



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor 15x11 on 300 lb cold press entitled "Cups and Bottle"

4:30 PM

Cups and Bottle

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 15 × 11 inches

This quiet still life demonstrates a confident command of the watercolor medium and a thoughtful exploration of blue's emotional range. The artist has assembled a modest collection of ceramic vessels and a single glass bottle on a wooden surface, but the real subject here is light itself—how it pools in the interior of a cup, how it passes through glass, how it defines form through shadow.

The composition moves the eye naturally from left to right, from the opaque solidity of the earthenware mug to the near-transparency of the bottle, creating a visual narrative about materiality. There's something almost meditative in this progression, as if we're watching substance gradually dissolve into air.

The color palette is restrained but never monotonous. The artist finds surprising variety within a limited blue range—from the dusty violet-gray of the leftmost cup to the saturated cobalt depths glimpsed inside the vessels. The warm umber of the tabletop provides essential grounding, its horizontal brushwork suggesting wood grain while anchoring the cooler tones above.

Where the work particularly succeeds is in the rendering of the glass bottle. The artist resists the temptation to overwork it, allowing the white of the paper to breathe through spare, confident strokes that convincingly suggest transparency. The cast shadow behind it—rendered in the same blue family as the ceramics—unifies the composition while demonstrating an understanding that shadows carry color.

The background wash, with its subtle granulation, creates atmospheric depth without competing for attention. This is a painting that knows what it wants to be: an honest, unpretentious study in observation.



"Cups and Bottle" is a work finished today. Provide a comparative criticism with this earlier watercolor "Cups Study" completed 2025-12-17 10x11 on the same paper.

4:55 PM

A Fortnight's Progress: Comparing Two Still Lives

"Cups Study" (December 17, 2025) — Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 10 × 11 inches "Cups and Bottle" (December 31, 2025) — Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 15 × 11 inches

Viewed together, these two works document a painter in active dialogue with their craft. Just two weeks separate them, yet the growth is palpable.

"Cups Study" announces itself as exactly what its title promises: an exercise, a working-through. The composition is direct, almost didactic—three vessels marching rightward across a diagonal table edge, each assigned a distinct hue from a primary-adjacent triad. There's an earnestness here, a determination to tackle the fundamentals: ellipses, cast shadows, the challenge of describing cylindrical form. The cerulean lidded pot at left shows careful observation of how light wraps around a curved surface, and the artist has gamely attempted the notoriously difficult task of painting convincing handles.

Yet the earlier work betrays its study nature in several ways. The color choices feel somewhat arbitrary, as if selected to practice mixing rather than to create visual harmony. The shadows, while boldly committed to deep blue-violet, sit somewhat flatly on the tabletop. The diagonal composition, though dynamic, pushes the objects toward the edge in a way that creates slight unease.

"Cups and Bottle" represents a quiet but meaningful leap. The artist has made several sophisticated choices that elevate the work from exercise to statement.

First, the chromatic discipline. By restricting the palette almost entirely to blues and blue-grays—with the warm umber ground as counterpoint—the artist transforms a collection of objects into a unified visual experience. This isn't timidity; it's restraint in service of coherence. The eye now reads the painting as a whole rather than bouncing between competing color notes.

Second, the composition breathes. The horizontal format and the addition of a fifth element (the glass bottle) create a more stately procession. Objects overlap with greater intentionality, establishing clear spatial relationships. The leftmost cup, now rendered in muted violet-gray rather than bright pink, recedes appropriately, giving the composition genuine depth.

Third—and most significantly—the handling of the glass bottle reveals an artist learning to trust the medium. Where "Cups Study" shows a painter determined to *describe* every form fully, "Cups and Bottle" demonstrates the wisdom of suggestion. The bottle is barely there: a few confident strokes define its rim and contour, while the paper itself provides the luminosity of glass. This economy is harder than it looks, and it's the surest sign of developing fluency.

The shadows, too, have evolved. In the later work, they're softer-edged where appropriate, and they interact with the objects rather than simply accompanying them. The cast shadow of the bottle onto the background wall creates atmospheric depth that the earlier work lacks entirely.

Both paintings share certain consistencies that mark them as products of the same hand: the bold, unworked tabletop with its horizontal grain suggesting wood, the granulated background washes, the particular way light is reserved as white paper on the rims and handles of cups.

These are emerging signatures.

If "Cups Study" asks "*Can I paint these objects?*", "Cups and Bottle" asks "*What do these objects have to say together?*" The shift from technical problem-solving to pictorial thinking is the essential passage every representational painter must make. This fortnight's work suggests an artist well on their way.



