Watercolor Workshop: Italian Garden Scene

MATERIALS:

- Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolor Tubes (5ml):
  • Cobalt Blue
  • New Gamboge
  • Permanent Sap Green
  • Burnt Sienna
  • Raw Umber
  • French Ultramarine
  • Alizarin Crimson
  • Yellow Ochre
- Winsor & Newton University Round Brush, Size 6
- Winsor & Newton University Round Brush, Size 10
- Project line art
- Arches 140lb cold pressed watercolor paper, trimmed to size

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

- Carbon paper
- Watercups
- Paper Towels
- Additional watercolor paper (for dabbing water and testing color)
- Watercolor palette w/ wells

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAINTING "TONY'S GARDEN"

The sketch of this garden was painted in the hill town of Civita di Bagnoregio, Italy. Copyright Stephanie Bower • Architectural Illustration 2017 • www.stephaniebower.com

This is an exercise in using yellows, browns and reds (or warm colors) to visually make some areas of the painting advance, and an exercise in using blues and purples (or cool colors) to make some areas of the painting recede. In architectural terms, you can think about it as the solid forms are warm, while the voids are cool. To create this effect, apply watercolor in layers, starting with an underpainting of fairly diluted colors, and then increasing the density of pigment as the painting progresses.

SET UP

Prepare paints on palette, water, paper towels, and scraps of paper to test colors. When painting, be sure the paper is tilted to an angle of approximately 30-45 degrees off the table top.
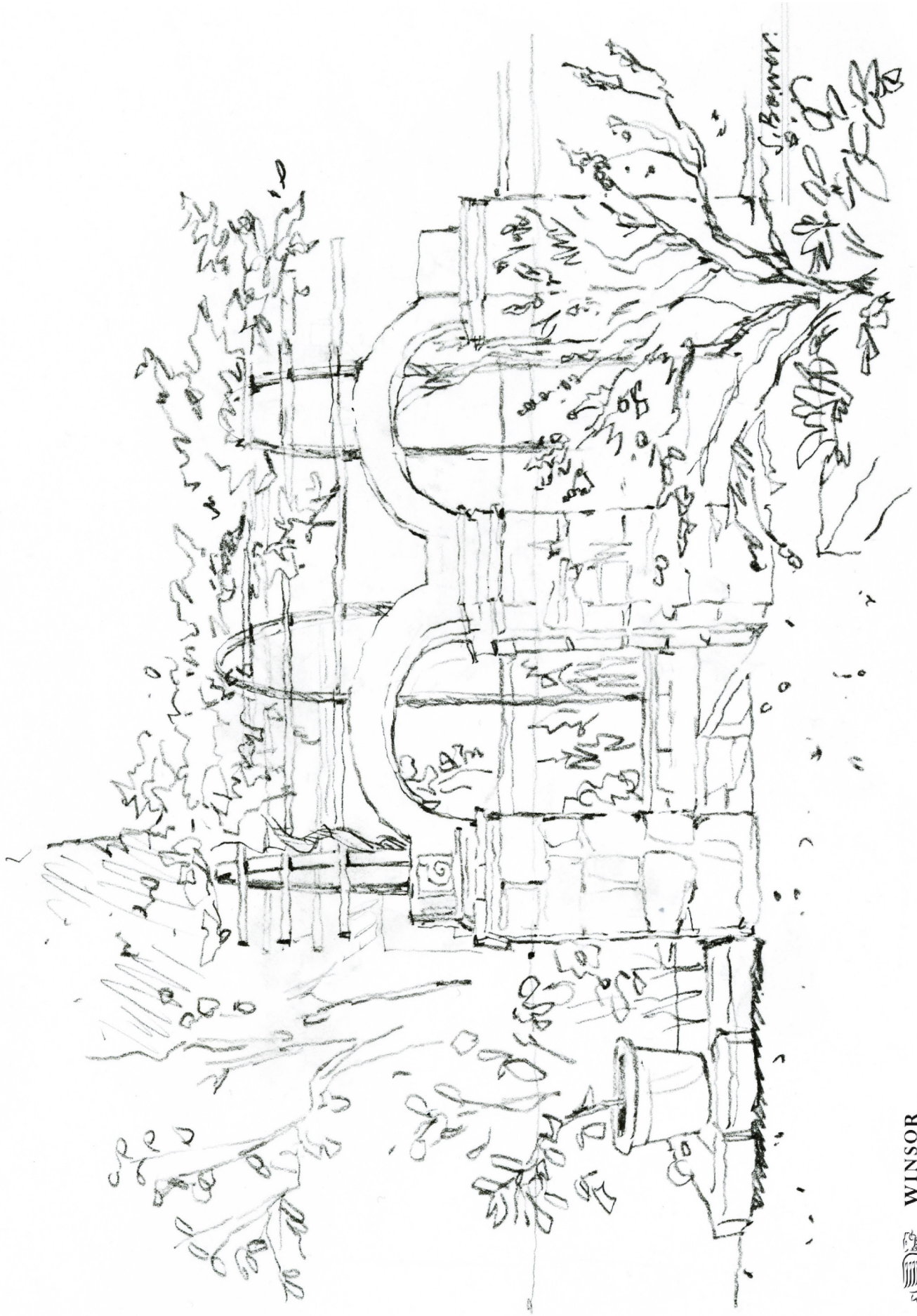
UNDERPAINTING

