favorites. We don't know just how old he IS, but since pre-Christian times he appears to symbolize our relationship with nature - now he appears in churches, Cathedrals and gardens all over Europe and America as well. He may have aspects as Gawain, the Green Knight, Cernunnos, Puck, the Foliate Face, Jack-in-the-Green, you name it! As a naturalist and artist, I find this image comforting...

Let your imagination fly...

See my new CDs for artists (including the first 25 tips on CD for your convenience!) in my Cafepress store, http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson. There's even a virtual sketchcrawl of my old spa town, and "Drawn from Life; An Artist's Journal."



Art 49-2