



Carla Gauthier GWG Glow Workshop

<http://carlagauthier.com/> carla.gauthier@yahoo.com

January 12-13, 2024



Carla demonstrated how to choose photos with a strong sense of light. The area with the light source will be brighter and warmer. It will get grayer and cooler as you move away from the light source. We need to concentrate on the light source and have the rest melt away. She said photos looking that have reflected light, interior light the bleeds out, looking into the sun and horizon light can show glow. She had two exercises to help us work on achieving a glow in a painting. She said to remember this is a learning process that will be an idea of what to do so that we can go back later and try it.

Exercise One:

She starts with clean brushes and mixes her colors so that they are ready to go when we cover the whole thing with a wash. She keeps each brush in the paint puddle it mixed. Next, she wets the paper generously. She said it is better to spray more and buy yourself a little time, than it is to be stingy and have the paper dry too quickly. She loads up the brush so that it is dripping with paint and makes a lemon-yellow circle, preserving the pure white for the light source. She said to leave a larger white area than you think you need because yellows travel far and fast on wet paper. Granulating colors will move more slowly. She then changed to her school bus yellow and quickly overlapped to enlarge the outer edge of the lemon-yellow circle. Next, she repeated enlarging by adding orange, permanent rose, and her dark blue mixture. The sky will change colors as it moves away from the sun. She reminded us that the colors are going to dry lighter. Hold up the painting and spray a very fine mist, letting it drip off of the painting to help it blend. If you need to retract paint from your white area, use a clean, dry, thirsty brush to pull out some of the pigment. You can also pull out a few reflections and add a small amount of color for clouds. It is a background, so it is not important that it is perfect. You then set it aside and let it get bone dry.



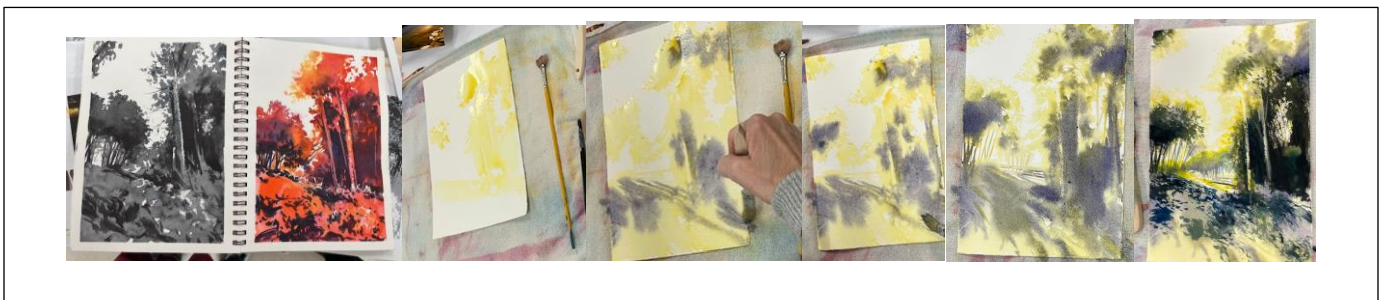
After our background wash was dry, we put in the medium values of streets and sidewalks concentrating on a big wash first. Details will come later. Be careful to “babysit” the sky by covering it so that you don’t get any unwanted paint or spots in it. We treated the buildings as one big shape. The largest palm trees are the center of attention in this painting. We saved the smaller details for later. In addition to using a toothbrush, a packing sheet for electronics was used to add texture by applying paint to it before laying it over the road, pressing down and lifting. A hog bristle fan brush was used to lift foliage. Our brains can trick us into thinking tree-green/barn-red/sky-blue. In order to get the color and value right we isolated the color in the photo with a hole punch size hole on a notecard. There is a difference between mixing a dark

color versus mixing a dark value. A dark color may be in the midtone values. Pick your blue based on how dark you want your value to be. Midnight Blue will make a darker dark value versus Cerulean Blue. To get that glow you need to same energy of color through the painting. Carla showed us how to add the suggestion of a roofline, side of a building, windows, picket fence, shrubs, and a car.



