

Keith's SKYSCAPE 8 page article in the August issue of The Decorative Painter Magazine

SKILLBUILDER

Skyscapes: The Sky's the Limit

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Part Two of a Four-Part Series



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I remember my first snowfall. I was visiting my grandparents in the back hills of the Smoky Mountains. I continue to relive the awe I felt on that magical winter morning. Sunlight danced like tiny diamonds on the blanket of white. Stillness filled the air and soft blue shadows moved silently within the pines. I knew then that I wanted to somehow preserve that feeling and share it with others someday. I did. I became an artist and that is what artists do.

In the last issue, I featured Water Mylar Mixes Gold Water-colors to demonstrate my Vertical Shapes Skyscape Technique. In Part Two, still using the lighthouse design but with some variations, I will be using other water-based media, DecoArt Traditional Artist Acrylics as well as DecoArt Americana Acrylics, to demonstrate my Diagonal Action Skyscape Technique.

DESIGNING THE SKY

How do we create movement in a painting? We can't make the shapes themselves move, so we use some of the age-old methods created by the Old Masters. First, we create a path for the viewer's eye to follow within our work. The path should follow any part of an invisible X that goes from corner to corner of the picture. These invisible lines are known as diagonals. Diagonals create action and movement in a work of art. The speed of action and movement is controlled by hard and soft edges. A hard edge will hold the eye for a moment while soft edges will cause the eye movement to flow.

The lighthouse sits conveniently where the diagonals cross each other. The red rooftops are my focal point. The dark blue pathway is balanced by the white diagonal patterns in the sky. The pathway is attached at the top by the small house and green foliage. It is attached at the bottom by the rocks and old fence. The viewer's eye can comfortably enter and leave the painting. The soft white diagonals in the sky allow the scene.

The more you eliminate spots that cause jerky eye movements, the better you create what is known as rhythm in a painting. Balance creates rhythm. Rhythm creates harmony and movement. This is a perfect example of my Diagonal Action Skyscape Technique.

In order to paint my various Skyscapes, I discovered, improved, and perfected my soft sky application. It consists of the magical uses for the opaque water-based Daler-Rowney Pro-White as it mixes with different water-based media, presenting an altogether different story, mood, and visual impact each time. I was amazed to discover a white that would not only blend with each medium, but also would actually bring out the best in them. My process of watering down the paper, the precise timing of applying Pro-White and color, and my unique blending process will become one of those moments for you to learn and enjoy.