

## Paint an Autumn Creek Scene in Watercolor or Oil

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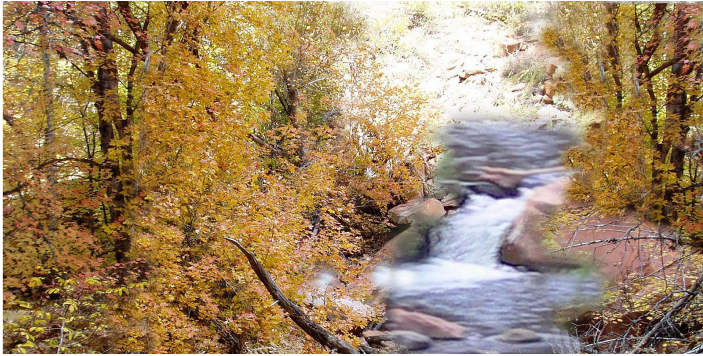
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### 2 Simple Straightforward Color STUDIES: 3-step in Oil & 4-step in Watercolor

Three values - light, medium, dark - separated into simple steps - applies directly to a "real" painting. . .

#### The Simple 3-step OIL Study



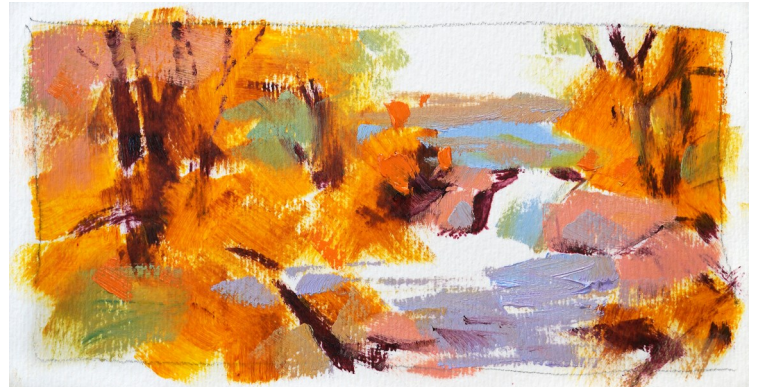
The reference photo...



Step 1 - The simple sketch - in this composition there are no large areas of dark value; therefore, the sketch of dark value accents serves as both compositional sketch and dark value-pattern for the composition in this small and simple oil sketch...

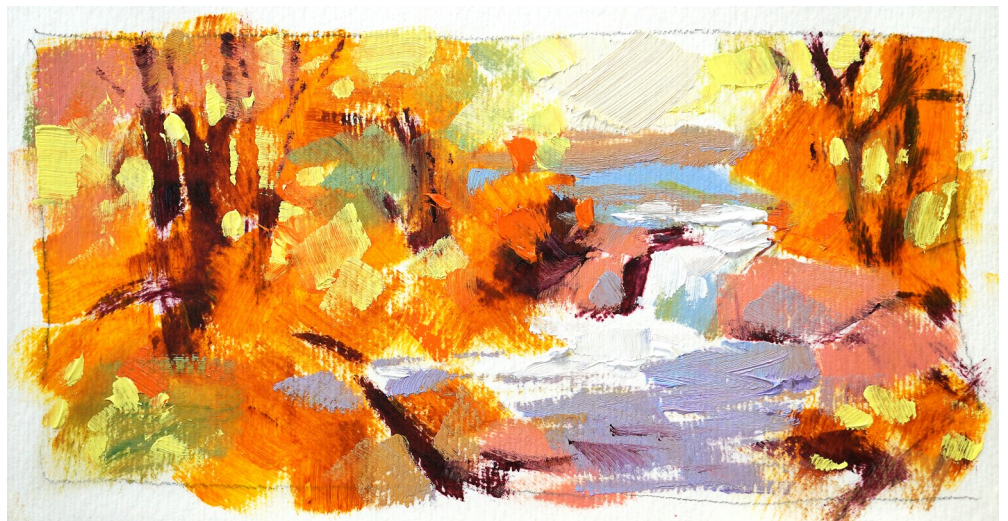
(This sketch is done with oil in a watercolor paper tablet. Since this is not an actual "painting", the archival rule of not painting with oil on paper I consider to be irrelevant.)

Step 2 - Paint the mass shapes of medium-value tones. See this step converted to gray-tone below. Allow the paint to cross shape boundaries - in other words, don't try to stay too carefully within the shapes of individual trees. Where one shape merges into the next (see reference photo) let the value and color carry right through into adjoining shapes as shapes often do in life. It is often a human construct to separate one tree from another...



Step 3 - Paint the lightest values: the light yellow in the fall foliage, sun-struck background and whitewater...

Again, look at the example in gray-tone below...





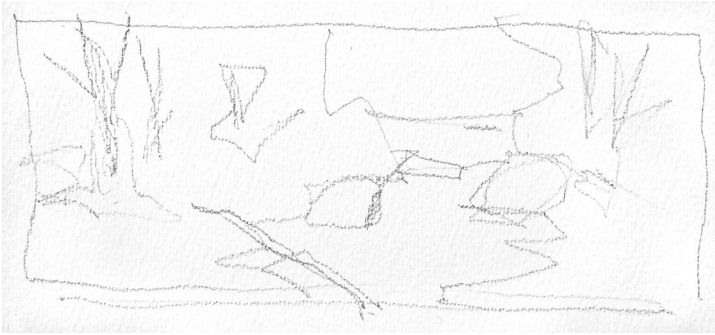
## The Simple 4-step WATERCOLOR Study

Again, we use three values - light, medium, dark - separated into simple steps.

Since I also paint in watercolor, I frequently do a watercolor sketch to prepare for an oil painting - or vice-versa.

The process for watercolor may be the opposite than for oil: light to dark rather than dark to light, but learning to see the simple values and largest, most important shapes is the same, regardless of medium.

Plus - it's fun!



Step 1 - A super-simple pencil sketch...



Step 2 - The lightest values...



Step 3 - Paint the medium values...



Step 4 - Paint the dark value accents...

I would love for you to experience the sense of freedom that comes from not caring about the outcome, but just to enjoy the process - and then allow some of that freedom to carry into the actual "painting".

In addition to freeing ourselves from over-thinking our painting process, our overriding **objectives** for doing these simple 3- and 4-step exercises is to **simplify** several critical aspects of the proposed painting in order to make the "real" painting easier to accomplish.

I'm referring to **Simplification** in terms of:

- Drawing & Composition - largest, most important shapes only
- Process - traditional "dark-to-light" (or light to dark as with watercolor), at its most basic
- Values - seeing and separating the reference photo into 3 basic values

In the actual "painting" as we begin to use "fancier" techniques, more detail, creative color, etc., we will probably find it easy to get "bogged down" and even confused as to how to accomplish our goal as we attempt to capture our mental image of a beautiful painting. When that confusion strikes it is so helpful to have a "simple plan" as backup.

Our goal with these studies is NOT to produce a "painting", but a study that is a reasonable interpretation - and most important, the **essence** of the subject!