



6 Tips for Taking Your Landscape from Good to GREAT!

What are some things you can do to your landscape painting to take it from GOOD to GREAT? Here are some finishing touches you can try when you get to the END of your painting and it feels like it needs something else... *(don't add these details in the beginning or it can look too tight)*

1. **Try a different color in the sky.** Make sure your sky is a nice quiet space to calm the painting. Even if it has clouds, or some color variations, it should be a peaceful area. Also, if your painting is very busy, you may need to add quiet space somewhere else as well.
2. **Add a little piece of patterned paper in areas that need a little detail** – sometimes a paper with a little pattern on it can be just the trick to give the eye something to focus on. If your painting is feeling very loose or messy, pop a couple pieces of patterned paper in here and there to sharpen it up. It only takes a couple.
3. **Add two or three little details with your paint marker** – If your painting feels like it's messy, that means you probably have great expression, which is a good thing. Now to bring it all together, use your paint marker to add 2 or 3 little details, it usually doesn't need much. This could be outlining a few petals on your flowers in the foreground, or grasses. Or it might be outlining a little section of your main landmark to make it the focal point. Using your paint marker to add just a couple of details – don't overdo it! – can really pull everything together for the viewer.
4. **Check your Contrast** – Sometimes if your painting feels a little "meh", you might need to strengthen your contrast. Squint your eyes and you will be able to see if you have good lights and darks. If everything feels like it's a similar tone, you'll want to add some pops of a very light color somewhere, and a pop of very dark color. Usually you will already have this in the painting, you just need to exaggerate it more. Contrast is often the number one thing a painting needs. This can be done with light and dark colors, it doesn't have to be black and white.
5. **Where's your focal point?** – If you look at your painting as a whole, where does the eye go first? If it's just a mass of rocks, or just a field of flowers, or just a huge body of water, it may need something to catch the viewer's eye to give it a focal point. Hopefully you have an eye-catching landmark and a good composition from the start (this is very important and this is why we spent the time on the grayscale sketches). But if you don't, you may need to add a sailboat on your water, or a snow field to your rocks, or some bigger flowers that stand out in your field of flowers to give your painting a focal point.
6. **Is everything the same size?** One mistake painters often make is to paint everything the same size. If your painting feels like it's missing something, check if your farm fields are all the same height. Or are your mountains all the same distance apart? Or are your flowers all facing the same direction? Once you get brave and redo these areas to have varying shapes, sizes and directions, your painting will have a LOT more interest!

KellieDayArt.com