

Brushstrokes



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb. 9 **DEADLINE FOR ENTRY INTO SWS NATIONAL SHOW**
enter through caFE (www.callforentry.org) by 12 am, mountain time—
see prospectus

Feb. 14 **Happy Valentine's Day!**

Feb. 18 Men's Breakfast, Molly's Café, 224 S. Lincoln Street, Spokane, WEDNESDAY, 9:00 a.m.

Feb. 21 SWS Gen. Meeting—in person—Spokane Art Supply, Saturday, 10-12, 1303 N. Monroe, Spokane—**Still Life with Shelly Haas** with techniques to help unlock your inner vision—see page 3

Mar. 18 Men's Breakfast, Molly's Café, 224 S. Lincoln Street, Spokane, WEDNESDAY, 9:00 a.m.

Mar. 21 SWS Gen. Meeting—**IN PERSON** at Spokane Art Supply, Saturday, 10-12, **Pigments Demo with Bennie Fountain**

April 9-11 SWS National Workshop with David R. Smith, at Spokane Art Supply, 1303 N. Monroe, Spokane—9:30-4:30—**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**

Challenge PAINTING
JANUARY
New Beginnings
FEBRUARY
Composition

(or what's on your easel)
SUBJECT OF YOUR CHOICE

**SEE PG. 2
FOR TIPS ON FEB-
CHALLENGES!**

Fresh and Exciting Watercolor

Join David on a Watercolor Journey, learning the most valuable watercolor concepts and techniques. This workshop will show you countless hours of trial & error by demonstrating approaches in an easily understood manner that will open new doors of discovery and creativity. Participants will be provided reference photos, drawing guides, and step-by-step instruction through all stages of the painting process. The workshop is packed with demos and guided practice. Regardless of your level of experience, you're almost guaranteed to leave with a handsome work of art, and the skills, concepts, and confidence to take your paintings to a higher level. David will demonstrate a wide variety of approaches and techniques including how to link shapes in a composition based on values, learning about edge quality of shapes, the importance of different consistencies of paint, and the different moisture qualities of paper, as well as how to work "wet-on-wet," and incorporate "spattering" and "spraying." – concepts and approaches that will keep your paintings fresh with exciting blends and textures and keep you inspired and eager to explore your new watercolor capabilities long into the future.



with **David R. Smith**
AWS, NWS, TWSA



April 9, 10, 11

9:30 to 4:30

in-person at
Spokane Art Supply

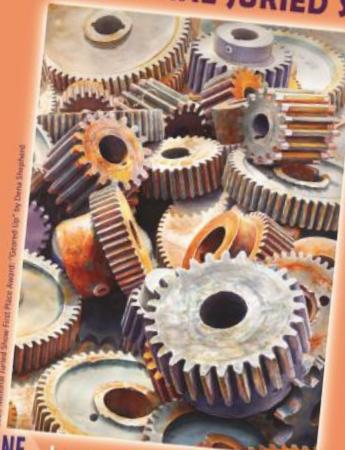
SWS members: \$395
non-members: \$495

Registration opens
January 1

For registration and
more information:
www.spokanewatercolor.org

**REGISTER NOW—
only 9 spots left!**

SPOKANE WATERCOLOR SOCIETY
CALL FOR ENTRIES
2026 NATIONAL JURIED SHOW



2025 Watercolor Show First Place Award: "Gears" by Diane Shaeffer

Juror: **David R. Smith** AWS, NWS, TWSA

go to spokanewatercolor.org for prospectus

entries accepted December 1, 2025 to February 9, 2026

for information: nationalshow@spokanewatercolor.org

visit us at www.spokanewatercolor.org

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February Challenge Tips

By Susan Schmidt/Diana Postlewait

COMPOSITION

Art composition involves arranging elements for visual appeal, with the **Rule of Thirds** (placing subjects on a 3x3 grid's lines/intersections) being a key guideline for balance, while other methods include **LEADING LINES, SYMMETRY, FRAMING, RULE OF ODDS, NEGATIVE SPACE**, and the more complex **GOLDEN RATIO/SPIRAL**, all aiming for dynamic, engaging visuals rather than static centering.

KEY COMPOSITION-AL TECHNIQUES

Rule of Thirds:

