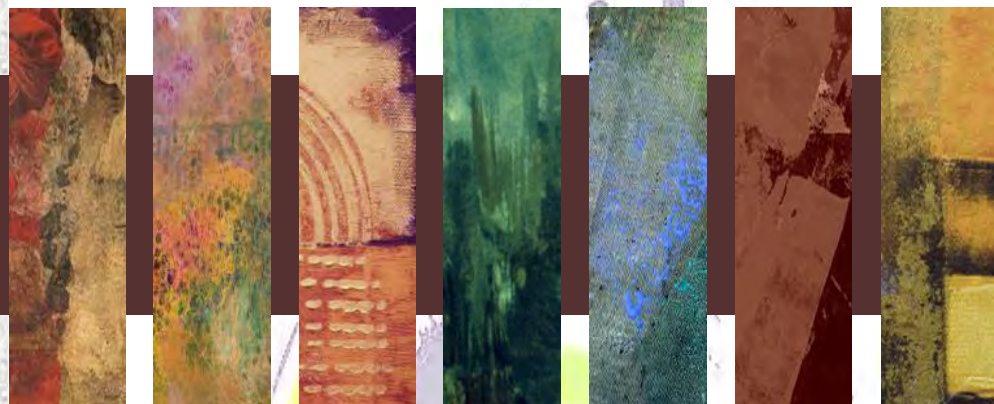


# water COLOUR



THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOUR / LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE PEINTURES EN AQUARELLE •

MARCH/APRIL NEWSLETTER ADDENDUM



March 2016 Newsletter Addendum

## WaterMedia



THE CANADIAN  
SOCIETY OF PAINTERS  
IN WATER COLOUR/  
LA SOCIÉTÉ  
CANADIENNE DE  
PEINTRES EN  
AQUARELLE

**ADMINISTRATOR**

Anita Cotter  
80 Birmingham St  
Unit B3  
Toronto, Ontario M8V 3W6  
416-533-5100  
Email: info@cspwc.com  
Website: www.cspwc.com

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Bill Atkinson

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Rayne Tunley

# Watercolour - a river of imagination!

Message from the President  
Message du Président

**MARCH 2016**

**NEWSLETTER ADDENDUM**



Dear CSPWC Members and Associates,

The **WaterMedia** survey is ready to be sent out to you.

However, at our Executive Board meeting on Tuesday, April 5, 2016, it was decided that - *before* the survey is distributed, we create an addendum to our previous March 2016 newsletter that would include articles and comments written by any of our

Members or Associates on the topic - and that these would be collected and sent back out to you as soon as possible.

This allows for conversation about the topic of **WaterMedia** that might be of interest to you written by fellow artists.

Please review the following articles - one page is given per article.

You will see, from previous newsletters which are attached to this email, that this discussion has been reviewed by the CSPWC for decades.

The survey will be distributed to you shortly.

As your elected President, I remain neutral and forever watchful.

Warm Regards,

Rayne Tunley AOCAD CSPWC  
President CSPWC  
CSPWC Exhibitions Chair

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## WaterMedia

As watercolourists, we all have a love affair with traditional watercolour. Most of us fell in love with the medium for all the reasons that make traditional watercolour so wonderful. And most of us are still hooked. For the CSPWC, however, the dilemma [for more than half a century] has been how to keep alive this great tradition, the tradition of our founding members, while at the same time considering and allowing for experimentation and yes, the use of new and probably yet to be developed media that challenge the status quo, but that do use water as the vehicle for transferring paint to paper and as an ongoing fundamental part of the process. In a nutshell, doesn't it come down to just this, this element of water, isn't this what differentiates watercolour and water-media from the rest of the pack? It isn't about the brand, or the particular type of paint or paper, or the brushes, it's about the magic that can be created with water and pigment. Simply put, arbitrary restrictions muddy the waters.

The name of the game is evolution, and obviously in this realm, the future is a great unknown. Acrylics are always a bone of contention in any discussions around admissibility. The great debate rages on, despite the fact that we do have at least one acrylic painting in our Diploma Collection, going back many decades.

