SPOKANE Watercolor SOCIETY

Brushstrokes

SWS MEMBER NEWSLETTER
PO Box 10298, Spokane, WA 99209
www.spokanewatercolor.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov. 21	**SWS Business Meeting & Pot Luck, Saturday 10:00-12:00,** Spokane Art Supply, 1303 N. Monroe, Spokane, ***details below***
Nov. 21	**Submissions open for SWS National Show,** ***see pg. 6***
Nov. 26	***Thanksgiving***
Dec. 4	Hanukkah begins
Dec. 5	**SWS Holiday Party & Play Day, Saturday 10:00-12:00,** Spokane Art Supply, 1303 N. Monroe, Spokane, ***details below***
Dec. 25	**Christmas Day**
Dec. 26	Kwanza Begins/Boxing Day
Dec. 31	**Membership Renewals due** for returning members —***see pg. 3***
Jan. 1	**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2027**
Jan. 16	**SWS General Meeting, Saturday 10:00-12:00,** Spokane Art Supply, 1303 N. Monroe, Spokane, **Demo with Becky Gromlich—Background Strategies** ***See details on page 3***

Challenge PAINTING

NOVEMBER EYES

See page 2

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



SWS Meetings

Annual Business Meeting & Potluck

Saturday, Nov. 21, Spokane Art Supply, 10-12



We will report on the past year's activites, the year ahead and review the prospectus for the National Show and workshop. We will also highlight how you can help SWS keep up with all the programs and events that you enjoy. And of course, we will enjoy our annual potluck brunch before all the business. So, bring a dish, either sweet or savory, for everyone to enjoy. Coffee, tea and table service will be provided. See you there.

Holiday Party & Play Day

Saturday, Dec. 5

Spokane Art Supply, 10-12



Vicki West will be demonstrating Ph Martin's products and we will be able to play with these products and make a holiday ornament. Please also bring a holiday goodie to share. Some really fun things are in the planning stages—details will be forthcoming.

SWS National Show



It's time to paint! Our National Show and Workshop is coming soon, and submissions will be open Nov. 21.

Our juror and workshop instructor will be **Michael Holter**, an acclaimed national artist and all-around nice guy (he juried our 2025 show) so we are thrilled he is back in 2027. The show will take place in **April at The MAC**, and the **workshop dates will be April 15-17, focusing on portraits and figures.** More details will be available at our annual Business Meeting Nov. 21. **See pg. 6 for more information.**

WATCH YOUR EMAILS FOR MORE DETAILS ON UPCOMING EVENTS!

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NOVEMBER Challenge Tips

By Susan Schmidt (REFERENCE LINKS ON SWS WEBSITE)

Eyes; The Window to Your Soul

Paint eyes—human, animal, bird, or whatever you please!

Lifelike eyes connect viewers to your subject. Eye position, lid openness, and alertness convey a wealth of information. Below is a summary of "Why Eyes Are the Most Important Part of a Portrait Painting," an article I found thought-provoking.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND EYES:

Ever felt a portrait looking back at you? This connection is biological. Your brain uses a shortcut called **"face schema"** to locate key features: eyes, nose, and mouth. Eyes convey the most information about gaze and thought, making them an anchor in portraiture.

Tips for painting eyes that capture attention:

1. **Shape:** Suggest the eye's rounded form with the lid's curve and shadows beneath it.
2. **Moisture:** Add highlights from your light source to give the eye a wet appearance.
3. **Sclera:** Use washes of gray, blue, and pink—not pure white—for a lifelike appearance.
4. **Iris:** Create depth with radial strokes and color gradients extending from the pupil.
5. **Pupil:** Paint a circle for a straight-ahead gaze and a slight ellipse when looking elsewhere.





GAZE—YOU GET TO CHOOSE!

- **Direct eye contact** creates intimacy and confrontation.
- **Gazing away** creates a sense of contemplation or distraction. Placing catchlight in the direction of their gaze balances the scene.
- **Lids.** Heavy lids suggest fatigue, sadness, or seduction. Wide lids suggest alertness, surprise, or fear.
- **Eyebrows.** Furrowed brows add tension; raised brows add openness and surprise. Make sure your brows are congruent with your lids and gaze to fully convey your subject's expression

HOWTO UPLOAD CHALLENGES

You may 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
- Scroll down to the **"Meetings and Programs"** section
- 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"**

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

SWS NEW WEBSITE

The updated website continues to get **rave reviews from members and non-members** alike. Be sure to check it out for news and resources: new videos added!