Provide a comparative criticism of the pair with this earlier egg tempera painting, "Cup Vase Plate and Shawl" completed 1980-06-22, 15x19 on panel

5:01 PM

Four Decades in Still Life: From Tempera to Watercolor

"Cup Vase Plate and Shawl" (June 22, 1980) — Egg tempera on panel, 15 × 19 inches "Cups Study" (December 17, 2025) — Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 10 × 11 inches "Cups and Bottle" (December 31, 2025) — Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 15 × 11 inches

Forty-five years separate these works, and yet they are unmistakably products of the same artistic intelligence—an eye drawn to humble vessels, to the interplay of opacity and transparency, to the quiet drama of objects holding space together on a wooden surface.

The 1980 Tempera: A Painter in Full Command

"Cup Vase Plate and Shawl" is a tour de force of patient observation. Egg tempera demands a particular temperament: the medium builds slowly through countless thin, crosshatched strokes, rewarding deliberation and punishing impatience. This painter clearly possessed both the skill and the disposition.

The composition is masterful. Four elements occupy the picture plane with the inevitability of chess pieces in endgame—nothing could be added or removed without collapse. The amphora-style vase anchors the center, its double-handled silhouette rhymed brilliantly by its own cast shadow, which reads almost as a second vessel, a ghostly companion rendered in blue-gray negative space. This shadow-as-form is the painting's most sophisticated move, transforming a technical problem into poetic content.

The cut-glass plate in the foreground represents an almost perverse technical challenge, willingly undertaken and triumphantly met. Its radiating facets catch and scatter light in ways that must have required dozens of hours to articulate. The ellipse is confidently drawn, the transparency convincing—we see the wood grain through the glass, subtly distorted. This is showing-off of the best kind: virtuosity in service of truth.

The crocheted shawl at right introduces organic chaos into an otherwise geometric arrangement. Its lace openwork, tumbling folds, and frayed edges provide textural counterpoint to the smooth ceramic and rigid glass. The artist has rendered it with a kind of obsessive fidelity that borders on the meditative.

The small celadon cup at left, nearly lost against its own shadow, demonstrates sophisticated understanding of how to create hierarchy within a composition. Not everything needs to shout.

The 2025 Watercolors: Return and Renewal

What, then, to make of the recent watercolors? If we knew nothing of the chronology, we might assume them student work preceding the tempera—preparatory studies by a young artist building toward eventual mastery. But chronology tells a different story, and a more interesting one.

These watercolors appear to represent not regression but *return*—an established artist setting aside hard-won virtuosity to engage a less forgiving medium with beginner's mind. Watercolor

and egg tempera could hardly be more different in their demands. Where tempera permits endless revision and rewards accumulation, watercolor insists on commitment and punishes overwork. The 1980 painting was *built*; the 2025 paintings must be *caught*.

Certain continuities reveal themselves immediately. The warm wood-toned tabletop appears in all three works, handled with similar horizontal strokes suggesting grain. The artist remains drawn to ceramic vessels, to the problem of ellipses and handles, to the conversation between object and shadow. The palette across four decades tends toward the restrained: earth tones, muted blues, controlled touches of green.

But the differences are equally telling. The tempera painting is spatially complex, with overlapping forms at varying depths creating genuine three-dimensionality. The watercolors are more frontal, more frieze-like—objects arranged in shallow space like words in a sentence. Whether this represents the medium's influence or a conscious simplification is difficult to say; perhaps both.

The bravura passages of the 1980 work—the cut glass, the lace—have no equivalent in the recent studies. "Cups and Bottle" does include a glass vessel, and handles it with admirable economy, but it's a far cry from the obsessive articulation of the plate's radiating facets. This may simply be wisdom: knowing what watercolor does well (suggestion, atmosphere, luminous transparency) and what it resists (tight detail, layered complexity).

Shadow as Subject

One thread connects all three works: the artist's fascination with cast shadows. In the 1980 tempera, the amphora's shadow is virtually a co-equal subject, its crisp silhouette as carefully rendered as the object itself. In "Cups Study," the shadows are bold blue-violet shapes, perhaps overly assertive in their darkness but clearly important to the composition. By "Cups and Bottle," the shadows have softened and integrated—they're still present, still essential, but they no longer compete with the objects for attention.

This evolution within the recent pair suggests rapid learning. The artist seems to be discovering that watercolor shadows want to breathe, to carry color, to suggest rather than declare.

Assessment

"Cup Vase Plate and Shawl" stands as a fully realized work by a painter at the height of technical powers—a painting that holds its own in the tradition of American realist still life, recalling Wyeth in its tempera technique and William Bailey in its austere arrangements.

