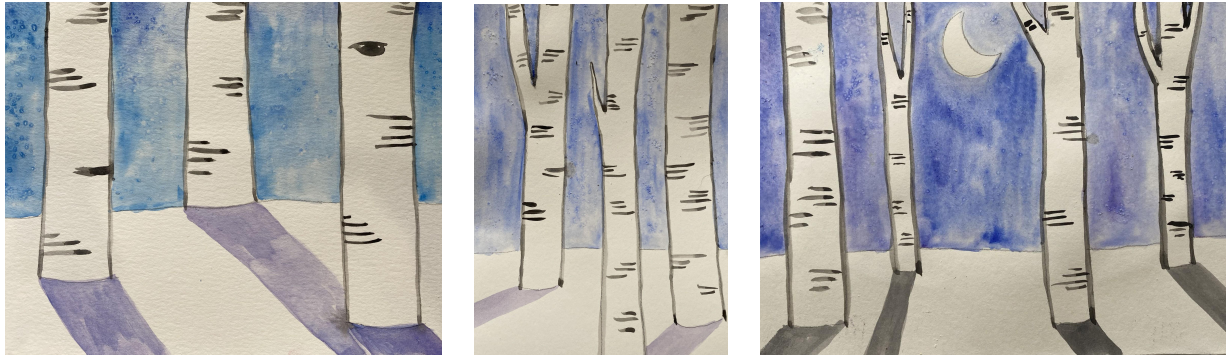


Lesson 3: Winter Birch Trees

Winter Watercolor Series

Taught by Nan Onkka for Grand Marais Art Colony, 2021



National Core Arts Standards:

VA:Cr3.1.3a: Elaborate visual information by adding details in an artwork to enhance emerging meaning

VA:Cr2.1.4a Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches

Techniques:

- Salt Resist
- Wet on Wet
- Wet on Dry

Connections:

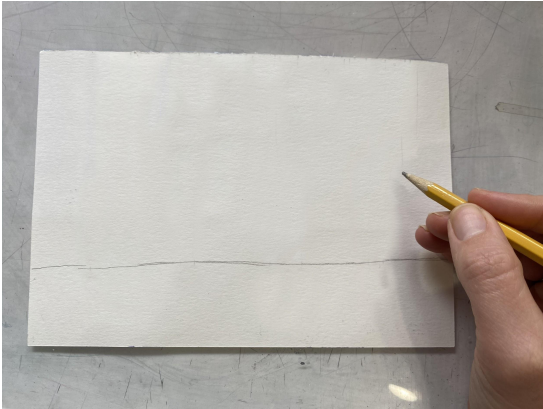
- Perspective
- Birch Trees

Materials Needed:

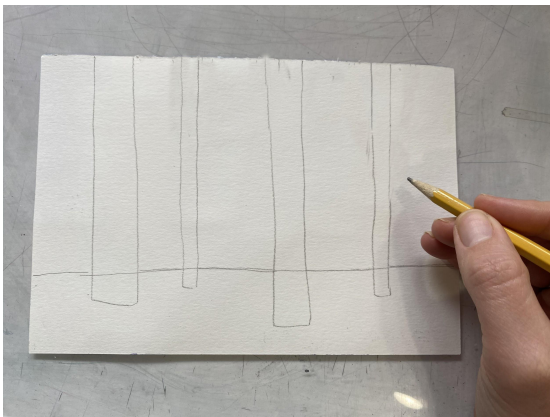
- Scratch Paper
- Pencil
- Table Salt
- Watercolor Set (with brush)
- Watercolor Paper
- Water Cup

Part 1: Drawing

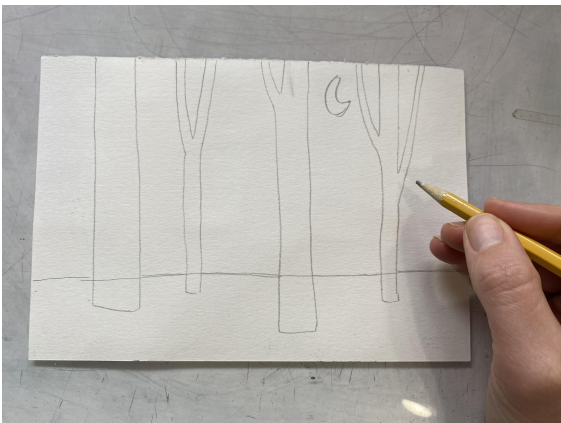
1. Find a pencil and a piece of **scratch paper** (not the watercolor paper). Our first step is to practice drawing our design.
2. With your pencil, draw a horizon line across your paper (near the bottom).



3. Next, draw a few tree trunks. To add a sense of depth, vary where the tree trunks begin. Draw some closer to the bottom of the page and some closer to the horizon line. (NOTE: All tree trunks should begin below the horizon line). The tree trunks closer to the bottom should be slightly larger than the tree trunks farther away.