REACH OUT TO **webmanager@spokanewatercolor.org** if you need any assistance setting up your profile or submitting event information.





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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SWS SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES

In order to alleviate more work for the board, we have now implemented an **automated subscription service** on our website. It is mandatory that you use a credit card (checks will no longer be accepted). With this new system, first time members will be charged a one-time $25 administration fee in addition to the $45 annual subscription fee.

As a returning member, you must renew your subscription by December 31st or you will have to sign up as a new member and will be charged the **administration fee of $25**. If you are a newer member and have joined in 2026, your subscription will already be in the new system, and your renewal date will be one year from the date you joined.

If you need any help with your renewal, you can call Carrie, and she will be available after the November and December SWS meetings to assist you.



Website Tips with Carrie

www.spokanewatercolor.org

HOW TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP

- Log in to your account at **www.spokanewatercolor.org**
- Hit the **MY ACCOUNT Button** on the right of Menu
- Scroll down to **"Membership"**
- Click on **"Renew Membership"**
- Choose **"Payment Method"** and fill in information
- Click on **"Subscribe"** (at this point, you can choose to save your credit card information, which will ensure automatic renewal)
- You can **check your renewal date** by going to My Account, Account Settings, Plans, and Manage Subscription. There you will see your renewal date, and will have the option to cancel if you wish. **You will be notified by email before your renewal date**, and can also cancel at that time.

FINDING OR LEARNING MORE ABOUT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Log in to your account at **www.spokanewatercolor.org**
- Hit the **MY ACCOUNT Button** on the right of Menu
- Scroll down to the **"Edits & Opportunities"** section
- Click on the **"Engage with Us"** button
- Click on a **subject area in the left column** which brings up a list of available volunteer tasks
- Click on a specific task, and/or you can click the **"Open to Learning More"** box, then click on **"Submit"**

january demo



Background Strategies with Becky Gromlich

at the **SWS General Meeting Saturday, January 16**
10 am to 12pm
at Spokane Art Supply

Have you ever painted a beautiful flower, portrait, or still life and then ruined it with the background? I'll demonstrate at least three popular backgrounds that I find easy to paint. Bring a small painting that's waiting for its background and your supplies if you want to paint along with me! I will also bring several paintings or prints so you can see a variety of backgrounds. Here are some supplies I will use:

- **Your favorite paint**
- **Water control (I use a cellulose sponge)**
- **Tissues**
- **Your favorite brushes, plus a small quill for a small painting, bigger one for a bigger painting**
- **1 plastic stencil with circles**
- **Stencil brush 1/2" size**
- **2" masking tape**
- **Xacto knife**
- **Spoon or bone folder**
- **Bleed-proof white**
- **Soft squirrel brush. I mostly use quill brushes for this, but if the painting is small then an extra soft brush will work**



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Sponsor Feature

GOLDEN, an SWS sponsor, is well known for their quality Golden Artist Acrylics. Their acrylic paints were developed with a combination of scientific research, artist collaboration, and a commitment to quality. GOLDEN has also developed the QoR® Artist Watercolors line. These professional watercolors have an innovative binder called Aquazol® that allows for exceptionally high pigment loading while preserving their transparency, blending, glazing, and rewetting qualities. QoR Watercolors have remarkable lightfastness, color intensity, luminosity, and movement on the paper, plus they dissolve beautifully in water.

In a recent article from JustPaint.org, an online blog from GOLDEN, they introduced an unconventional technique for using QoR watercolors… filling reusable markers and brush pens with diluted QoR watercolor paints and using them for sketching, plein air work, mark making, and wet-into-wet techniques. For more information about this technique look for JustPaint at justpaint.org.

GOLDEN ARTIST COLORS®

Be sure to check out all of their wonderful products at **www.goldenartistcolors.com**. There are also clickable links on the bottom of our home page (**www.spokanewatercolor.org**) under **"Our Sponsors"** where you can check out all of our valued sponsors.