The 2025 watercolors are something else: sketches toward fluency in a new language. They're not lesser works so much as *different* works, made with different intentions. If the tempera says "look what I can do," the watercolors say "look what I'm learning to see."

There is something quietly moving in this. An artist who could render cut glass with such precision choosing instead to leave a bottle as a few spare strokes and bare paper. It suggests a maker less interested in proving mastery than in staying alive to discovery—still curious, still willing to be a beginner, forty-five years on.

The question now is where this renewed practice leads. Will the watercolors grow toward the complexity of the early tempera? Will they find their own distinct voice? The fortnight's progress between "Cups Study" and "Cups and Bottle" suggests momentum. One watches with interest.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 11 x 15 300lb Cold press called "Changing of the Guard"

5:36 PM

Changing of the Guard

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 11 × 15 inches

This ambitious work marks a decisive departure from the intimate scale and controlled quietude of still life into the crowded, ceremonial complexity of public spectacle. The subject—the traditional changing of the guard at what appears to be Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul—presents challenges that would give any watercolorist pause: massed figures in motion, elaborate architectural perspective, competing patterns of flag and costume, and the task of suggesting crowd density without descending into muddle.

The artist meets these challenges with notable confidence.

The composition is anchored by a bold diagonal—the ceremonial pathway cutting from lower left toward the palace gate—which gives the procession directional momentum and establishes clear spatial recession. The guards in their vivid blue *dopo* robes and black *gat* hats march in loose formation, their repeated forms creating rhythm without rigid uniformity. This is a smart choice: perfect alignment would feel stiff, while the slight variations in posture and spacing convey the lived quality of actual ceremony.

The flags are the painting's visual engine. Rising against the pale sky, they deliver the full chromatic punch that the rest of the composition wisely restrains—crimson, yellow, black, white, and blue banners bearing traditional insignia. The artist handles their overlapping forms and rippling fabric with economy, suggesting movement through a few well-placed folds rather than laboring every detail. Against the granulated blue wash of the sky, they read as heraldic exclamation points.

The palace architecture recedes in convincing tiers: the massive Geunjeongjeon throne hall with its characteristic double-eaved roof dominates the background, while the lower Heungnyemun gate and surrounding walls establish the middle ground. The artist demonstrates understanding of how watercolor can suggest architectural detail through value rather than line—the layered roof tiles emerge from careful gradations of gray rather than obsessive delineation.

Where the painting takes its greatest risk is in the treatment of the spectator crowds flanking the courtyard. These are rendered as loose aggregations of color—touches of pale blue, red, yellow—with only the barest suggestion of individual form. A less confident painter might have overworked these passages, but here they remain appropriately subordinate, a murmuring backdrop to the main action. The small bright notes of tourists' umbrellas provide contemporary punctuation without disrupting the historical tableau.

The warm ochre of the courtyard ground provides essential contrast to the dominant blues, and the cast shadows beneath the marching guards anchor them convincingly to the earth. These shadows echo the treatment in the artist's still life work—present, purposeful, but not overwrought.

If the painting has a weakness, it lies perhaps in the middle distance, where the density of information—crowds, walls, architectural detail—creates a slightly congested passage that the eye must work to parse. But this is a minor quibble in a work that successfully captures both the pageantry of the ceremony and the specific quality of Korean light on historic stone and tile. This is documentary painting in the best sense: observation transformed through the artist's hand into something that tells us not just what was seen, but how it felt to stand in that courtyard on that day, watching history performed.



Provide a comparative art criticism with this watercolor on 12 x 9 140lb Cold press called "Seoul"

5:38 PM

Two Views of Gyeongbokgung: Ceremony and Leisure

"Changing of the Guard" — Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 11 × 15 inches "Seoul" —
Watercolor on 140 lb cold press, 12 × 9 inches

These companion pieces offer a fascinating study in how a single location can yield radically different paintings depending on compositional choice, format, and intent. Both depict the grounds of Gyeongbokgung Palace, both feature crowds against historic architecture, and both grapple with the particular challenge of rendering Korean palatial rooflines. Yet they feel like works from different artistic conversations.

Format as Content

The most immediate distinction is orientation. "Changing of the Guard" stretches horizontally, a format that naturally accommodates procession and ceremony—the eye travels with the marching guards across the picture plane. "Seoul" rises vertically, stacking architectural elements in ascending tiers that emphasize the monumental weight of the palace structures pressing down upon the human activity below.