1. Separate the arches from the background by underpainting with a diluted Cobalt Blue. While wet, drop in more Cobalt Blue in places, and use gravity and the tilt of the paper to let the colors sink to the bottom. Pick up the brush a lot for texture and to leave white spaces in between strokes for sparkle.
2. Mix a warm yellow green (Sap Green + New Gamboge + spot of Burnt Sienna). Starting with diluted New Gamboge, paint the foliage indicating the sun coming from the left (light on left, dark on right). While wet, drop the green in places to indicate the shadier side of the foliage Pick up the brush a lot when applying paint to indicate the texture and scale of leaves.
3. Using diluted Raw Umber, paint the stone on the arches, leaving lots of white areas to indicate the sun hitting the surface. While wet, drop in Burnt Sienna in places for variation in color. Also drop in small bits of gray (Burnt Sienna + French Ultramarine) for variation in stone color.
4. Mix a cool purple (Cobalt Blue + Alizarin Crimson) and paint the lavender plant in the foreground. Be sure to leave the tips white, and remember that left is lighter (sun) and right is darker (shade). While wet, drop in extra Cobalt Blue and green for variation in color and to darken the shady side.

OVERLAYING COLOR

1. On the back wall behind the arches, use some of the same purple, then while wet, drop in spots of Burnt Sienna so it feels like warm stone in cool shade.
2. Mix a medium warm green (Sap Green + New Gamboge + Burnt Sienna) and paint the body and underside of all foliage around the arches. While wet, drop in more bits of New Gamboge to show sun hitting the leaves. Remember, the sun is coming from the left.
3. Mix a slightly warmer purple (French Ultramarine + Alizarin Crimson). Paint the foliage on the underside of the canopy, use this purple to help define the edges of the arches. Use small strokes to indicate the scale of the leaves. Use this same purple to add depth to the lavender plant.
4. Mix a gray (French Ultramarine + Burnt Sienna + spot of Alizarin Crimson) to paint in the back side of the trellis (leave the front side white). Add more Burnt Sienna to this mix to create a warmer gray to add shadows on the arches, stone, and pot, etc.

FINISHING TOUCHES

1. Mix an orange (New Gamboge + Alizarin Crimson) to paint in the fruit and flowers. Add a warmer purple to the lavender bush. On the ground, paint small areas with a diluted gray (French Ultramarine + Burnt Sienna + spot of Alizarin Crimson), then drop in Yellow Ochre Light while wet.