

I have had the opportunity to teach a watercolor class through a public education program. I have also had the opportunity to attend a few workshops and be taught myself. It is very interesting to me to compare how I feel being both a teacher and a student. I have always tried to teach how I would want to be taught as well as finding ways that will resonate with people who process differently than I do. I guess being a schoolteacher has helped me with this. Being the teacher is not the hard part for me. Being the student has been a challenge.

How do I take information that may or may not be new, but put in a different way, into my brain? And then once I have truly processed said information, how do I use that information in my work without going back to the same thing that I always do? I mean, isn't that the reason we take workshops, or watch someone else paint? To take the information presented and then somehow include that information in our own process? I am wondering if what happens to me happens to others, or am I just not a great student? I take notes, I practice at the workshop, sometimes I view a video numerous times, but not a great deal happens to my approach. Do you think it is because once we get to a certain stage of painting, or creating, our processes are not necessarily going to change, but that our skill grows? Maybe taking workshops isn't what I need to do. Don't get me wrong, I love going. There is just something about spending a few days with like-minded people, talking about art and then submersing ourselves while creating art. I love it, but I have struggled the last few years really changing anything that I do after those workshops. Maybe I don't notice the changes, or the small things that I do perhaps a little differently.

Sometimes I think the process of painting is like riding a bike. Not that it's boring, but that it is automatic. The steps that I take to paint a certain scene are the same time and time again. Sometimes I don't really have to think about what I am doing; it has just become automatic. Is that a bad thing? I don't think so. Haven't I worked hard to become proficient at painting? Have you? Do you feel that it is somewhat automatic? Maybe it's not that I am a bad student, maybe it is just that I don't need to be a student any more right now. I don't have all the answers, nor do I profess to be "Grand". Perhaps I just need more brush miles on paper. More working out composition, and color theory. I think I can still grow as an artist being in my own head. Do you always have to be a student? All of this is something that I am processing and hopefully have intrigued you enough to ask yourself about. Are you a good student or are you like me, and perhaps just need more miles to the paper right now? Either way, I just know that I need to paint. I know I will take more workshops, and maybe one day

something will really strike me and cause great change. Maybe not. Miles to the paper and improvement of my work is the goal right now. And that is okay.



Owl
by Marsha Dennis