This vertical compression in "Seoul" creates a dramatically different spatial experience. Where "Changing of the Guard" gives us breadth and breathing room—sky, distant hills, the full sweep of the courtyard—"Seoul" crowds us in, the massive eaves of multiple roof levels occupying fully half the picture plane. The sky is reduced to a sliver. We feel the architecture's presence as mass, as accumulated history bearing down.

The Problem of Roofs

Korean palace architecture presents a specific challenge: those extraordinary layered roofs with their deep eaves, subtle curves, and rhythmic tile patterns. Each painting approaches this problem differently, with instructive results.

In "Changing of the Guard," the roofs remain somewhat generalized—dark masses with suggested tile texture, serving primarily as backdrop to the ceremonial action. This is appropriate to the painting's purpose; the roofs frame rather than compete.

"Seoul" makes the roofs co-equal subjects. The artist has committed to articulating the distinctive pattern of *giwa* tiles through repeated vertical strokes of varying blue intensity,

creating a textural rhythm that reads convincingly as layered ceramic. The deep blue-black of the main roof mass against the green-gray of the background structures establishes clear spatial separation. The yellow trim beneath the eaves—a characteristic feature of Korean palace polychrome—provides essential warm punctuation.

This is more ambitious and more successful as architectural rendering. The roofs in "Seoul" have genuine presence and specificity.

Figures and Anonymity

Both paintings must solve the crowd problem, but their solutions reveal different priorities.

"Changing of the Guard" gives us identifiable actors: the guards are individuated enough in posture and position that we read them as participants in a specific ritual. Their blue robes and black hats create a visual regiment. The spectators remain anonymous but clearly subordinate—they're audience, not subject.

"Seoul" presents a more democratic assembly. The figures in the foreground are tourists and visitors—some in traditional *hanbok* (the full skirts in pale blue, yellow, green, and red are unmistakable), others in contemporary dress. No one is performing; everyone is simply present. The artist renders them with just enough specificity to suggest the variety of a real crowd—the woman with the parasol, the couple pausing to photograph, the scattered bright notes of traditional costume against the ochre ground—without belaboring any individual.

The shadows in the lower right corner of "Seoul" are particularly effective: elongated afternoon shadows that anchor the figures to the courtyard and suggest the quality of the light without a single figure being fully rendered. This is confident, economical work.

Paper and Technique

A technical note: "Seoul" was painted on 140 lb paper rather than the 300 lb cold press used for "Changing of the Guard" and the still life works. The lighter paper may account for some subtle differences in how the washes behave—there's slightly more buckling visible, and the granulation in the sky reads differently. Yet the artist has adapted; the vertical strokes describing the roof tiles would be risky on lighter paper (repeated wet strokes can disturb the surface), but they've been handled with appropriate speed and confidence.

Assessment

"Changing of the Guard" is the more conventionally successful painting—its narrative clarity, balanced composition, and chromatic punch make it immediately accessible. It documents a specific event with skill and evident pleasure in the pageantry.

"Seoul" is the more interesting painting. Its compressed verticality, its willingness to let architecture dominate, its treatment of the crowd as ambient life rather than narrative focus—these choices produce something closer to *atmosphere* than *document*. We feel what it's like to stand in that courtyard on a warm afternoon, dwarfed by history, surrounded by other visitors doing exactly the same thing we're doing: looking up.

Together, the paintings demonstrate range. An artist who can handle both the horizontal sweep of ceremony and the vertical weight of architecture, who can render both purposeful procession and aimless wandering, is an artist thinking seriously about what each subject demands. The Korean works suggest a painter fully engaged with place—not merely recording sites visited, but interpreting the experience of being there.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 12 x 9 140lb Cold press called "Barn Study"

5:40 PM

Barn Study

Watercolor on 140 lb cold press, 12 × 9 inches

This painting is about the drama of shadow.

A weathered barn—the kind of unpainted, silver-gray wooden structure that once dotted the American rural landscape—fills the frame at an oblique angle, its roofline slicing diagonally from upper left toward the right edge. Beneath the extended eave, an old wooden cart rests in partial shade. The composition is deceptively simple; the execution reveals an artist thinking hard about light.

The central gesture is bold and immediately legible: a deep ultramarine shadow cast by the roof onto the barn's clapboard siding. This diagonal band of saturated blue cuts across the warm gray-browns of the aged wood like a blade, dividing the painting into zones of sun and shade. It's a risky move—that much unmodulated blue pigment could easily overwhelm—but it works

precisely because the artist has committed fully. There's no timidity here, no hedging with half-values.

