

CREATIVE PROCESS IN FOUR STAGES:

With notes to promote further creative thinking

The process at the core of advanced level instruction at BGSBAI

(Updated by M.S., July 2014)

A process to see you stay on track + stay focused to develop a beautiful botanical – from scratch to completion.

Stage 1: OBSERVING

A time to explore, to develop further knowledge about your plant subject and through that process become energized and inspired.

COLLECTION & STORAGE

- **Methods and procedures** – keep plant material fresh (consider treatments for cut stalks of specific plants); collection permit required for native species
- **Sketching in the field** – make list of outdoor sketching gear and keep handy in bag or backpack

OBSERVATIONAL STUDIES

- **Plant ID** – field guides on hand; use a plant key and study the botanical description; use online resources
- **Setting up** – arrange subject matter for optimum viewpoint/eyelevel; use a pale or dark backdrop
- **Field sketching pages** – reference drawings; L&S studies of more complex plant structures & with written notes; color observations; photography taken with accompanying notes; pressing of plant material.

Stage 2: COMPOSING

DESIGN THE PICTURE'S STRUCTURE –

- **Structural Composition** – picture format (portrait or landscape); select the drawing from your field sketch pages – that based on your *established arrangement* that influences the view taken for most of your observational drawings; brainstorm ideas using “thumbnails”, use tracing paper overlays for ideas at actual dimension of the picture; analyze final selection (actual dimensions) taped up on wall

MAINTAIN THE FOCAL POINT & ENHANCE A SENSE OF 3-D –

- **Tonal composition** – background treatment; degree of value contrast/tonal range, e.g., major contrast in value + color creates dynamism - power to attract but does this best express your interpretation of the subject matter?; flower symbolism/ folklore could see creative use of a tonal range to invoke a certain mood or that which expresses a sense of the environment in which the plant grows, e.g. a habitat that is damp and dark, or one that is dry and sunny (without resorting to background sketches).

Stage 3: TRANSFERRING

TRANSFERRING DETAILED DRAWING FROM FINAL DESIGN –

- **Trace onto tracing vellum** - STAY ALERT for all tracing; make accurate ink line drawing on tracing vellum (ink line accommodates tracing onto heavy weight paper using lightbox - in a darkened room); **Redefine accurate pencil drawing** on watercolor paper – lighten with kneaded eraser; constantly refer to original observational drawings and notes.

TRANSFER OVERALL VALUES OF LEAVES etc. FROM TONAL COMPOSITION TO COLOR

- **Prepare color mixes in accordance with values established in the Tonal Composition** – half a day to complete the three separate palettes each with full wells of color to last for the entire painting (seal when not in use); **Color pencil** – M.S. techniques (optional);
- **Initial applications of wet-on-wet watercolor wash** – (form shadows followed by general overall washes) this stage seldom sees satisfaction with the painting process but lighten up (!) - it will be transformed during the detailing stage; Re-evaluate value range (Tonal composition).

Stage 4: DETAILING

FURTHER CREATIVE THINKING

Enhance – color unity, focal point (color intensity or textural detail, delineate a foreground element)

FINAL DETAILS – Refer to details in field sketch pages + your photos; refer to the handout –

“**How & When to Finish**”; Store and after a week critique your painting objectively.