Best suggestion: continue with alternating between transparent and water-media exhibitions, and leave the doors wide open in the latter to allow for any medium that incorporates water as part of the process...and most importantly, absolutely let go of the *"must be resoluble"* criteria, not just in our water-media exhibitions but also for all exhibitions. In my opinion, this stipulation has always been so ridiculous as to be laughable, given that such a requirement is never going to be tested and why on earth would it be a requirement of a work of art anyway? Given that this requirement is currently in place, how to explain allowing casein in our water-media exhibitions and not acrylics? Casein is somewhat resoluble to a point, but ultimately no more resoluble than acrylic, so is there a time limit on resoluble? And of course there is the complication, as we all know, that acrylics can be applied transparently, and who can really tell the difference between a transparent acrylic and a transparent watercolour, so yes, we do need to decide whether acrylics applied in a transparent manner will be allowed in a transparent exhibition.

Even though the recent exhibition at the Etobicoke Civic Centre was promoted as a water-based media exhibition, by far the majority of the works fell into the category of transparent watercolour. I would suggest the reason for this was the exclusion of acrylics in the Call For Entry. The water-based media category as it currently stands is so limiting as to sabotage the purpose of these exhibitions. They are presented as opportunities to exhibit other than transparent media works, but this is not happening.

A can of worms. We need to get over it. Back to the drawing board. It's about water and pigment and making good paintings. Embrace the great tradition, embrace today, embrace whatever is on the horizon. In this way we stay relevant.... creatively, individually and as a society. It's not that complicated.

As we continue to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CSPWC, let us move forward with a clear resolution that will stand the test of time...

Janet Baker CSPWC  
April 7, 2016

### **An Associate Member's WaterMedia Opinion**

The CSPWC was formed to promote traditional transparent watercolour on what I will call traditional paper. Period. Changing that to get more members, increase interest, or however else it is described is nothing short of shameful.

If someone paints for years and their style deviates – slightly or completely from the traditional methods over time – that is fine. They may completely change their methods or materials to the point that they do not qualify for entry in, nor want to be a member of, the CSPWC. There is nothing wrong in that: they may join another association or club that better suits their needs. However, insisting that the CSPWC change the rules so they can remain members of the CSPWC is wrong.

Traditional transparent watercolour has been around for a long time and like anything else with a history the interest in it may rise and fall; this should be considered normal. If membership is down then cut back on expenses: in an extreme example, close the office and “employ” only volunteers.

As an associate member and volunteer web master for the CSPWC, I have seen the wide range of styles created by following the rules. My personal opinion of examples seen elsewhere that push the limits beyond what the traditional methods are: I don't like them. This does not mean they are wrong or bad, but they are just not my cup of tea . . .

Is this a reason to not want to change the rules? Yes, it is. I joined this association because traditional transparent watercolour is what I like, what I want to practice and what I want to promote.

It is also what I want the association I am a member of to practice, promote and to raise up, not to bring it down - even in part - to the level of an *Arts and Crafts* club.

*Eric Bailey, Associate*  
CSPWC Web Master  
April 8, 2016



Dear CSPWC Members and Associates,

The following is not a committee resolution.

It is an opinion piece, my attempt at a rational departure point for considering what our society should accept or reject in the exploration of watermedia.

I am starting with the premise that the purpose of watermedia is to extend the vision of watercolour. To maintain the transparency and colour integrity which are characteristic of the best watercolour pieces.

Before deciding how far to extend the boundaries of traditional watercolour to allow for exploration and experimentation into watermedia it would be instructive to examine watercolour itself. We need to know what our departure point actually consists of.



*Richard Belanger, mixed media, a bit of underpainting with acrylic + watercolor*

The first paintings done by man were cave paintings in Spain. Earth colours were mixed with blood as a binder and probably water was used to thin the paint. The ground was the rock wall of the cave. These 20,000 year old paintings were the precursors of all painting methods currently in use.

Fast forward to our recent past and the historical giants in watercolour. They would include Turner, Gainsborough, Sargent, Homer and Eakins. There were some common characteristics shared by all of them.

They all treated water colour

as a transparent medium. They all also used white gouache as a body paint mixer or white ground when they wanted a denser more opaque passage or to reclaim a white area.

More recent influential teachers in watercolour such as Edgar Whitney and Carl Schaeffer also included brush or pen with India ink as part of their tool base in teaching watercolours.

