

## Tip #74

### *Painting Cats*

Cats are wonderfully graceful, funny, kinetic and challenging. If you are a cat person, as I am, you'll delight in trying to capture them on paper or canvas; if you have your OWN, you'll never run out of models. Still, painting a neighbor's cat or a stray moggy, as they call them in England, is a decent substitute ... their feline grace and presence is captivating.

As in most things, practice is a great help. Drawing cats - or any animal! - over and over lets us get familiar with how their bodies are put together, and how they move. Then when they *do* just that before you're finished, you can complete your sketch in a believable manner. This is great place to practice those quick gesture sketches!

#### **Art 74-1, Blocking in forms**

Look for ways to simplify the shape, then add details as you can. This little example of blocking in the forms is from my recent article in *Watercolor Magic*, the Creativity Workshop for the December 2007 issue. You'll find more about it here, <http://www.watercolormagic.com/blog/default,date,2007-10-15.aspx>.



#### **Art 74-2, Do what you can in the time you have**

If there's only time to catch a little of your subject, do that! Here, Merlin was pretending to be asleep (you can see his ears turned to listen!) before suddenly leaping up to run off. I had quickly sketched his head, ears, and the beginnings of the "gesture" of his pose, so just splashed on a watercolor wash and called it done!

### **Art 74-3, Working from life**

If you enjoy working from life while painting cats, most likely you'll be depicting one that's asleep! Here, Miss Rags appropriated a box that Oliver had previously tagged as his-fortunately the box was simple to sketch and her pose was relatively easy. I concentrated most on her head and face, doing the most detail there first, while she was immobile.

Look for ways to simplify and focus, and you'll be able to produce a painting that catches something of the beauty of the cat.



Art 74-3

### **Art 74-4, Cats make wonderful painting subjects! "Maggie in a Basket" is 15" x 22" on cold pressed Fabriano paper.**

Years of sketching and painting cats helped me to capture the expression on my cat Margaret's face ... but don't hesitate to use photo resources if need be. I'd taken pictures of her and her wide-eyed stare more than once, and at least a photo stays put till you're finished! I liked this one well enough I used her on a greeting card and a post-card in my CafePress store, here, [http://www.cafepress.com/cathy\\_johnson.21126530](http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson.21126530).

(If you like images of cats, please browse the rest of my CafePress store, especially the section called "Cats!", [http://www.cafepress.com/cathy\\_johnson/547327](http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson/547327). Or in the section on "Posters, prints, cards and more, here, [http://www.cafepress.com/cathy\\_johnson/507340](http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson/507340).)

Be sure to look for my NEW CDs for artists in my CafePress store, [http://www.cafepress.com/cathy\\_johnson](http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson), and watch for my fine arts auctions, <http://members.ebay.com/aboutme/cathyjohnsonart>, weekly on eBay.



Art 74-4