

Tom Francesconi aws, news, tusa

Watercolor Impressions



Chicago's Magnificent Mile

NEWS!!

Tom's painting, "Waiting on Tables", was accepted into the 2014 **American Watercolor Society** International Exhibition. With this acceptance, Tom has been awarded signature membership in the American Watercolor Society. Tom will be attending the AWS Awards Dinner at the Salmagundi Club in New York on April 11, 2014.

Tom's painting, "Honfleur Harbor Market", was selected for inclusion in the **Transparent Watercolor Society of America** 2014 National Exhibition. This is the 12th year that Tom has been selected to exhibit in this prestigious show.

Morgan Stanley, a financial services corporation, commissioned Tom to create a painting for their Corporate Offices in Chicago.

Keeping an Open Palette

Recently, I was asked how I decide what to paint? Do my reference photographs become “stale”? To begin, I feel that I have more painting ideas floating around my head than I probably have time left to paint. Sometimes I jot them down so I do not forget. Because of this, I often have an idea for my next painting before I finish the one in front of me. As is the case with many artists, the seeds for my ideas are born from life experiences which stimulate a creative response. One way to capture that seed is my taking photographs. And, in a perfect world, that would be the end of it. Any time I need an idea, I would just look at a reference photo and presto, I would be off and running, but it does not always work that way. As time passes, photographs get old and so may the inspiration that came with them. Sometimes I cannot even imagine why I took the picture in the first place. Here is where a note written on the back of the photograph may have been helpful. But there are times, regardless of when the photograph was taken, I am no longer moved by it. Being human, I am not always the same emotionally. What is a poor painter to do? Here are a few tips that I use that may help you during times like these.

It is safe to say that photographs can be a great source for artists. I have more photographs than I know what to do with, and perhaps that is part of the problem--too many choices. You know the routine--flip, flip, flip, nope, nope, nope. Give it up! Maybe it is time to get rid of some of those photographs. What I like to do is put together a small group of a dozen or so--ones that seem to perk my interest--and do a series of value studies for each of them. That usually gets the ball rolling. Now I have painting ideas waiting in line for me. I will repeat the process, as needed. As time passes, I find some photographs never get chosen. I separate them out to give them one more chance at a later date. At that time, I will consider the possibilities. I may even try to develop an idea by doing some loose studies. If, at this point, nothing has changed, I will purge them from my already too large of a collection.

Old sketches can also be a wonderful resource for paintings. That stack of sketch books in my studio is always available to furnish me with ready-made value patterns. Whenever I look through my sketch books I always find something of

interest, even if it has been used before. There is something about the flavor of the sketch that energizes me. And more often than not, that old sketch may send me in new directions. Either way, it has gotten my attention and I am productive once again.

An often overlooked source for painting material is a failed painting. Why not take a fresh look at an old friend? Okay, so it may not be a friend, but maybe you can make it one. Fresh eyes can offer amazing remedies to those paintings waiting to be rescued. I almost always have some of those paintings in the studio, and when I get good and tired of having them around, I decide to do something about it. I will analyze each painting, trying to determine why it is not working. I will ask specific questions: Is there a problem with the value pattern? Did I try to say too much? Is it a color issue? Sometimes I will find that the issue is minor and can be fixed without too much fuss. If I determine that the painting is not able to be saved, I may decide to try again, working from the original sketch if I still like it or, if not, make a new sketch. At the very least, I learn from the process. It is my own private critique session, thinking creatively and working my craft.

If, for whatever reason, none of the above works for you, it may be time to acquire some new material. Get outside, breathe some invigorating air, and discover what is out there. I know you have heard it before, but it is true: *Subject matter is all around us*. It may be that we just need to take a fresh look. At times like these, I may simply take some time off to smell the roses and do something that is not art-related. Sometimes, when I do not work so hard at it, things just seem to flow more readily. After all, we are not machines. From my own experience, and on more than one occasion, I have been amazed by a very good painting that was born from a period of rest and removal. This can be as short as an hour or as long as...? Only you can determine that. Sometimes I just feel like getting away from my everyday routine and my immediate world. Maybe a day trip or a weekend getaway will satisfy the urge. Besides, my family is always eager for a road trip! It does not have to be to some far-flung, exotic locale. The idea here is to just get something new in front of me. I let the rest take care of itself.

