

Sail Away With Your Brush:

Techniques for Improving your Paintings Using Your iPad's Photo App and Camera

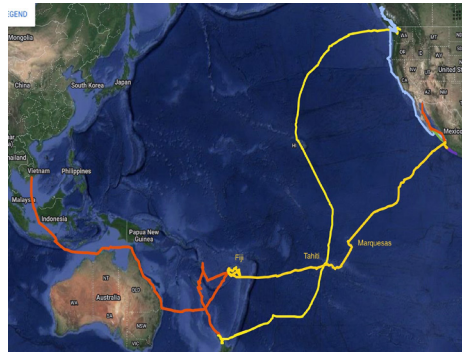
Article #1 of 4 by Roxy Podlogar

In 2016, my husband and I sold everything and began living aboard our ocean-going sailboat, Sky Pond. We make ocean passages requiring weeks to reach iconic destinations. After several years of searching for my artistic voice while sailing about the world, I set out to achieve a childhood goal of being an authentic watercolorist. I've discovered a few tricks that helped me along the way.

We've sailed 40,000 miles throughout the Pacific and are currently in Fiji. The irony of exploring remote wonders of the world by sailboat is that the powerful emotion of rarely seen and uncommon sites are sometimes challenging to capture and convey. Colors can seem brighter and incoherent. Natural features create unusual landscapes like the mushroom rocks in Fiji's Fuluga atoll.

Often, we are situated near an iconic subject, tucked in at anchor behind an island, which would be exciting to paint from Sky Pond's deck. But every breath of wind or ripple of wave swings us on our tether, continuously moving my subject, so I paint from photos.

I create reference photos using simple camera settings and photo editing techniques. These techniques are invaluable in creating my paintings, from capturing the subject to evaluating my work.



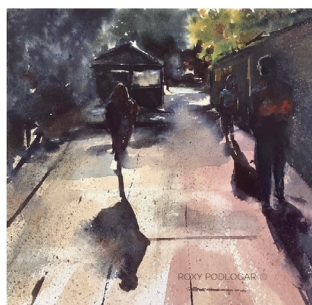
- Set the level indicator and the grid to "on" in the camera's settings. I use a one-third grid to frame the focal point.
- Take numerous photos in both landscape and portrait from different perspectives using the level indicator and the grid to produce the best composition of the subject.
- Ensure colors in the photo match the scene. If not, make a mental note to adjust the colors later in the photo app.
- Modify the reference photo in the photo app using tools in the edit function:
 1. Select the best composition by zooming in and out to crop the subject.
 2. Level the image if necessary.
 3. Correct the color using warmth or tint.
 4. View the image in black and white to confirm the composition and focal point. Locate the darkest darks and the lightest lights to use as a reference when adding washes and detail to the painting.
 5. Flip the image in mirror mode to ensure the composition holds.

Finally, I store reference photos in albums according to genre, such as landscape or still life. I browse these albums for subjects to paint.

Before sketching onto the watercolor paper, I draw a value study using a pencil or three graduated values of gray-toned markers in my sketchbook. Midway through painting, I create a work-in-progress photo by laying the painting flat in diffused light and compare the work-in-progress photo to the reference photo and a photo of the value study. Add all three

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6. Use the markup tool to experiment with changes to the work-in-progress photo, such as adding a shadow or changing

the hue before modifying the painting. The markup tool can be used with a finger or, my favorite, the Apple Pencil.

7. Photograph the completed painting and store it in an album marked for that year to assess progress over time. Other than cropping and straightening the

image, I never adjust the image to improve its quality. The photo remains true to the painting. This process and set of techniques have improved my ability to evaluate subjects and contribute to capturing and conveying my unique experiences. As the Fijians say, Bula! To life!

Over acrylic

Roger shows us his great style

Focused Nancy

Paintings!

Plein air

Winter view from the lodge

We wish you were with us at the most recent "PaintOut", but plan now to join us for an upcoming camp and you will be hooked!

If you've ever planned a 5 day getaway, then THIS getaway should be near the top of your list. PaintOut is held in May, Sept, and February (always from Wed. to Sun. a.m.)

Come from far away or nearby and enjoy leaving obligations behind. We paint, eat great food, paint, socialize, paint, learn, paint, sleep, paint, and do it all over again. At February's PaintOut, we even had renowned chef, Wayne Johnson, preparing our meals!

Read about Chef Wayne [HERE](#).

Aaah...the fried chicken, the soups, the desserts, the friends, and the calm.

NEXT CAMP - MAY 1 - MAY 5, 2024