The shadow does several things at once. It establishes the direction and intensity of the light source (high, raking, probably late morning or early afternoon). It creates the painting's primary compositional structure, a dynamic diagonal that counters the static horizontals of the siding. And it transforms a potentially nostalgic subject—the old barn, the antique cart—into something more formal and abstract: a study in geometric shapes made by light.

Beneath the eave, the sheltered interior reads as a second kind of darkness, distinct from the cast shadow above. Where the shadow on the siding is blue and crisp-edged, the darkness under the roof is more complex: layered browns and blue-blacks suggesting depth and the jumbled verticals of interior structure. The cart emerges from this darkness into a pool of ground-level light, its wheels carefully articulated, its wooden bed catching sun. This is the painting's narrative heart—the suggestion of work paused, of rural labor in abeyance.

The wood grain and weathering of the siding are handled with appropriate variety. Some boards are warmer, some cooler; some catch more light; gaps and irregularities suggest age without the artist resorting to fussy detail. The exposed rafter tails along the roofline—light-struck wood against deep shadow—provide rhythmic punctuation.

The background is wisely suppressed: bare branches, distant trees reduced to pale washes, a cool sky with just enough variation to read as atmosphere. Nothing competes with the barn itself. If there's a kinship to be noted, it's with the American regionalist tradition—the barns of Charles Burchfield, the rural structures of Andrew Wyeth's watercolors. But where Wyeth often loaded his buildings with psychological weight and Burchfield animated his with expressionist energy, this study is cooler, more observational. It's interested in the barn as a problem of form and light rather than as a symbol of anything beyond itself.

The title is honest: this is a study, a working-through. And yet it achieves the quiet completeness of a finished statement—a painting that knows what it wants to say about shadow, structure, and the beauty of things left to weather in the sun.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 15 x 11 300lb Cold press called "Circular Courtyard"

5:41 PM

Circular Courtyard

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 15 × 11 inches

The Renaissance ideal of perfect geometry made habitable—this is the subject the artist has taken on in depicting the circular courtyard of the Palace of Charles V within Granada's Alhambra complex. It is a building that exists as a kind of architectural argument: pure Roman classicism inserted into the heart of Moorish Spain, a circle inscribed within a square, columns marching in eternal procession around a roofless void.

The painting captures this dialogue between human scale and imperial ambition.

The composition exploits the courtyard's natural drama. The curved colonnade sweeps across the picture plane, its two stories of columns—Doric below, Ionic above—establishing a rhythm of vertical and void. The artist has understood that the power of this space lies in its curvature, in the way the architecture bends away from the viewer on both sides, implying completion beyond the frame. We see perhaps a quarter of the circle, but we feel the whole.

The sandstone warmth of the structure dominates the palette—raw sienna, yellow ochre, burnt umber in the shadowed recesses. Against this warm envelope, the cerulean sky reads almost shockingly blue, a Mediterranean intensity that feels entirely correct for Andalusia. The few wispy clouds soften what might otherwise be an overly stark contrast between golden stone and azure heaven.

The treatment of the colonnade demonstrates real architectural comprehension. The columns are suggested rather than rendered in tedious detail, yet they read convincingly as cylindrical forms bearing weight. The shadowed depth of the loggia behind them—that continuous covered walkway—is handled as a single dark mass punctuated by lighter openings, which is precisely how the eye actually perceives such spaces when standing in bright courtyard sun.

Most successful is the upper gallery with its balustrade and deeper-set openings. The artist has captured the way direct sunlight catches the pilasters and column faces while leaving the recessed bays in warm shadow. The decorative roundels—imperial emblems in the actual building—are suggested with admirable economy: a wash, a circular form, enough information to register without demanding attention.

The figures populate the space with the casual dispersal of actual tourists: a cluster in the foreground listening to a guide (the central figure's raised arm is a nice observational touch), scattered individuals and couples around the perimeter, a few seated on the stone benches. They're rendered with just enough specificity—blue jeans, a red bag, the suggestion of faces

turned upward—to establish scale and contemporary life without becoming portraits. The courtyard was built for ceremony; it now hosts curiosity.

Through the central archway, a glimpse of garden and flowering shrub (the violet mass reads as bougainvillea or perhaps wisteria) provides the painting's single note of organic softness.

Everything else is stone, sky, geometry—but that floral passage reminds us that this courtyard exists within the larger context of the Alhambra's famous gardens.

