

Monthly Meeting Notes

FCA Victoria, November 17, 2011 Called to order at 7:15, Windsor Park Pavilion

Chair: Sam Boehner

Business:

1. Chapter Membership Dues of \$20.00 were required in September. Any outstanding payment can be mailed to: Mary Conley @ #1-908 St. Charles Street, Victoria, BC V8S 3P6

2. Mark your calendars for our Victoria Chapter Christmas Potluck on Thursday, December 15th, 2011. Bring a **potluck dish** to share (and a little note listing main ingredients for members with food allergies). To help cut down on waste, please **bring your own cup, glass and utensils**, and bottle of wine (if you prefer). We will be having our annual **"Small Painting Exchange"**. Anyone who brings a painting to exchange goes home with a piece to treasure from one of our talented artists. Your piece should be no larger than 8" x 10", and it does not need to be framed. Please do not gift wrap the painting so everyone may enjoy seeing the various creations. Simply slide the painting into a plastic presentation sleeve if it is sensitive. Paintings will be exchanged using a number system.

3. Kerry Fleetwood has kindly volunteered once again to organize the slide show of all the artists' new work from this past year. Please send your JPEG images ASAP to Kerry at: kerryfleetwood@shaw.ca so she can start preparing the show.

4. Sam shared the news about the outstanding 4-day workshop on "Cityscapes" given by Harold Allanson, SFCA. Not only did the participants have the opportunity to capture city scenes, Harold explained his techniques for using multiple photographs to rearrange elements to create a better composition. Participants also practiced his bold and direct style of painting to try their



hand at painting mist and fog, chickens, trees, boats and water. Thank you to Kevin Ronneseth for bringing in several large montages of photographs of the workshop to show the membership, as well as providing the photographs for these meeting notes.

Demonstration Summary: Harold Allanson, SFCA www.haroldallanson.com

Sam introduced Harold and shared his ever-growing list of achievements and awards that have been received from both sides of the Canadian/US border in his remarkably short 12 years of painting watercolour. Harold is well known for his evocative paintings of west coast harbours and boats, and the people who populate them.



*Demonstration
painting by
Harold Allanson
Photo courtesy of
Kevin Ronneseth*

Harold's demonstration for the evening was on painting reflections on water. The image was a group of fishing boats tied up in a calm harbor, with mist filtering through fir trees in the background. Harold had already prepared much of the painting ahead of the meeting, having applied liquid mask to a few of the smaller foreground elements, having painted the background elements and the boats, as well as the base wash for the foreground water, which darkened towards the bottom of the painting.

Harold paints water (and trees) with a flat brush. It provides a nice edge at the water line, and the strokes can easily be extended in a horizontal line to create broken reflections. He paints with his board at a tilt, with a roll of paper towel beneath the top of the board, painting downwards to create the reflection of the forest, switching to a round brush towards the bottom of the reflection to create the uppermost tips of the trees. Harold will turn his board around and paint upside down for ease of painting, due to the fact that his paintings are so large and some areas can be difficult to reach. From time to time, Harold will blot his painting with toilet paper to lighten his paint and to create variation.

Harold works from large shapes moving on to smaller shapes, so in this demonstration he added all his large sections first. After these were painted and dry, he removed his liquid mask and painted the reflections of the various floats, and all the other small shapes.

If an error is made, he recovers the area by using a "Mr. Clean Magic Eraser", a sponge marketed for household cleaning. To demonstrate this concept Harold used the sponge and washed away the beautiful tree reflection at the left of the painting, much to the horror of the watercolourists who were watching the demo! After the area had dried he repainted his forest reflections without any perceptible correction to the area.

During the detailed work, Harold painted the reflections of the masts, explaining that even in calm waters the boats will have movement. The mast reflection closer to the boat will be fairly straight, yet as the reflection moves further up the mast (away from the hull of the boat), the mast will have more movement and sway to it, and this will be noticeable in the reflection.

To complete the painting, Harold used a damp brush to lift “ripples” from the water that would normally form due to bugs touching the surface, or fish breaking the surface from below. Without this detail, the eye cannot “read” the area as water.

Specific Points about Harold’s Methods and Tools:

The Drawing: The image is drawn onto tracing paper, using numerous layers to move elements around for a better composition. When Harold arrives at his final composition, he copies all the elements onto one piece of tracing paper then transfers the image to his watercolour paper using non-wax graphite paper so as not to “bruise” the paper with repeated drawing and erasing.

Brushes: Harold uses a few flat brushes, as well as cheap rounds purchased at Opus by the name of “Allegro”. They are not floppy, and they keep a nice point. He paints 90% of his painting (even the large ones) with a #4 or #5 round, feeling that he loses control with a larger brush. Washes or larger shapes are created with a 1” flat brush. Corrections and lifting are often done with a small square-front acrylic brush.

Pigments: Daniel Smith and Winsor & Newton tube colours are his preferred paints. He is not particular on the colours themselves or their properties. Favourite colours are the Quinacridone colours of Burnt Scarlet, Burnt Orange and Gold to create nice browns, and Cobalt Blue and Cadmium Orange to create a nice grey.

Paper: Harold uses Twinrocker watercolour paper, (<http://www.twinrocker.com/>), which is a hand-made cotton rag paper. Because it is hand-made, the fibers lay in a random pattern, and therefore absorb and repel the paint differently than Arches. If you are careful not to scrub your paint into the surface, you can easily lift out most pigments (unless they are staining). The paper weight is ~200 lbs. and comes in Hot, Cold and Rough press. Twinrocker may be purchased at Dick Blick or Cheap Joe’s. One note of caution is that due to the softness of the paper, masking fluid and tape can delaminate the paper fairly easily.

- Harold sometimes uses liquid mask, but at other time he paints around items to avoid the hard edge that liquid mask leaves behind.
- Toilet paper is used to blot paint. Paper towel is too harsh, and Kleenex falls apart too quickly. Harold does use paper towel for resting his brushes on, and to wipe excess paint and/or water from the brush.
- Colours are mixed directly on the palette.
- Various tube pigments fill the wells of his palette (he works with 4 palettes) and have been allowed to dry. This way, if a colour becomes contaminated, the surface can easily be washed off to get back to the pure colour.
- He paints generally from large shapes to small as the painting progresses.
- Lifting is often used towards the end of the painting to bring lights into darks, and darks into lights.

- Graphite paper used is: Sally's Graphite paper, which is a non-wax graphite (sold by Opus)
- The pen used over top of tracing paper and graphite is a Pilot Fine or Extra Fine ballpoint pen. Any pen with a thicker point can alter the proportions of your image.
- Harold's influences: Alan Wylie, John Salminen, Andrew Wyeth and John Singer Sargent.
- Rule of Thumb for reflections:
 1. If you get into trouble, just go darker.
 2. Darks reflect lighter and light reflects darker on the surface of the water.
 3. Reflections are more muted than the item that is being reflected.

Next meeting: December 15th, 2011 for our Christmas Potluck! See #2 at the top of the meeting notes for further information.