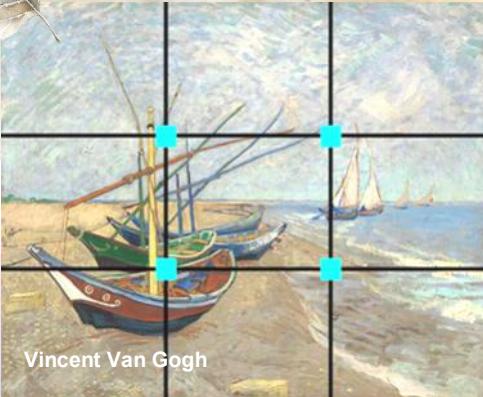
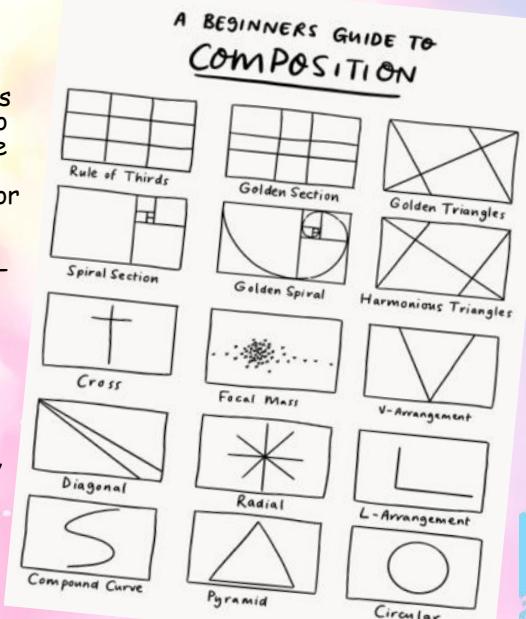
Divide your canvas into nine equal parts (two horizontal, two vertical lines). Place focal points on the four intersections or along the lines for natural-looking balance, avoiding dead-center placement.

Symmetry & Patterns: Creates order, stability, and even majesty (like in religious art) by mirroring elements, often using reflections or architectural forms.

Leading Lines:

Use natural or man-made lines (roads, rivers, fences) to guide the viewer's eye towards the main subject.

Framing (Frame within a Frame): Use elements like doorways, windows, or tree branches to create a natural border around your subject, adding depth.



Rule of Odds:
Grouping subjects in odd numbers (3, 5, 7) is often more visually appealing and memorable than even numbers.

Negative Space: The empty space around your subject. Leaving ample negative space creates simplicity, emphasizes the subject, and prevents clutter.

Depth & Perspective (Foreground Interest): Adding elements in the foreground helps create a sense of three-dimensionality, making flat art feel more immersive.

Filling the Frame: Intentionally getting close to your subject to eliminate distractions and create intimacy. (Cropping).

Golden Ratio/Spiral (Phi): A more advanced mathematical proportion (approx. 1:1.618) found in nature, used to create harmonious, flowing compositions, often visualized as the Golden Spiral.

WHY USE THEM?

- Visual Interest:** Breaks monotony and guides the eye
- Balance:** Creates harmony between elements, even when asymmetrical
- Emotion:** Can evoke feelings of drama, calm, power, or mystery
- Clarity:** Helps isolate and emphasize the main subject

We will show both January's and February's Challenges at our Feb. 21 meeting at Spokane Art Supply. Bring your paintings to the meeting, AND please upload them onto the website by Thursday Feb. 19. This will ensure that clean images of your work will be presented on the website, and newsletter.

Please see pg. 3 for uploading instructions.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

SWS NEW WEBSITE

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the AD-HOC Committee, they found an individual to renovate and streamline our website to make it more functional in a user-friendly format. Please see page 3 for procedures to help us learn and navigate through the new format.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Susan Burke, Spokane, WA

Bob Hunter, Spokane, WA

Rocky Kerr, Spokane, WA

Jim Murphy, Spokane, WA

Nancy & Vince Kurpan, Spokane, WA

Laurie Barrie, Pullman, WA

Alicia Beat, Colville, WA



Website Tips with Carrie

www.spokanewatercolor.org

FIRST LOGIN to UPDATED SITE

If you have **not** accessed your account in the updated website, you will be directed to set a new password the **FIRST TIME** you login.

HERE ARE THE STEPS INVOLVED:

- Log on to www.spokanewatercolor.org
- Hit the **Login Button** on the top right or the **My Account** button and the Login Screen will pop up
- Click on **"Forgot Password"**
- Choose to **Reset your Password**, enter your email address and click **"Send Link"**
- You will **receive a code** on that email address
- **Enter the code** by typing it in, or copying & pasting
- Type in a **new password** of your choosing
- Click **"Confirm and Reset"**
- A **confirmation** of the change should appear
- Go back to the **Login Box** on the website and type in your new password

It is important that you can access your account as you will not be able to view the **Members Only** information such as discount codes, member roster, payment links, etc. If you are having trouble please contact the Web Manager at webmanager@spokanewatercolor.org.

HOW TO UPLOAD CHALLENGES

Please bring your Challenge Paintings to in-person meetings, **but also we request you upload them** so that we have clean images to use on the website and newsletter. **Please upload by the Thursday before the general meeting.**

- Log in to your account at www.spokanewatercolor.org
- Hit the **My Account Button** on the right of Menu
- Click on **"Meetings and Programs"**
- Click on **"View and Submit Current Challenge"** (images should be clean and cropped to show the painting only), **FORMAT** should be in **JPEG or PNG**, **maximum size of 4 mb**
- Type in the requested information with the uploaded photos and click **"Submit"**

Feb. Demo Artist



Still Life with Shel Haas

at the
SWS General Meeting
Saturday, February 21
10 am. to 12pm
Spokane Art Supply
1303 N. Monroe, Spokane

SWS member, Shelly Haas, has spent her days teaching neuroscience for children and adults with different learning styles. She tries to make contact with a person's own "operating systems", and assist them with being more present to these inner systems and use them to advantage in daily life.

