

Taking the Plunge in Watercolor!

Some folks consider watercolors hard. Things run and go in unexpected places. Colors mingle in unexpected ways on moist paper. “Mistakes” can’t be readily erased.

Watercolors ARE like life---full of things we didn’t necessarily plan on AND things we sometimes have to learn to live with and then learn to LOVE!

That is exactly why they are perfect for making journals and postcards reflecting the moments of our lives:)))

My simple approach for making watercolor postcards and journaling is to do my drawing first, then color it--- and once it’s completely dry, go back in with my pen and strengthen/ darken any passages or lines that need it.

Here are some things to remember on your way to watercoloring:

- Whitespace is a thing of beauty---just like in life. Not placing color on every square inch of your paper leaves some places for things to sparkle---just like the sunlight! Your white paper is your “white paint” so you always want to save some light!
- Just a like a rumor in a clique of high school girls, wherever the paper is wet you can bet things are going to spread (okay, the technical term here is “bloom”, but you get my drift;) Color brushed onto wetted paper = color traveling everywhere.
- Even when a paper appears dry, it may be damp enough for colors to not stay put which can cause color to feather out. Paper that feels “cool” to the top of your index finger still has moisture in it, so if you want that color to stay exactly in its place, let the paper dry until it feels the same temp as areas that have not been wetted at all before applying color.
- This is your chance to color outside the lines!! I love doing my drawing first, then “splashing” the color in letting it go outside the lines on purpose. The line drawing of



the tree already tells me what it is, so the color can meander out and add some character without effecting the story you are telling.

- Clean water (like a clean house) is next to godliness (okay, I heard that one growing up so you can disregard...) but for clean watercolors, rinsing your brush frequently in clean water does the trick.
- Like things that are soft? For soft edges, wet a large area of your paper, then drop color into places you choose.
- Want edges like your lettuce, crisp? Paint onto dry paper---wherever your brush touches down, you will have a very crisp edge.
- Rule of thumb for painting values in watercolor? Work light to dark. Lightest areas first, middle values next, darkest areas last. The reason? Dark passages painted too early are like little mine fields waiting to explode if you touch your wet brush up against them:))

Anything can and should be part of your watercoloring while here in France or while making like a tourist in your hometown;)



your dessert for the day
a road sign
a fellow traveler
a flower local to this area
your art supplies (your pen, your brush, your watercolor box)
your bed
your opened suitcase (or in my case, my EXPLODING suitcase:)
a spider web in the garden
the bell that calls us to dinner each evening
hand-drawn maps of where you've been
use some French words or lines from French songs in your drawings
airline tickets, travel itineraries
your shoes
brush strokes of the colors used in your journal with the names

Then....when we are out and about in the villages...

bicycles
street lamps
cats (don't tell Eddie)
dogs
benches
shop windows
flower boxes
fountains
statues
cafes
signage of all sorts
markets
doorways
little old men
little old women
little tiny cars
wonderful old buildings

The main thing to remember

Have JOY in the moment
JOY in awareness that you are here and now---

Life is Good!!