Exercise Two:

We created a sense of light coming through the sky from above. She gave each of us a cheap hardware store brush with a “haircut” for this painting. She drew in a few tree trunks using a white Crayola Crayon. The paper needs to be dry so that you can get those sharp edges. She said to be looking for bigger shapes. She began with yellow, constantly going back with only the tip of the brush into the water, like playing in a puddle. If your shapes are drying too quickly you are not using enough water. If she really wants to extend the process, she wets the back of the paper, leaving the front dry. She used Ultramarine Violet and Lemon Yellow to make grays and greens. She took a thin brush and did some pulls to make branches and tree trunks. She connects some dots here and there making sure that her brush was now drier than the paper. The white crayon line shows through, and adding darks around it makes it really show up. She put cooler colors near the edge leaving the warmer colors towards the highlights. Having understated texture will make it feel like the white sun and sky are coming in.



Workshop Supply list:

palette

brushes

paints

best paper you can afford in 1/4 sheet size or 12 x 16"

scrap watercolor paper to practice on is always helpful (student grade or the backs of old paintings).

Paper towels

pencil, eraser

masking fluid

white gouache (if you already have those last two - I will bring some to share, so no worries)

a photo or two of your own to work from where the light source is in the photo - sun, moon, candle/fire or lamplight. If you're unsure bring a few photos and we can discuss what will work best.



Carla prefers 140 lb 100% cotton Fabriano or Saunders Waterford Artistico watercolor paper. She stocks up when it is on sale. She uses an old oil paint hog bristle fan brush for texture. She uses a variety of paints and brushes.



Carla provided the notes below.

Making Color Glow

Carla Gauthier

281-384-2473

Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, William Turner – the masters of watercolor – could all make color GLOW, as if the light was coming from the paper itself. They did it with just a few basic colors, because they understood that illusion of glowing light comes from

1. The relationship of colors – warm colors enhancing glow close to the subject, cool colors giving contrast in areas more distant from the light
2. The range of values – how light to how dark
3. The intensity of colors – the brightness or dullness of each color

Seems simple enough....but there is a subtlety to what they knew, and we need to observe and understand before we paint

- A. Prioritize – decide WHAT will glow, where the light will be emanating from – most likely your focal point
- B. The light or glow should stay white paper, or a very light value of warm color in most conditions. Be subtle here – this is KEY. Don't overpaint these colors of values
- C. The glowing light can actually burn off color and values in objects that are close to it – often a tree will not be green, or a fence will not be brown – they can be white to very light, WARM versions of yellow or the local color – observe this effect, and paint carefully – this will be a focal point
- D. The areas closely surrounding the glow should be LIGHT, WARM in daylight conditions, TRANSPARENT and sometimes INTENSE colors – light yellow, peach, warm pinks and oranges
- E. Further from the glow the colors will COOL DOWN, transition to DARKER and LESS INTENSE colors
 - To make less intense colors, remember that any color can be made more dull with the addition of its complementary color.
 - There are no perfect tube colors to emulate this – often the light and glow in a specific area will lessen the light in other areas – and make color dull and dark.
 - Use the isolating hole in a white piece of paper to accurately judge a color's intensity and value.
 - Practice mixing this so that the color you get it right the first time – so the painting doesn't get that muddy appearance

This works well for any subject with strong light – look for it in photos or other artists' work. Possible subjects:

- Strong **sunlight**, a sunset, a sunrise
- **Backlighting** can work this way, where the subject has a glowing edge but is largely in shadow – the camera is pointed towards the source of light
- **Interior light**, viewed from outside – like a window that glows warm light at night.
- **Exterior light** viewed from inside – a room with a window streaming light inside
- **Firelight or candlelight**
- **Moonlight**
- **Street lights, Car lights**