

Tip #97

More Brush Basics - Flats



These brushes were originally sign painters' brushes, but fine artists jumped on them sometime early in the 20th century and discovered all the terrific things they can do! They're also often much less expensive than round brushes, probably because they're much easier to make. No need to graduate the tips to a sharp point while making sure the brush holds a reasonable amount of paint...

Last time I said if I could have only one brush, I'd choose a round - but thank my lucky stars, I DON'T have to choose, because I pick up a flat more often than not!

Art 97-1, Versatile brush!



Don't imagine you can only make rigid, mechanical shapes dictated by the brush's straight lines. You can use the side of the brush, the belly, the corner, the edge. Here are samples I

did for my North Light book, *Watercolor Tricks and Techniques*, out in early 2010. Try several widths - I usually have a 1", 3/4" and 1/2" in my repertoire. Test drive your brush in as many ways as you can imagine!

Art 97-2,
Flats can do traditional washes, as well ...

You can get a nice flat or graded wash with a flat brush, too - just be sure to pick up the "bead" of color that usually forms at the bottom. Wring your brush or wipe it on a tissue, then touch it to the wet bead - the excess liquid will wick up into the brush to avoid backruns or "flowers."



Art 97-3, LOTS of variety in this painting of a derelict lobster boat in Maine ...



I used only a couple of flats on most of this painting-the side, the edge, the corner...you name it! See what YOU can do. (In the collection of Scott and Lucinda Clark.)

Please drop by my artists blog, <http://katequicksilvr.livejournal.com/>, my fine arts gallery blog, located at <http://cathyjohnsonart.blogspot.com/>, where I often offer mini-demos, my CafePress store, located at http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson, where you can find instructional CDs for artists, or drop by for a visit on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/cathy.johnson1>!

© Copyright 2009 Cathy Johnson, Graphics/Fine Arts, All Rights Reserved