Shel will introduce us to some of these techniques to unlock our inner vision, as artists, and to understand how we "see" and translate that to our painting process.

And, of course, there will be plenty of time for "hands-on" learning as we paint a **STILL LIFE**, so bring your painting supplies!



2026 Art on the Green



Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

July 31 thru August 2, 2026
www.artonthegreencda.com

Some deadlines are coming up soon...

Now through Mar. 17

Booth Artists applications open
(through Zapp)

Jan. 1—Mar. 17

Poster Contest entries open
April 1—May 31

Juried Show entries open

Check out their website for more info





Brushstrokes

January Demo Notes

Dorrie Rifkin, one of our 2025 National Show winners from New Jersey, gave us a challenging and informative (as well as entertaining) demo on painting cityscapes at our January meeting. She is inspired by the street scenes of nearby New York, by typography and big bold images. She finds the perspective easy as the vanishing points made by city streets are obvious.

She always starts with a sketch—if she doesn't like the composition in her sketch, she won't like it as a painting. Dorrie begins her painting with a detailed drawing, more detail in front, and less in the unimportant areas—you should only put in as much detail as you feel comfortable with, i.e. you don't have to paint every window you see to convey the essence of the building. It is far better to keep things as simple as possible. **TIP**—paint the shadows of tires instead of the tires themselves.

She uses a full value range with the darks centered on her area of interest, and she leaves room on the side of her paper to test values and colors. Dorrie feels that mixing colors is imperative as evidenced by her palette. She tries to leave the white spaces without masking, often pulling them out by paper towel

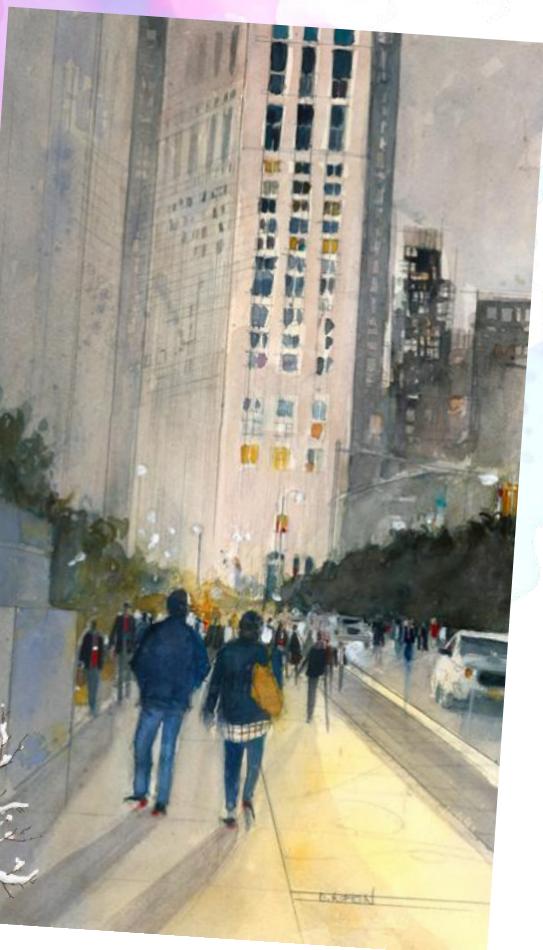
or brush. Dorrie may put as many as 325 layers on her paintings—letting each dry before going to the next. She does not like to work wet on wet. She uses Arches or Fabriano paper, mostly cold pressed, and prefers Silver Brushes—Black Velvet holds a lot of paint and you can also draw with it. A credit card piece is a great tool to pull out fine lines.

Her colors are mostly muted but for the pop of color in her interest areas, which draws the viewer's eye. She does not use outlines but prefers to use negative space to define the edges.

Dorrie did a fantastic job of painting a detailed cityscape in under two hours, and we all loved her humor and "back east" charm. You can learn more about Dorrie, her painting and online workshops at www.dorrierifkin.com. **THANK YOU DORRIE!** We all loved it!



REFERENCE PHOTO



YOUR PRIVACY IS IMPORTANT to Spokane Watercolor Society!

Your contact information is included in our roster, so that members can contact each other. This is only accessible by logging on to www.spokanewatercolor.org with your user name and password, under the heading "MY Account". If you DO NOT want your contact information on this roster, please contact: vpres@spokanewatercolor.org.





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Winter Meetings

SWS AD-HOC COMMITTEE—Kim, Lori & Carrie

During our November Annual Business Meeting/Brunch, members learned of all the exciting things planned for 2026—shows, workshops, display opportunities, plein air events and more. We also recapped SWS in 2025 with a fun slideshow.

The Ad-Hoc Committee presented a **breakdown of the Officers' duties** (which were far too many)—worksheets were given for members to easily volunteer for tasks which fit their skills and time available. The future of SWS depends on member participation—thank you all for your positive response! Our December meeting was our white elephant art supply swap and Christmas party.



January's meeting was Zoom and Zoom link at Spokane Art Supply. Several guests and new members were in attendance. Announcements were followed by Dorrie's demo.



Thank you Tom B. for the great photos!

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