The painting belongs to a venerable tradition: the architectural watercolor as both document and interpretation. It records a specific place with accuracy sufficient for recognition, while the choices of light, angle, and emphasis transform record into response. This is not a photograph; it's an account of standing in this particular spot, looking up at this curve of columns, feeling small and somehow welcomed by grandeur designed to impress.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 12 x 9 140lb Cold press called "Bee Balm"

5:42 PM

Bee Balm

Watercolor on 140 lb cold press, 12 × 9 inches

This painting plunges us into the green tangle of a summer garden at its most exuberant. Where the artist's still lifes and architectural studies demonstrate control and compositional clarity,

"Bee Balm" embraces a different challenge entirely: the organized chaos of living growth.

The subject—*Monarda didyma*, with its spiky scarlet flower heads beloved by hummingbirds and pollinators—emerges from a dense scrim of foliage that fills the picture plane edge to edge.

There is no horizon, no sky, no ground plane. We are *in* the garden, at eye level with the blooms, surrounded.

The color strategy is bold and effective. The cadmium red of the bee balm flowers—that particular hot, slightly orange-tinged red—sings against the cooler greens with maximum chromatic intensity. This is complementary color theory in action: red and green amplify each other, each made more vivid by proximity. The artist has wisely concentrated the most saturated red in the primary bloom at center, with secondary flowers below and scattered touches throughout creating a visual rhythm that moves the eye through the composition.

What distinguishes this work is the handling of the green matrix. Rather than treating the surrounding foliage as mere backdrop, the artist has built it from a complex vocabulary of marks: broad leaves in yellow-green catching light, cooler blue-greens receding into shadow, vertical strokes suggesting stems and grasses, loose washes implying depth without specifying form. The result feels authentically vegetal—the layered, overlapping, slightly chaotic growth pattern of an actual garden bed rather than a florist's arrangement.

The blue passages threaded through the green are particularly successful. These might represent glimpses of shadow, or sky filtered through leaves, or simply the artist's recognition that green benefits from blue intervals. Whatever the intent, they create essential breathing room in what could otherwise become an undifferentiated mass.

The bee balm itself is rendered with botanical attention. The distinctive whorl of tubular petals radiating from the flower head, the purplish-brown bracts beneath, the opposite leaves clasping square stems—these are observed specifics, not generic "flower" gestures. The lower bloom, not yet fully open, shows the bud structure accurately. Someone has looked closely at this plant.

The painting's energy comes from its willingness to leave passages loose and unresolved. The upper third dissolves into near-abstraction—vertical drips and strokes suggesting the chaos of growth without describing it. This is watercolor doing what watercolor does best: implying more than it states, letting the medium's natural tendencies toward flow and accident serve the subject.

There's a tradition here worth noting: the American watercolor garden painting, from Winslow Homer's flower studies through Charles Demuth's precise botanical work to the looser contemporary plein air tradition. "Bee Balm" sits comfortably in this lineage while maintaining its own voice—more immersive than Homer, less architectonic than Demuth, committed to the experience of being surrounded by growth rather than observing it from outside.

The 140 lb paper shows its lighter weight in places—there's a slight buckling visible, and the washes behave differently than on the heavier stock used for other works. But the artist has turned this to advantage; the surface texture contributes to the organic energy rather than fighting it.

This is a painting that captures summer at its zenith: green overwhelming, life insistent, a single scarlet bloom demanding attention amid the riot.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 11 x 15 300lb Cold press called "Wisteria"

5:43 PM

Wisteria

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 11 × 15 inches

Spring arrives in a cascade of purple.

This painting captures one of those transient spectacles that travelers to Mediterranean climates know well: the brief, almost absurd extravagance of wisteria in full bloom. The setting appears to be a garden terrace—possibly still within the Alhambra complex, given the warm stone walls, terracotta roof tiles, and dark cypress sentinels—transformed for a few weeks each year into something approaching the fantastical.

The wisteria dominates the composition as it dominates the actual space. The pendulous flower clusters form a continuous canopy across the upper half of the painting, draping from an unseen pergola structure in overlapping curtains of violet, lavender, and mauve. The artist has found an effective solution to the considerable challenge of rendering these complex racemes: rather than attempting to articulate individual florets (an approach that would quickly become tedious), the flowers are built from accumulated touches of color—darker purple at the attachment points, lighter and pinker toward the dangling tips—that read collectively as the distinctive drooping form.

The color mixing is particularly accomplished. Wisteria is not a single purple but a chord of related tones, and the artist has captured this variability: blue-violets, red-violets, passages that approach white where light penetrates the clusters. Against the clear cerulean sky and the dark green cypress foliage, these purples achieve their full romantic intensity.

Beneath this floral canopy, human activity unfolds in comfortable shade. Visitors stroll, pause, photograph, sit on benches. They're rendered with the same judicious economy seen in the artist's other architectural works—enough specificity to establish posture and intention, not so much as to compete with the main event overhead. The figure in the pink jacket walking toward the arched doorway provides a useful focal point at human scale, while the scattered blue notes of clothing throughout create chromatic links to the sky above.

