

# Art on the Run – Capture your Subjects in Pencil or Ink & Watercolour!

By Karin Richter ©

You may be a plein air enthusiast or a studio painter, but there are times when we are out and about when carrying regular watercolour supplies is either not practical or wanted. As many of you know, we painters are always on the lookout for subject matter or see things that are fascinating. Many of us have been caught bringing our cars to a screeching halt by the side of the road at the sight of an arresting view! The camera is, of course, an important tool when away from home but it is so much fun and satisfying to quickly capture something of interest right on the spot! Particularly when on vacation, the fast pace of visiting all the sights often does not allow for a formal painting session.

Sketches serve as memories and make charming works of art in themselves, or serve to later develop a more serious work of art in the studio. Treat these sketches as just that, a visual record. Don't make it into a detailed drawing (or do if so inclined!!) but have some fun, feel free to be a little crooked, dabble, dabble! There are many ways to paint on the fly. Presented here are some of the different techniques I use. I recommend that you have a sketchpad on hand that can handle a wash (110 lbs paper weight minimum).

## 1. Watercolour Pencils

These pencils contain the same pigments as all other mediums. They go on like a pencil but dissolve with the application of water. They are available in sets or can be purchased individually. I suggest you buy an empty pencil box available at most art stores, and fill it with your favourite colours. As with regular watercolour paint, I recommend you buy a warm and a cool primary colour plus burnt sienna. Colours can be layered (e.g. a yellow on top of a blue will make green). A soft touch will yield soft colours, a thick/strong application will produce a deeper/darker colour.



To add water to your W/C pencil drawing, all you need is the handy little water brush that already contains a water reservoir in its “belly” and releases just the right amount of water to move the pigment around. It's like magic! There is enough water in this brush to do lots of sketches!



*Watercolour pencil sketch before application of water*



*Watercolour pencil sketch after application of water*



*Watercolour pencil sketch after more water was added*

The beauty of watercolour pencils is that you can leave as much of the “dry” look and apply as little or as much water as you wish. The more you go over the initial drawing with water, the smoother your application will be.

## **2. Soluble Ink Markers**

People love this simple method! All that is required is a sketchpad, a soluble marker (like a Pilot Fineliner) and our handy water brush! Nothing is more light-weight or easy to use. Just sketch your subject matter and then apply water from your brush. The ink in your marker will run and create a monochromatic, lightly shaded sketch:

These soluble markers come in different colours. Aside from a more monochromatic look in either black, blue or sepia, you may find it fun to experiment with vibrant coloured markers.



*Sketch with soluble ink markers*



*Sketch after water was applied*

### 3. Permanent Markers

There are two different methods I use which will give you two different looks. Here you need to carry a small water container, a sketch pad, a watercolour brush, and a small set of watercolour paints:

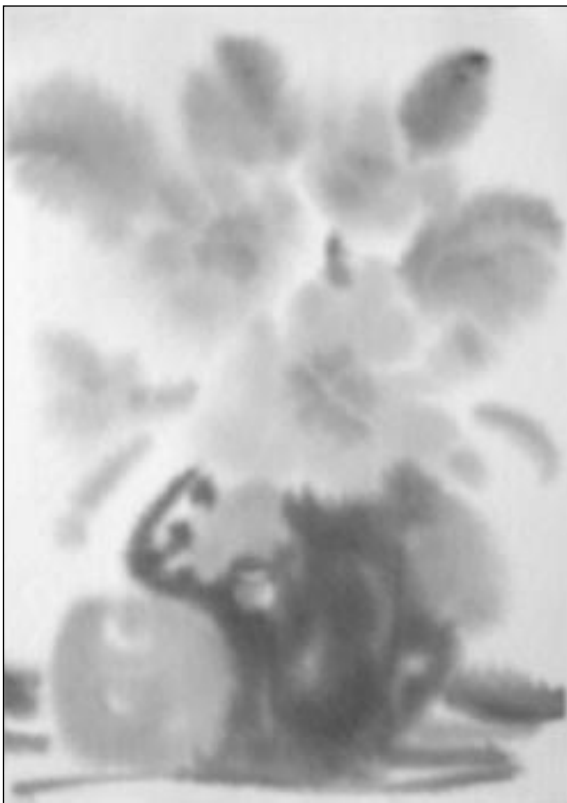


*Ink sketch*



*Ink sketch with watercolour applied*

a) Sketch with the permanent marker (like a Sharpie Ultrafine), then fill in with watercolour paints in a precise or loose fashion.



b) Have your chosen colour scheme ready to go, paints softened, then wet your paper and dabble in colours in the areas they need to go:



Let your paper dry. Now apply an ink drawing to give your subject matter some shape. Don't worry if some colours overlap and have bled into neighbouring objects.



Now you are ready to touch up your work with more paint and perhaps do some detailing, as little or as much as you like.

Whatever method you choose to do, have some fun! You create a wonderful record of places you have been and objects that have caught your attention! Happy trails!

## About the artist

*KARIN RICHTER CSPWC, SCA, PAC, ASA  
Master Pastellist (MPAC)*

*Born in Germany into an artistic family, Karin has had a passion for painting since she was a child. She has been a professional artist working in all mediums for 20 years with a style that can be described as impressionistic. She draws inspiration not only from the western landscape and the Canadian Rockies close at hand but also from international destinations she travels to on a regular basis. Throughout the years, Karin's paintings have been featured in solo and group shows in many prominent locations and private and public galleries locally, nationally and internationally. She is a member of many prestigious art societies and has worked on their boards. Sharing her knowledge of painting has been a joy to Karin for many years. She is an enthusiastic art instructor to many aspiring artists in classes and workshops locally, across Canada and overseas.*

*Karin can be reached at: [karinrichter@shaw.ca](mailto:karinrichter@shaw.ca). Her website is at: [www.karinrichter.com](http://www.karinrichter.com)*