Is the rationale of purist transparency advocates in watercolour less a reflection of the actual history of the evolution of watercolour painting and more a reaction against a surge in various new media that threaten to overwhelm or alter watercolour methods to the extent that traditional methods of watercolour might disappear?

It is a legitimate concern and one that we take very seriously.

**This is why we require for juried entry in our International Open Water Competitions stringent rules regarding the application of transparent watercolour.**

Some of CSPWC's very successful watercolourists already use watermedia.



*Ann Balch, Mixed Media: Transparent Watercolour / Acrylic Archival Varnish Paper on Board, mounted on stretcher bars*



*Shari Blaukopf, pen and archival ink for line and transparent watercolour for colour.*

There are many, but some examples would include

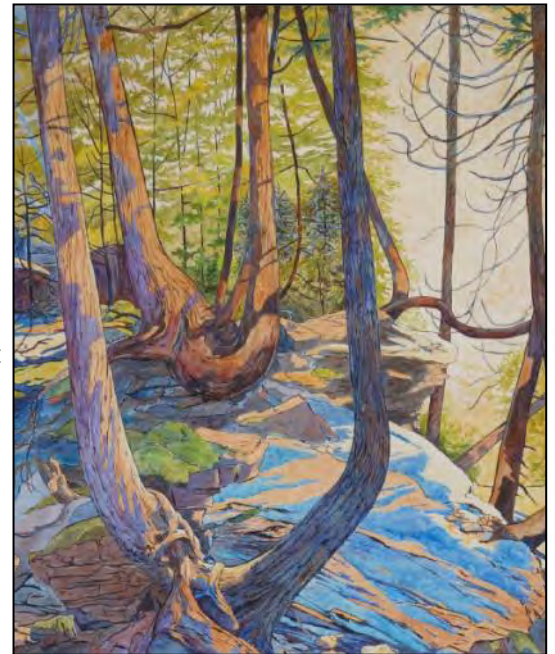
Ann Balch who adheres her transparent watercolour on paper paintings to a board mounted on stretcher bars and glazes them with acrylic archival varnish.

Richard Belanger who sometimes uses a tonal acrylic underdrawing as a base for his watercolour washes.

Shari Blaukopf who combines pen and archival ink for line and transparent watercolour for colour.

Lin Souliere who uses acrylics transparently like watercolour, no glass glazing required.

Jean Pederson who uses a variety of mixed media techniques.



*Lin Souliere, acrylics transparently like watercolour, no glass glazing required.*



*Jean Pederson, a variety of mixed media techniques*

Each of these artists is a watercolourist who has extended their vision by stretching the boundaries of watercolour into watermedia.

Each has also maintained the vision of watercolour in their work.

In defining watermedia's departure point from watercolour we recognize that watercolour begins with 2 defining characteristics, It is resolvable in water after it has dried and It is transparent.

I believe that dropping resolubility as a requirement does not impede the vision of watercolour.

Furthermore allowing watercolours to be fixed and varnished allows

them to be viewed without glass glare.

Allowing them to be adhered to a canvas stretcher allows for a more contemporary presentation able to be exhibited in gallerys that otherwise refuse paintings under glass.

I also believe that Watermedia must be offered annually in Open Water Exhibits along with Watercolour if it is to have the desired effect of attracting new members.

I also believe that Watermedia must be offered annually in Open Water Exhibits along with Watercolour if it is to have the desired effect of attracting new members.

i suggest Watercolour always be 50 percent or more of entries in these shows so that it always maintains a dominant position.

These are my personal opinions, but I hope you will give them thoughtful consideration.

Thank you.

Garry Hamilton CSPWC  
Vice-President CSPWC

## **Wedded to Watercolour**

I was well into my 60s when , one day, right outa the blue, I decided that I'd like to become a painter. I knew nothing so I went nosing around a dozen Toronto galleries.

"What's that I would ask them " And they replied – " That's an oil. That's an acrylic. Why that's a watercolour ". And based on this slim data I chose watercolour as my future. It looked easy, it cleaned up well ( since I am by nature a messy artist ) and I sensed one wouldn't have to constantly lug around a lot of art stuff. Besides, my grandmother and her great grandmother before her had been genteel ladies prone to passing time with – guess what – yup! watercolours.

Over time I learned from the best – artists here in Canada, in the United States and Europe. Ten or more years of slogging it out and trying to learn with each passing Lesson.

Four years later I applied for and got CSPWC acceptance. Oh great Joy! Now I get commissions for my whimsical work. I make a decent amount with my paintings. I have published several books illustrated with my watercolours. My works hang in municipal collections. I am invited to illustrate magazines. The list goes on..

Every now and again, the art clubs I belong to, start mumbling about acrylics or some other water-based marvel that is a Johnny come lately on the scene. They want to change things. Why, I'm not sure.

But I will say this. I am a watercolourist pure and simple. It's not an easy medium by any means. And I say Phooey to those who want such change. If they want to water down ( no pun intended ) the medium – let them go elsewhere. Let's keep the cap W right there in art club logos.

As for me, I'm sticking to those paints in a tube that mix with water, dance together on paper and give me the probably the most satisfaction I've known in a long, long time.

Be happy to debate this with anyone at any time. Provided, of course, that it doesn't impinge on easel time with my watercolour amigos.

Cheers and good night

*Wilf McOstrich CSPWC TWS WGA IWS*



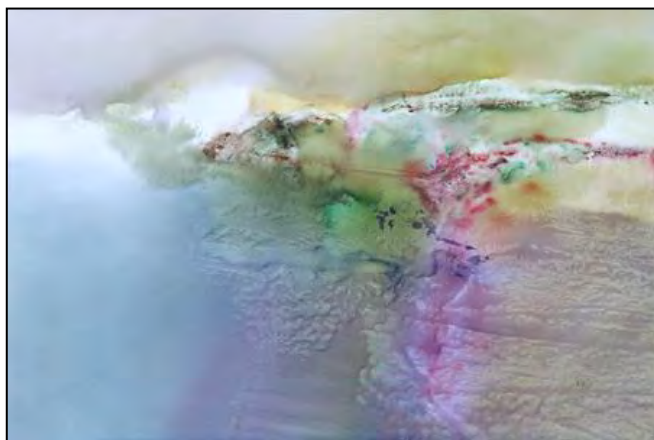
## **Think before you 'Tick'**

- an opinion from Peter Marsh about the upcoming survey.

One could say that the same issues are repeated for every review of the specifications for water media; the specifications that we use in our calls for entry. Actually there has been a gradual evolution of this topic that has in general been caused by the broad expanse of new media that have become available for watercolour artists, and the new ideas that have accompanied them. It is hard to get everyone to agree on these issues as everyone has their own opinion so I don't expect all members to agree with the points that I make but they are worth considering in your deliberations. First off is our name as a society and our mandate in our by-laws. We are THE preeminent watercolour society in the country, and our ranks are full of predominantly excellent watercolour painters. Our by-laws say "**Purpose of The Corporation "The Canadian Society of Painters**



*Fred Brigden*



*Ray Cattell*

**in Water Colour"** (Letters patent July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1936) *recognizes, encourages, and nurtures excellence of work in the medium of watercolour. To this end it plans and holds seminars, demonstrations and open competition exhibits in order to discover and appreciate the work of watercolourists and to encourage them to become members of the Society which provides a common forum, information and camaraderie for artists who express their creativity in this demanding discipline.* Any direction that changes these basic fundamentals could certainly cost us a lot of members who are dedicated to what we have

accomplished since 1925, so it is best not to take your decisions lightly.

Secondly, although other media have constantly been used along with watercolours by many great artists, and many of our society colleagues, their use has been kept to a minimum (and has even been specified in percentage amounts) to the betterment of expressing the mediums main characteristics of works on paper, water solubility, and transparency. These directions are generally not pursued by any other of our great art society's, in fact they are eschewed in part in favour of a great number of other mediums that are used for artistic expression, and that is why many of our members who paint in other media are also members of other prominent societies.



*John Bennett*





*Anthony Batten*

Changes to the specifications we have used for 'watercolour' could change the requirements for entry into The Society. It is conceivable that venues that have exhibited our works over the decades might also change their view of The Society depending on our decisions. We also have international standing to the extent that we receive submissions from around the world. How will the watercolour painters of the world view changes to our views on the use of watercolour? We have

still to complete the compliment of watercolours to be included in the Royal Collection by 2025. How will the curators view our decisions? Decisions we make as a result of the survey could gradually change the nature of our 'Diploma Collection', hundreds of paintings held at The Peel Art Gallery in Brampton.

So our survey is probably far more significant than most of us would expect. We should think very carefully about any changes that might disappoint many members who aspired to be a member specifically because of what they perceived we represented. Evolution creates changes in perceptions.

*Peter Marsh OSA SCA CSPWC*  
Past President CSPWC



*Neville Clarke*

In 1925 the CSPWC was formed because there wasn't a venue for watercolour painters (inclusive of war time). They were able to make their mark and gather together in order to allow for an opportunity to create the voice of the watercolour painter.



*Pat Clemes*

Painting in watercolour is "like trying to contain a wild pony" (Pat Clemes). Painters in watercolour were sent to Florence, Italy to a special course (ie: Rudy Stussi, Pat Clemes) - to paint the landscape in transparent watercolour. Watercolour master courses were and still are available in Canada and the USA without making any changes to the medium.



*Rudolf Stussi*

When I became a member in the '70s, Ray Cattell, CSPWC RCA, created magnificent

abstract works with true brilliance on acid-free watercolour paper. John Bennett painted large colourful abstract nudes in high key, full of colour vibration. Doris McCarthy painted during her trips around the world and across Canada in this spontaneous medium of watercolour.

As a society, during the celebration of our 90th anniversary we remember —that we sent paintings to the Royal Jubilee collection at Windsor Castle (all traditional transparent watercolour), that we have a members' Diploma Collection which represents a painting of every CSPWC member since 1986. I believe that it is important to keep this reputation of painting in watercolour in its tradition.



*John Bennett*

The CSPWC has continued to draw excellent painters from across the country to become who we are now.

### **Mixed Water Media**

It is my understanding that some recent members of

the CSPWC feel that the direction of watercolour should be expanded in other directions than what is present at this time. In effect we already have—where we alternate every other year — water based media and transparent watercolour. If we were to alter our direction completely as it stands now, this would require a constitutional change. For the changes and ideas suggested, we should be reminded that there are other societies such as OSA, SCA, Colour and Form who would accept paintings in any media, including watercolour and water media.

The Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour was created for a purpose—the medium of transparent watercolour painting—and I firmly believe that it is important to maintain this integrity.

*Gery Puley CSPWC*

Past President CSPWC



*Doris McCarthy*

My position is simple.....

I support traditional watercolor and would not support diluting it with other mediums (a modest pun intended) until we consider changing the supports and glazing methods first. We need to see shows sell more than they do currently to be more attractive to members and future new members. If under glass is not appealing to consumers why not change this aspect first, as many traditional watercolourists have already done.

I feel this would make the traditional watercolour image both in surface finish, scale and presentation (mounted on Gallery frameless wood panels for example) more appealing to the purchasing public; many of whom do not buy work under glass. (At least they are not buying at OpenWater)

Scale: I also like to work large in oil and current watercolour "under-glass" glazing restrictions is a constraint. I am experimenting like so many other watercolourists have done with large format watercolour paper mounted on board and varnished or waxed.

It's expensive to frame and ship a full size watercolour: my shipping costs from Brockville to Toronto with return is \$250. My framing costs are \$250 to \$300. That is a lot of money, plus commission,,,,,whew! Anything to help me reduce upfront costs is a good thing.

*Bob Shackles CSPWC*

My membership in the CSPWC is all about watercolour. I think it's great that we have evolved and opened up the guidelines to include watermedia with all its exciting possibilities. At the same time I hope that transparent and opaque watercolour do get overtaken by acrylic painting which to me is a whole other medium. It is water-based but so is the new 'water-soluble' oil paint.

As new products such as Yupo are developed and new ways of framing watercolours (no glass, spray varnished) are tried, the Society members will always be having to re-examine our commitment to watercolour. Thinking about how we can evolve is a healthy exercise but we must be vigilant so as to never rethink watercolour!

*Joan Zagaris CSPWC*