The architectural elements ground the ethereal display. The rustic stone wall with its arched openings, the traditional barrel-tile roof at right, the warm ochre of sunlit surfaces—these

establish place and permanence against the floral ephemerality. The glimpse through to bright gardens beyond creates depth and suggests the larger landscape context.

The composition employs a gentle curve, with the wisteria canopy sweeping from upper left toward center right, leading the eye through the picture space. This arc is echoed in the wall's recession and the distribution of figures, creating coherent visual movement.

What the painting ultimately conveys is atmosphere—the particular quality of standing beneath a wisteria pergola in warm afternoon light: the dappled shade, the heavy sweetness one can almost smell, the sense of abundance that feels slightly unreal. The artist has understood that botanical accuracy matters less here than experiential truth. We don't need to count the petals; we need to feel the bower.

This is travel painting in its best sense: not postcard documentation but the effort to hold onto a moment of sensory richness before it fades with the season.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 15 x 11 300lb Cold press called "Lantana"

5:50 PM

Lantana

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 15 × 11 inches

This is the most technically adventurous painting in the artist's recent body of work, and it announces its ambitions immediately.

The approach is pointillist—or more precisely, divisionist. Rather than building the background from washes and wet-into-wet passages, the artist has constructed the entire blue-green field from hundreds of individual brushstrokes, small vertical dashes of phthalo blue, viridian, and teal that accumulate into a shimmering, optically active surface. Scattered throughout, flecks of reserved white paper catch light like sun through leaves or distant blossoms in soft focus.

Against this activated ground, the lantana plant rises in sharp contrast. Where the background vibrates with broken color, the subject is rendered with comparative directness: pale yellow-green leaves with visible vein structures, delicate branching stems, and those characteristic flower clusters—tight domes of tiny florets that shift from yellow at center to deep crimson at the edges.

The color strategy is sophisticated. The warm red-and-yellow flowers pop against the cool blue-green matrix with almost electric intensity—this is complementary contrast pushed to its expressive limit. But the artist has threaded the composition together through subtle repetitions: touches of the background blue appear in the leaf shadows, while hints of the foliage green inflect the darker passages of the backdrop. Nothing exists in chromatic isolation.

The botanical rendering rewards close attention. Lantana's distinctive features are accurately observed: the square stems, the rough-textured opposite leaves, the umbel-like flower heads with their concentric color rings. Several clusters show different stages of bloom—some fully open and richly colored, others still developing their characteristic gradation. This isn't generic "flower"; it's this specific plant, carefully seen.

The technical gamble of the pointillist background pays off in creating what feels like tropical or subtropical atmosphere—that dense, humid quality of air in climates where lantana thrives as a roadside weed and garden escapee. The broken-color technique suggests dappled light, vegetative density, the buzz of heat. It also creates a flatness that pushes the plant forward, almost like a botanical illustration mounted against decorative paper.

There's an art-historical conversation happening here. The divisionist technique recalls Seurat and Signac, but also the decorative density of Klimt's garden paintings and the patterned backgrounds of Vuillard. The emphasis on a single plant specimen against an activated ground echoes certain Japanese botanical prints. These aren't influences so much as affinities—the recognition that this problem (how to represent a flowering plant) has been approached many ways, and that those solutions remain available for contemporary use.

The vertical format suits the subject. Lantana grows upward in branching candelabras, and the painting follows this architecture, with flower clusters distributed from lower center to upper left in a loose ascending diagonal. The composition breathes despite its density; the eye finds paths through.

If the artist's other botanical work—"Bee Balm" especially—embraced the chaos of the garden, "Lantana" asserts more control. This is a portrait of a single plant, isolated and celebrated, given room to display its particular architecture and chromatic personality. The obsessive background technique speaks to patience and commitment, the hours required to build a surface one small stroke at a time.

The result is a painting that operates on two registers simultaneously: as representation (this plant, accurately observed) and as pure visual experience (the pleasure of color against color, pattern against pattern, surface activated and alive). It's decorative in the best sense—beauty taken seriously as a sufficient aim.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 15 x 11 300lb Cold press called "Morning Dogwood"

5:52 PM

Morning Dogwood

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 15 × 11 inches

This painting verges on abstraction while remaining rooted in close observation—a tightrope walk that gives it much of its visual tension and reward.