OCTOBER Challenge Paintings



















Monica S. won the $15 Spokane Art Supply Gift Certificate. **Congratulations!**



To see ALL of the Challenge Paintings, visit the website under "My Account" then "Meetings & Programs"

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October Meeting Highlights

















Katie Frey, a local artist and one of our National Show winners, guided us through her process to paint a Cedar Waxwing. Colors she used were **Perm. Red Light, Cad Yellow, Ochre, Payne's Gray and Pthalo Blue**. She started by mixing up **pools of colors** that she will use on the body. She also had lots of **test strips** handy to test the color and bleed quality before applying it to the painting. Katie worked wet on wet to begin with, **wetting only the area that she would be working on,** in this case, the body. **Masking** (if you prefer) the eye area and other parts that are to be left white should be done, or just be very careful to avoid getting color on them. She is not opposed to using white, but generally prefers to leave the paper white. One of her **greatest tools is the paper towel**, so be sure to have a supply of those at the ready . She worked her way down the body, using her pre-mixed pools of paint, and lifting up immediately with the paper towel if the color was too strong. So while the body was drying, she worked on the wings, applying the lighter colors and then hopped between feathers defining them with darker lines and dry brushing.





POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Have a mix of **hard and soft areas** using different brushing techniques
- **Alternate areas you work on** putting finer details on a fully dried section while waiting for a different area to dry
- For detailed areas, **start with darker defined details and blend out to a suggestion of them**—our minds will fill in the blanks
- Use dry-brushing to **define some feathers** on the head and body, rather than painting every single feather
- **Paper towels are your friends**













Katie used Arches Paper, and Princeton Velvet Touch brushes that hold water and come to a fine point.

Thank you Katie—it was an informative and fun demo we all enjoyed. You can check out Katie's website at **www.katiefreyart.com**.

MEETING NOTES
By Marianne O.

The SWS October meeting was "for the birds." Not only did several of the challenge paintings depict birds, **Katie Frey** provided a paint-along demo of a cedar waxwing. **Kim G.** started the meeting by introducing three **guests (Al, Julianne, and Jane)** and asked them to tell us about themselves.

Board Activities: Kim G. noted that the Board continues to update and streamline various SWS processes to lift some of the time-consuming tasks, including membership renewal. The **annual charge of $45** entitles you to full access to the SWS website, and discounts on both SWS show entry fees and on annual workshop fees. **Carrie D.** demonstrated how to renew your membership online, and noted that everyone should check in on-line to make sure their membership dues are up-to-date. Details on page 3.

Events: Sue R. noted that the SWS **Centerplace** exhibit ends on November 9th to be followed by a group exhibition open to various media. Call Sue for more information.

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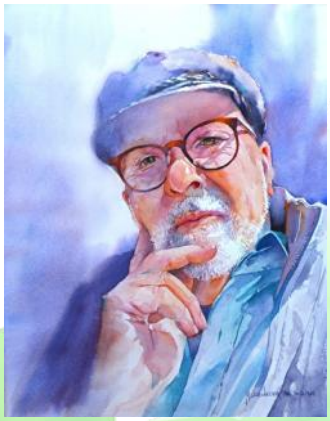
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Meet Our Juror

Michael Holter is an award-winning artist who works in watercolor and oil whose paintings can be found in private and corporate collections in the US and several foreign countries. Although Michael has been painting most of his life, his work experience spans a wide range of creative challenges. He has been an art teacher, creative director and businessman in both fine art and commercial art. Michael has owned and operated galleries and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Art Education and an MA in Visual Communication.

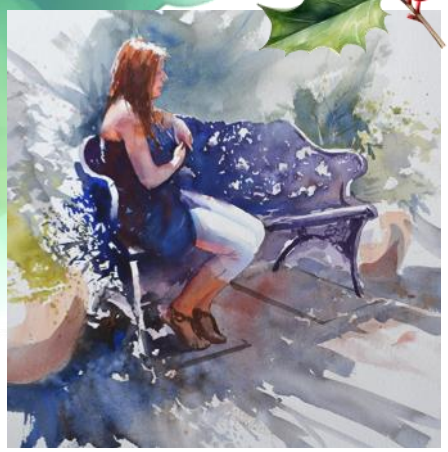




Michael is a member of the Salmagundi Club, a signature member of The American Watercolor Society, The National Watercolor Society, The American Impressionist Society, The Watercolor Honor Society, The Transparent Watercolor Society of America, The Outdoor Painter Society, the Southwestern Watercolor Society, The Missouri Watercolor, The Society of Watercolor Artists and more.



Michael says, "My work is impressionistic. I like to represent people or places and allow the painting to evolve from the structure of what is recognizable. The challenge is to balance the care needed to make the representation interesting... and perhaps believable, with the freedom, looseness and painterly quality that makes painting so unique and expressive."



"I have been influenced by artists such as Charles Reid, Richard Schmid, Burt Silverman, Frank Webb, John Singer Sargent, Ted Nuttall and many others. Even though I have an art degree, most of what I put into practice is self-taught through studying the work of these distinguished artists and much painting."