



Tip #19

Simple Buildings in Landscape

Buildings in landscape humanize the scene—they give us something to relate to, and provide a focus. They can give the eye a destination. They can be used to suggest a bit of mystery (who lived there? Why? How long ago? Why did they leave?) They can invite us into a scene or they can suggest emotion—an abandoned, derelict building carries a hint of sadness. They can be moody or inviting.

Buildings can give a sense of scale, as well...sometimes it's hard to tell just how large something is without something "knowable" to go by.



Art 19-1

Art 19-1, Step by step demonstration

Of course there's no need to use a barn in your landscape unless it FITS, and you just want to—this is an example of a very simple technique, step by step.

First, lay in a simple wash—scrape back into it while it's still damp to suggest detail, if you like.

Now, wash in shadows under the eaves—on the front of the little barn you can see the color was still fairly wet and the shadow is soft. On the side of the barn, the color had dried. I added a bit more detail to the shadows under the front roof overhang, then painted to roof when all was completely dry.

Finally, I added details, including the door and windows. If your building is in the distance or middle distance, it doesn't need to be any more detailed than this.

Art 19-2, Put it into the landscape

Now, put it into your landscape—this was a demonstration from my most popular North Light book, *Creating*

Textures in Watercolor - that's why there are notes on the art! Since this one is far back in the picture, I kept the details even simpler, but your eye still goes there, led, in part, by the linear marks in the field, and in part by the fact that our eye searches out the familiar and evocative human touch. I liked the soft, subtle colors here...



Art 19-2



Art 19-3

Art 19-3, Other Buildings

And of course there's no need to use a barn-you could choose a garden shed, gazebo, Navajo hogan, lean-to, greenhouse, church, schoolhouse, observatory, or even an outhouse, as I did here! Seems silly, but this is one of my favorite paintings...again, the building becomes the center of interest because it *is* very human, and because its geometric form contrasts with the curves and rhythm of nature.

For more on buildings in landscape, see *Creating Textures in Watercolor* or my First Steps Series book, *Painting Watercolors*, which covers a variety of simple buildings, both from North Light. You can find these and other North Light Books online at <http://www.artistsnetwork.com/nlbooks/index.asp> or <http://www.amazon.com>.

You'll find my original artwork on new products in my Cafepress store, at http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson.