

# Ric Dentinger Watercolor Workshop

August 19-21, 2014 / GWG at KACC

## Day 1:

Ric Dentinger had a traditional education. His background is in graphic design. He has also worked as an illustrator and art director. He attended art school at the Warren Hunter School of Art in San Antonio. There he used a palette of only 6 colors. He gradually expanded his palette. He now has a warm and cool of each of the primary colors and the rest are "convenience colors" that help him keep his paintings fresh so that he doesn't have to keep stopping to mix more of a color. He paints in a representational style. He likes to get in and hit an area of his painting while saving the light. When he knows that when he sees a subject struck by light in a certain way, he immediately wants to paint it. He believes that artistic freedom of expression means using whatever it takes to achieve the look he wants. He uses gouache in areas because it is opaque and absorbs the light. It doesn't let the paper refract the light. He said that watercolors take longer to learn than any other medium. He also paints in oils where he has to do more mixing of colors than with watercolors.

## Supplies/Materials below :

### Paints

Any professional grade of watercolor paint is acceptable. He uses Schmincke watercolors because of their rich, intense color and high quality. He first learned about them when Herwicks Art Supply in downtown San Antonio (300 Broadway/ 78205) asked him to use them in a demo. Schmincke watercolors don't turn into rock hard concrete on the palette. You won't ruin a brush going into them trying to rewet them on the palette like you can do with some other brands. He doesn't receive anything from them for recommending them, he just loves them. He said that M. Graham, Winsor Newton and Holbien are also good watercolors. M. Graham has honey in it and doesn't seem to completely dry, sometimes lifting under his washes. He considers these to be the most frequently used Schmincke colors and would highly recommend them as a minimum palette:

- |                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Lemon yellow         | 13. Cobalt turquoise               |
| 2. Cadmium yellow light | 14. Chromium oxide green brilliant |
| 3. Indian yellow        | 15. Olive green permanent          |
| 4. Chrome orange        | 16. Yellow ochre                   |
| 5. Cadmium red light    | 17. Raw sienna                     |
| 6. Scarlet red          | 18. Naples yellow                  |
| 7. Alizarin crimson     | 19. Raw umber                      |
| 8. Manganese violet     | 20. Burnt sienna                   |
| 9. Ultramarine finest   | 21. Burnt umber                    |
| 10. Cobalt blue light   | 22. Payne's grey bluish            |
| 11. Prussian blue       |                                    |
| 12. Cerulean blue tone  | Gouache – Titanium White           |



### Brushes

He uses many brushes, but as a minimum he recommends:

- A genuine Kolinsky sable brush, such as the Raphael Sable Series 8404 in a size 8 or da Vinci – Maestro Series 11
- A squirrel oval wash, such as the Isabey Series 6234 in a size 4



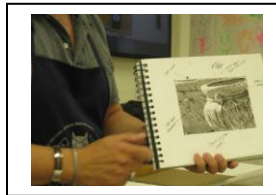
## Other Supplies

- Small spiral bound sketchbook – size 9" X 12" or smaller Canson C a' Grain 111 lb)
- Pencils of varying hardness for value sketches (Staedtler Lumograph 100G6)
- 300 pound Arches cold pressed watercolor block of 12"x16" or 9"x 12
- waterproof support board, such as gator foam board – min. 13" X 17"
- paper towel
- water sprayer
- water container
- 1 " artist tape (Pro Tape)

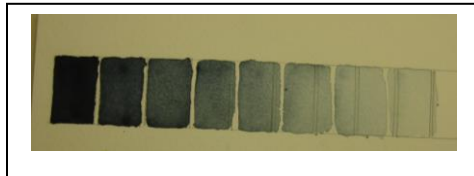


## **The Demo:**

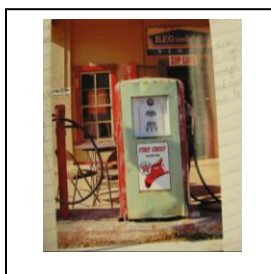
He is "drawn" to drawing. He does thumbnails and black and white value studies. He likes to write notes around his thumbnail sketch about where to keep the light and where to find the darkest parts. To be successful, you don't just jump into a painting. You have to become more intimate with the subject. Use thumbnail sketches with notes about the depth and lighting source when sketching on location to learn more about your subject. Everything outside changes so quickly. Photos can be taken to document the moment. Photos at noon have downward cast shadows, west sun at 3:00 may have eaves shadows underneath.



He discussed the value scale. He has students make a value scale using Paynes Gray. The start with a value straight from the tube and then add water to achieve a progression of lighter values until white. Paynes Gray dries 50% lighter.



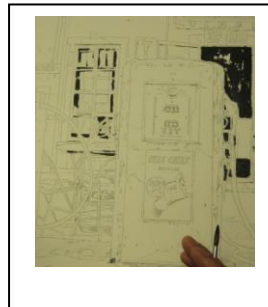
He has two new paintings in Splash 15. Our demo was of a smaller, tighter version of one of those larger paintings. He provided a reference photograph of the gasoline station in Waring, TX that incorporated dramatic light and dark contrasts. It was taken around 2:00 in the afternoon. Students had the option to use that photo or a photo of their own. We discussed thumbnail sketches. We drew a brief thumbnail sketch from the photo. Then we drew the subject on 300 lb Arches watercolor paper using a light table. Arches has sizing that refracts the paint. He likes 300 lb paper because after it is wet and dried, the paper absorbs the paint. With 140 lb paper he feels as though the paint stays on top of the paper and the paper also buckles. He tapes the paper down to his board with white artist tape, then wets it and lets it dry thoroughly until bone dry.



He told us that watercolor is not really as much about the water, but rather more about the pigment. He stressed the delicate balance of water and pigment. Having a knowledge of the pigments will help you to not waste money on paints you won't use. His palette contains 18 wells. He has on row of warm yellows and reds, one row of cool blues and one row of earth tones.



He likes to start with the darkest darks. He found the darkest value in this demo to be in the windows. He doesn't like to use a solid black because it is too flat. He took his da Vinci #6 Sable brush and made a mixture of Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine Blue, mixing until it was the consistency of thick honey. He put in those dark values first, then put in the reds and the blues. He used thick paint with a dry brush in many areas. He left some areas in the dark parts where he could go back in and drop in some color to "make something happen" there. He used both warmer and cooler darks by adding more Burnt Sienna or more Ultramarine Blue. He used Cobalt Blue, Burnt Sienna, Green, Prussian Blue and Chrome Orange in the sign, creating a rusty feel. He changed the blue up here and there varying the color a bit and painted around the lettering. He went in while it was still damp with a thick Burnt Umber, some Scarlet Red and Cad Red to create the rust. He was precise now, but will soften when the shadows go over it. He saves his loose shadow washes for last.



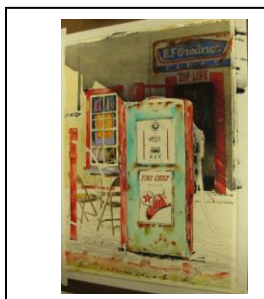
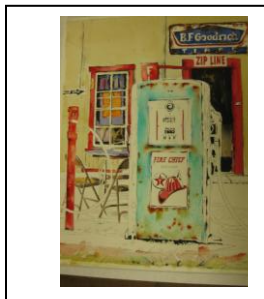
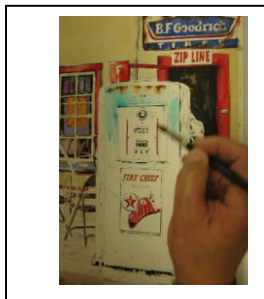
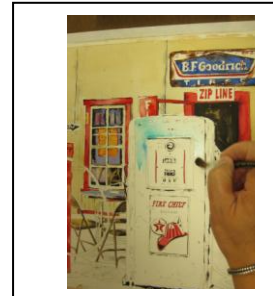
## Day 2:

He uses his iPad to zoom in and out on the image while he paints. He also likes to have 2 images, one of the photo and one in high contrast.

He went back in and "tickled" areas of the painting so they would not be lost then the shadow wash goes over them. He used Turquoise on the gas pump. He dropped in some green and Naples Yellow. Naples Yellow is an opaque color. If used pure and thick it can bring light back in where it has been lost. Glazing over opaque paint can move the pigment and get murky. The trick is the delicate balance of the pigment to water. You need to know what is going to happen when you lay your paint down. Disturbing it by overworking it will also make it murky. He liked the cool of the turquoise against the warm of the red. he went in with some thick pure Burnt Sienna and a little red to create a look of bleeding rust while it was wet. Watercolor is all about timing.

He used Schmincke masking fluid in a tube to save some whites in the window panes. It applies easily and flakes off beautifully. He applied Raw Umber to the stucco wall, plus some Burnt Sienna.

When putting on our last pass shadow layer he told us not to use a synthetic brush. Synthetics are plastic. They do not hold water like sable or squirrel brushes which are soft. The paint runs off so you are constantly going back into the water. They have too much spring and will be like scraping a shovel. It softens and "globs up" the paint. He marked the shadow areas with pencil, leaving the whites and saving some highlights. He likes using a mechanical pencil because it doesn't get shorter. The paint absorbs into Arches paper. The graphite rises to the top and can be erased when dry. He went in when the shadows dried with a very thick dark Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Sienna to paint the hoses. He added some red on top in several areas on the hoses.

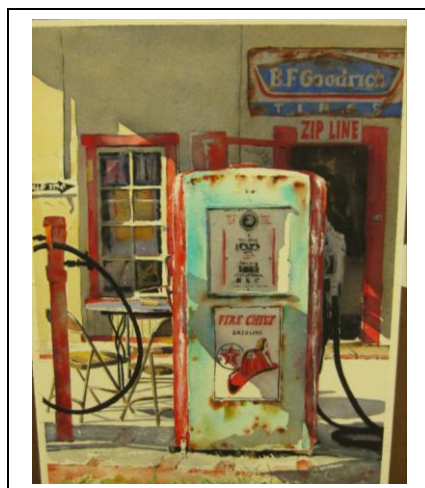




### Day 3:

On the final day of the class he tweaked areas and added whites. He concentrated on intense and bold values and spectacular, fresh color. For an area to look lighter, you darken behind it. He strengthened areas by adding color where it had washed out in the shadow. He used a dry brush technique to apply paint in some areas. Gouache is an opaque watercolor. He used gouache to highlight whites, but cautioned against using it as a crutch in large areas. He often uses it straight by dipping his small brush in the tube. Adding water will soften it. He added it to the top of a ridge on the pump, a latch, the letter F, a chair, window reflections, the lower door jamb and other areas where he lost the white. This made it more 3-D. He dry brushed gouache on the side of the pump and on the pavement for a rocky look the shadow area.

He critiqued each painting done by the students. He provided positive feedback and constructive suggestions for ways to achieve the feeling of dramatic light.



He also instructed students on what he looks for in a subject and techniques to achieve a striking and dramatic watercolor painting. He circulated through the class, helping each student as we worked on a subject that we brought in to class.

#### Miscellaneous Info:

He talked about a product called Aqua Fix that you use just a drop of in you paint mixture that will keep your paint from moving when you wash over it.

He said you can go to Dick Blick and pull up colors to learn about them and compare.

He considers Andrew Wyeth and John Singer Sargent to be artistic "ROCK STARS."

His website is <http://ricdentinger.com/> His phone number is 210-260-2508.

He Instructs Watercolor Classes at Southwest School of Art in San Antonio <https://www.swschool.org/>

He is represented by **The Hunt Gallery** / 4225 McCulloough Ave / San Antonio, TX / 78212 210-822-6527