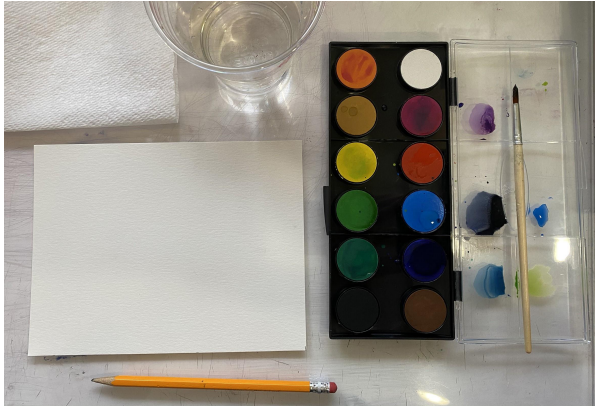
4. Add details, such as branches, a moon, etc. Keep the details simple; you will have to paint around them!



5. Once you are happy with your drawing, find your watercolor paper and a pencil.
6. Draw your design lightly in pencil onto your watercolor paper.

Part 2: Painting the Background

1. Set up a workspace at your desk or table. Your workspace should be clean and easy to wipe if any paint or water spills. You will need: watercolor paint set, paintbrush, water cup with clean water, watercolor paper, paper towel, pencil, and salt.



2. Using the wet-on-wet technique, cover the first area of the sky (avoid the trees and ground!) with clean water. (I recommend working in areas to avoid having your paper dry out.) The paper should be very wet and shiny.



3. With a clean, wet brush, mix a few colors on your palette. The more water you add, the lighter the color will be.



4. While the paper is still wet, add color to the wet areas. The color will spread and move in the wet area, but the dry areas should remain white. Continue adding paint until you are happy with how it looks.



5. Carefully sprinkle a small amount of salt on top of the wet paper. Your salt might not react right away - that's okay!



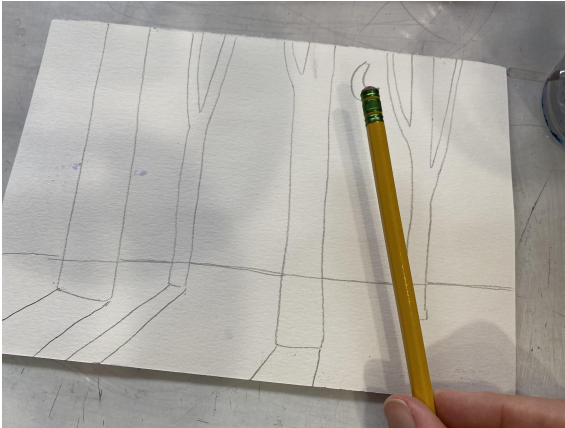
Repeat steps 2-5 until the entire background is painted and salted. The trees and ground should remain white.



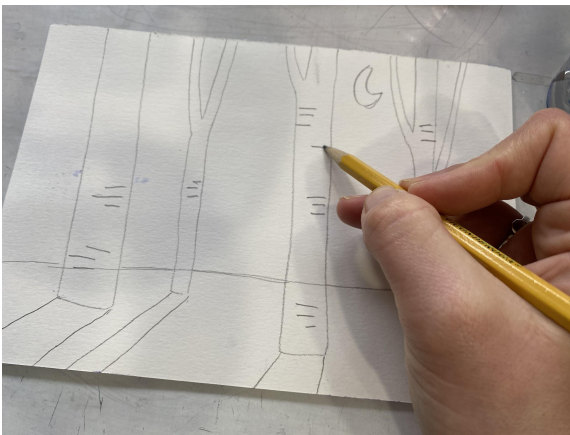
Part 3: Practicing the Details

1. Find your scratch paper sketch from Part 1. First, we will practice adding shadows!

2. Think about where the light source is coming from in your imaginary landscape. If you have drawn a moon or a sun, then that is your light source. If you don't have either of those, you can choose a spot on your paper. As long as it is somewhere in the sky, it can be left, center, or right.
3. Without actually drawing anything yet, use a pencil (or ruler) to draw an invisible line connecting the light source to your tree trunk. This tells you the direction your shadow will go. Draw the shadow lines. Repeat this for each tree trunk, noting that each one might go a different direction!



4. Now practice adding the details to the birch bark. Birch trees have dark lines on their bark called "lenticels." Draw a variety of horizontal lines on the tree trunks to represent the lenticels.



Part 4: Painting the Details

1. Before starting this part, make sure your painting is mostly dry!
2. With a clean, wet brush, mix a grayish purple or blue on your palette. The more water you add, the lighter the color will be.

3. Looking at your sketch for reference, paint the tree shadows. The shadows begin at the bottom of the tree trunk and should run off the bottom of the page.



4. With black paint, start adding the lenticels (black lines on the birch bark). If the black accidentally spreads into the background, use a paper towel to help remove the black.



5. Optional: Once the background is completely dry, you can outline your trees with black watercolor.
6. Lastly, when EVERYTHING is completely dry, carefully wipe away the salt into a trash can.

Cleaning Up

1. When you have finished painting your background, it is time to clean up!
 - Rinse out your paintbrush with clean water (dab it on the paper towel to make sure it does not have paint remaining on it)
 - Let the watercolor paints air dry (or gently blot them with a paper towel)
 - Wipe down your table with a clean rag
2. When your painting is completely dry, don't forget to sign and date it. Congratulations on a fantastic painting!

