

Tip #67

Found Art Supplies

Have you ever found yourself wishing for your art supplies so you could capture that fleeting moment? Have you arrived at your destination only to discover you've left your favorite pencils or pens at home?

Frustrating, isn't it? And of course you can't make art without the wherewithal, can you?

Well - of course you can! The cave artists at Lascaux didn't have access to Daniel Smith, Dick Blick, or Jerry's Artarama, and you shouldn't let a little thing like not having the Proper Art Supplies stop you, either, when the spirit moves you.

I once found myself out on a ramble with my sketchbook but nothing to draw with - happily, I had just passed the remains of someone's campfire, just full of bits and pieces of burned wood. The light bulb went on - that's charcoal! The landscape drawing ended up as an illustration in one of my first art books!

Art 66-1, The shape's the thing ...

Learning to look for the negative shapes and capturing them accurately makes it easier to see how things are placed in their spaces-but sometimes it's effective to concentrate on those spaces! This pencil drawing of my old cat, Westport, has more work in the areas that are NOT cat. This works especially well with a light-colored subject like this old champagne kitty.



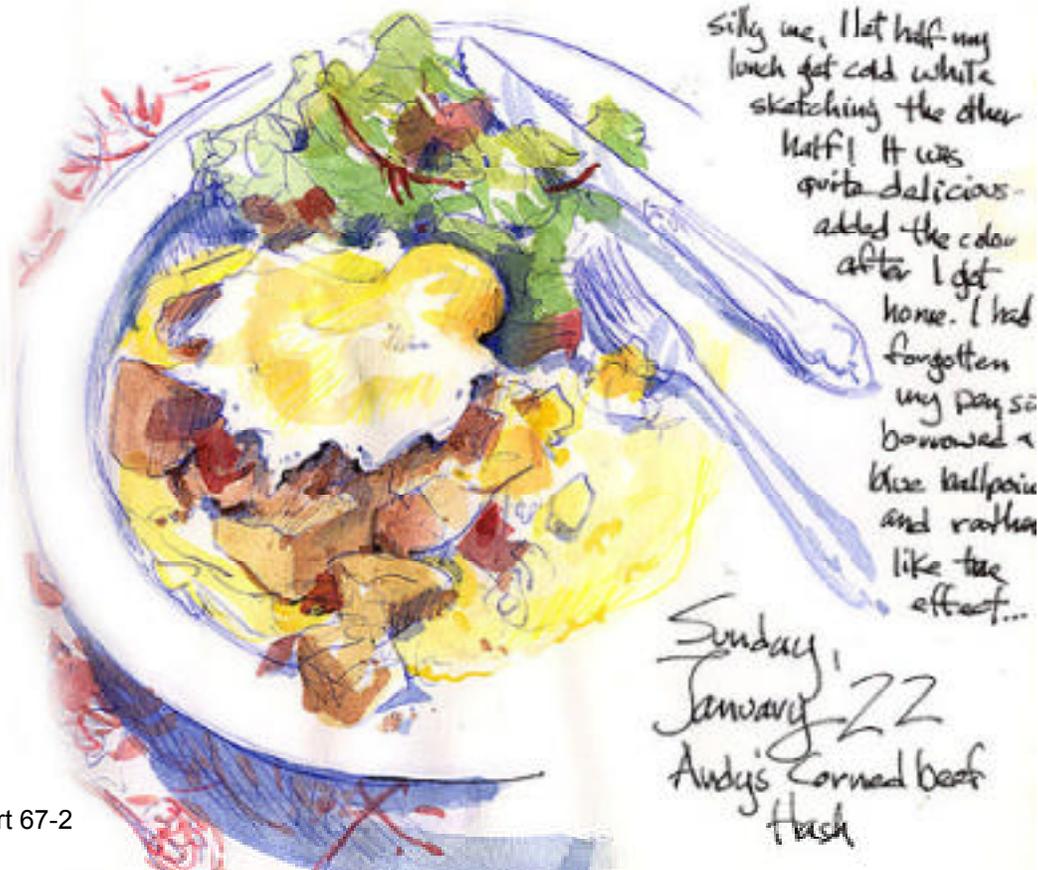
Art 67-1

Art 67-2, "Lunch at Scandinavian Country"

Some things just don't seem to want to make sense to our logical brain. The odd shapes of the blades on this antique electric fan and its housing, distorted by perspective, were difficult for me to see properly-until I paid attention to the negative shapes instead.



Art 67-2



Art 67-3, India Ink play

Who says you have to have a special ink pen to draw? I often use a sharpened stick or dowel rod, but this day I looked at the telescoping straw that came with individual cartons of orange juice and noticed that angled tip, so like the old quill pens I used to cut for myself. I had to experiment, holding the tip flat to the paper, on edge, at an angle, and found it pretty versatile - I could definitely make do with this!

It's tempting to try out cocktail straws, fast food joint straws, and whatever else comes our way - but I've discovered it does work best to cut that angle on the business end!

There are literally dozens of other possibilities, when you consider found art supplies - and we'll consider more of them in a future tip!

You'll find much more on drawing in my Sierra Club Guide to Sketching in Nature and my North Light First Steps series book, Sketching and Drawing - look for them here, <http://www.cathyjohnson.info/books.html>.



Art 67-3

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