Lastly, there have been times when all I can do is just get in the studio and surround myself with the materials of my craft. I may not paint at all. There are always enough things to keep me busy in the studio, and many times, ideas were generated from my having been in that environment. Happy painting!



Chicago's Buckingham Fountain

2014 Workshops

- **This Spring! May 19-23, 2014** Door County, WI
This is my annual spring workshop near my home in Ellison Bay. Door County is known for its charming lakeside villages and picturesque landscape. It has long been a special place of retreat for my family and me. It is a lovely and peaceful environment for the painter and I look forward to sharing it with you. (See page 6 for information)
- **September 15-19, 2014** Beach Art Group, Panama City Beach, FL
Contact Helen Ferrell at beachartgroup@att.net (850) 265-0460.
This will be my 2nd visit to Panama City Beach which rests on the Gulf of Mexico coast. It long has been a popular vacation destination due to its beautiful sugar-white sandy beaches. The workshop is held at the Palms Conference Center in Panama City Beach. It is a spacious facility providing an ideal location to paint and at this time of year, the temperatures are just right. Last year's workshop was quite full so don't wait to register. Join Tom in sunny Florida!
- **October 20-23, 2014** Pike County Arts Council, McComb, MS
Contact Susy Sanders at susymae68@yahoo.com Home (601) 684-9995 or Cell (601) 248-1023. 2220 Veterans Blvd. McComb, MS 39648
This will be my first workshop in Mississippi and I am looking forward to it.

This workshop offers the opportunity for a few days of concentrated study while making new friends and enjoying real southern hospitality...and New Orleans is less than a 2 hour drive away! Special events are planned for this workshop and space is limited so please register early!

- Every year, Tom conducts 1 or 2 figure workshops in Chicago. These are one-day workshops that are scheduled on weekends, making it ideal for anyone in the Chicago area with a busy weekday schedule. These workshops are held at the Old Town Triangle Center. For updated information, please go to the Old Town Triangle website (see Classes).



Old Cowboy

For specific information about any of these workshops including availability, description, registration, tuition, location, accommodations, etc., please use the contact information provided.

Tom would be happy to conduct a workshop in your area. For more information, please refer to the contact information at the bottom of page 7.

2014 Classes



Tom teaches a Saturday morning class at the Old Town Triangle Center in Chicago. Classes are generally 10-week sessions that run winter, spring, summer and fall. The Art Center is located in a charming, historical neighborhood, just 2 blocks from the acclaimed Lincoln Park area and the Lake Michigan lakefront. The Center is easily accessible and the neighborhood street parking is free! More information about this class can be found by going to:

www.oldtowntriangle.com Scroll along the red headers to **Art and Fitness Classes**. A drop down menu will appear. Click on **Art Classes**. Scroll down to the bottom to find more information about Tom's classes and any upcoming workshops.

As always, I welcome your comments regarding my newsletter.

Tom Francesconi AWS, NWS, TWSA Door County Watercolor Workshop



Where: Ellison Bay Community Center, Ellison Bay, Wisconsin

When: May 19-23, 2014 9 am - 4 pm

Contact: Tom Francesconi (708) 799-8161 info@tomfrancesconi.com

Situated along the shore of Ellison Bay, Wisconsin, on the beautiful Door County peninsula, this workshop will offer the student a wonderful learning opportunity as Tom shares his methods for painting bold, loose and interpretive watercolors. Along with discussions that cover a range of topics, Tom will do a complete painting demonstration each day. Subjects may include landscapes, urban scenes, and the clothed figure. Students will work from their own references as they explore new ways to approach their paintings. Each class day will end with a group critique. *Tom welcomes all painters.*

One day, a shore lunch will be provided for everyone. On Thursday evening, there will be a wine and cheese gathering at Tom's Ellison Bay home.

Tom Francesconi (708) 799-8161 info@tomfrancesconi.com www.tomfrancesconi.com