

Keith's SKYSCAPE article in the November 2014 issue of The Decorative Painter Magazine

SKILLBUILDER

Skyscapes: The Sky's the Limit

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Part Three of a Four-Part Series

It is important for us to give a physical form to emotions we feel, to the scope of things, how necessary it is for us to draw and paint, or to design and make visible our dreams? It's not that we can or should, it's that we want. It's our calling, our values, and who we are.

You might relate to this story. It was just past my tenth birthday in August of 1956. My dad had given me a large airplane glider kit, and I had just finished putting it together. The wind conditions were perfect for the launching of my

Albatross. That morning, I crossed the small bridge to the vacant meadow near my home. I ran down the path toward the field and saw my glider albatross with all the velocity my young pitching arm was capable of. A perfect launch! Up it went, higher and higher! Then it turned and leveled to flight across the sky. I have never forgotten that magical vision, even though it was fifty-eight years ago.

A wild cobalt blue sky pushed toward an endless line of dancing, almost fluorescent, puffy white clouds. As they

contrasted to me and mine in slow rolling patterns, I saw that they covered the entire Bay Area horizon. They softly touched the working field of mustard flowers and crossed the blue sky to the north with their white heavenly presence.

I could have felt that time stood still, had it not been for Albatross slowly making its descent across the beauty of the clouds, softly landing in the waiting field of yellow. I couldn't identify the feeling or emotion I felt at that moment, as I was too young. I knew, however, that I would somehow capture that vision one day—and I did. I became an artist, and that is what artists do, we capture visions. We look and connect our concepts, skills, and passions to those who will see, feel, and read our visual stories.

In Part One of this series, I demonstrated my Vertical Shapes Skyscape Technique using Marlin's Miller Co. Middle Master Gold Watercolors. Then, in Part Two, I covered my Diagonal Action Skyscape Technique using Dioxone Art Supplies Jetfire Acrylics. In Part Three I will introduce my Horizontal Sensory Skyscape Technique using the Dioxone Jetfire Acrylics and Designer Gesso.

In order to paint my various skyscapes, I discussed, improved, and perfected my Soft Sky Application. It consists of the magical mix for the opaque watercolor Dioxone Pro White as it mixes with different colored fluid 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 would actually bring out the best in them.

How do we create serenity in a painting? Because serenity and

peace are created by soothing the emotions and not activating them, we want to think in terms of balance, stability, and a sense of calm. Horizontal lines suggest calm and peaceful visions. A quick example of this would be to draw a box, and then draw shapes in the middle of the box (such as a circle and squares). As it stands, these objects float and have no stability. They are actively appearing to rise because of this. However, if you draw a simple horizontal line on either side of the objects, connecting them to the edges of the box, they are now grounded as far as the subconscious mind relates to them. The aggression has been removed, and a feeling of stability and balance has replaced it. Think in terms of real objects: a picture hanging crooked on a wall, a shelf that is lower on one end. These are not in the natural elements of balance that we as humans have learned to accept as our day-to-day way of viewing life. When we think of balance, we think of horizontal, like a scale that has equal amounts of weight.

Objects in art have weight not only through color, value, and density, but also through an attachment to certain emotions within us. As artists, we not only need to learn how to deliver a technical concept, but the emotional concept connected to it.

Please look for my final article in issue #1, 2015, in which I will demonstrate one more of my unique Skyscapes using the Dioxone Jetfire Acrylics and Designer American Acrylics. You will learn even more of my magical techniques.

LET'S PAINT

After completing my finished sketch, I block in my darker areas with Purple Lake. This will give you a good perspective on the balance of the layout.



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