



## "Painting Florals In Watercolor"



The art of painting flowers has been a marvelous challenge. It was not sufficient for me to just take a photograph and paint from it. I had to see them in their natural habitats and naturalized in my garden and yard. I studied them from all sides, in all kinds of lighting conditions. I saw the way the dewy light of dawn created halos of gold around each delicate petal. The bright light of noon-day made the colors explode in radiant profusion. As the sun fell toward the horizon, a warm afternoon glow lit the garden and turned each bloom into a precious jewel. And after sundown, the brightness of the sky cast a marvelous glow that seemed to emanate from the blossoms themselves. On grey, overcast days, the flowers brought life and beauty to the otherwise drab world. Sometimes, the petals were bedecked with shimmering pearls of water droplets. On occasion the dew was so fine, it seemed the flowers were coated with diamond dust. I studied the blossoms close up. I noted each line



in the petals, each stamen and pistil. I sketched the buds from first form to glorious opening. I memorized

the shapes of the leaves, the size and quality of the stems, the amount and configuration of the blooms borne upon the stems. And I painted them.

My watercolor set up is quite simple. I have an area in my painting loft dedicated to watercolor painting. The same fluorescent lights and north facing windows that light my oils, are sufficient for the whole room. There is a storage unit that Ed, my husband, built with wide, deep, flat drawers, that can hold many sheets of watercolor paper, as well as the finished pieces waiting



to be matted and framed. I generally sit and work "flat", the paper taped to a piece of rigid masonite board. I use a greater range of colors for watercolor than I do for oils. My style is very direct, so I want to be able to choose the perfect rosy red, or pink or salmon



that I see in the flower. However, I do a lot of color mixing. I have mostly Winsor-Newton paints, but my box, like most artist's, is packed with other brands,

some major, some more obscure. I like the Russian, Yarka brand for its darker tones and ease of coverage. I prefer Arches 140# hot-pressed paper. For my realistic style, the smooth surface is preferred, upon which I am able to employ fine detail. My brushes are differing sizes of sable, with a few less expensive brushes, to do heavy duty scumbling, etc.

I start the piece with a light pencil sketch of the flower and its characteristics, on paper sized and cut to the shape best suited to the composition. My technique is to wash in the background colors in an impressionistic style, leaving the basic subject areas white.



Then painting on dry paper, I begin layering the local color in light washes, gradually deepening the tones in the shadow areas, and darker portions of the flower. I generally complete the supporting structure including the leaves and stems, then finish the blossoms. The painting is signed, scanned, color corrected as needed, and printed as a giclee print on high quality Curtis Brightwater bright white 80# cover stock paper. The print is shrink-wrapped on foam board with a certificate of authenticity and a biographical brochure on the back. I then am ready to distribute the prints to some of the more than fifty galleries and gift shops that carry my work on consignment.