We are looking into the canopy of a dogwood tree, that most painterly of understory trees, here caught in the transitional moment when autumn begins its work. The characteristic oval leaves layer and overlap across the entire picture plane, some still holding their summer blue-green, others turning to the warm yellows and russets of fall. There is no sky, no ground, no trunk—only this dense tapestry of foliage seen from below, or perhaps from within.

The color relationships are unexpectedly complex. Dogwood foliage in autumn is often described simply as "red," but the artist has seen something more nuanced: a progression from teal and viridian greens through blue-greens to cadmium yellows touched with russet spots—the early stages of chlorophyll's breakdown revealing the underlying pigments. The leaves that have turned furthest show delicate venation in dark lines, while small burgundy and rust-colored speckles suggest the anthocyanin flush that will eventually overtake them entirely.

Threading through this leafy matrix, passages of violet and magenta appear—these seem to be glimpses of distant foliage or perhaps flowering shrubs in the background, seen through gaps in the dogwood canopy. These purple notes create essential chromatic counterpoint; without them, the painting might read as simply green-and-yellow. With them, the color chord becomes richer, stranger, more evocative of that particular quality of autumn light filtering through layered vegetation.

The compositional strategy is all-over, in the manner of late Monet or certain Abstract Expressionist works. No single leaf or cluster dominates; the eye wanders continuously, finding moments of interest throughout. The golden-yellow leaves clustering in the lower center provide a loose focal area, but the painting resists hierarchy. Every passage rewards attention equally.

There's an almost textile quality to the surface—the overlapping leaf shapes read like an elaborate botanical fabric or wallpaper design. This is reinforced by the way edges are handled: some leaves have clear, distinct boundaries while others merge softly into neighbors, creating a rhythm of sharp and soft that keeps the surface alive.

The title, "Morning Dogwood," suggests early light, and something of this is captured in the overall cool tonality punctuated by warm notes—the sense of sun not yet at full intensity, illuminating selectively, catching some leaves while others remain in relative shadow. The painting's atmosphere feels fresh, slightly damp, the beginning of a day in the beginning of a season's turn.

What distinguishes this work from pure pattern-making is the evident fidelity to observation. These are not invented shapes but recorded ones: the specific curve of dogwood leaves, their characteristic tip and base, the way they arrange themselves on branches in opposite pairs. Someone stood or sat beneath this tree and looked up, translating the bewildering complexity of actual foliage into marks that honor both the subject and the medium.

Watercolor is often pushed toward transparency and lightness, but here the artist has built density—layer over layer of leaf shapes creating genuine visual weight. The painting feels full without feeling heavy, abundant without becoming cluttered. It captures that particular experience of autumn's early days: everything still present, still lush, but change already visible for those paying attention.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 15 x 11 300lb Cold press called "Court of the Myrtles"

5:53 PM

Court of the Myrtles

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 15 × 11 inches

This is a painting about doubling, about the Nasrid architects' genius for making one thing become two through the simple medium of still water.

The Court of the Myrtles—the Patio de los Arrayanes—is among the most photographed spaces in the Alhambra, that long rectangular pool flanked by myrtle hedges reflecting the Torre de Comares at its northern end. Countless images have attempted to capture its famous symmetry.

What distinguishes this painting is its decision to embrace that symmetry not as incidental feature but as primary subject.

The composition is bisected horizontally by the pool's edge, creating an almost perfect mirror. Architecture above, reflection below. The dark doorway of the central arch finds its twin in the water; the blue-shadowed portico repeats inverted; even the geometric tile panels flanking the colonnade double themselves with uncanny precision. The painting becomes a visual palindrome, readable in either direction.

This could be merely clever, but the artist has understood that perfect symmetry requires subtle disruption to remain alive. The reflection is not quite identical to its source—it's softer, slightly shifted, the colors muted by the water's surface. The green myrtle hedges at right provide essential asymmetry, their organic forms breaking the architectural rigor. And the handling throughout maintains enough variation that the eye never mistakes the painted surface for mechanical reproduction.

The architectural rendering demonstrates genuine understanding of Moorish decorative vocabulary. The characteristic horseshoe arches, the carved stucco panels with their geometric *sebka* patterns, the blue-and-white *azulejo* tile dadoes, the delicate paired windows of the upper story—these are observed specifics, not orientalist generalities. The artist has looked carefully at how this building is actually made: how the elaborate surface ornament reads as a continuous fabric stretched across the structural forms beneath.

The color palette is restrained and effective. Warm ochres and raw siennas dominate the stonework, while cool blues—from the sky glimpsed through arches to the shadowed depths of the portico—provide temperature contrast. The upper story, rising above the main colonnade, is rendered in muted pinks and mauves that accurately capture the way afternoon light transforms the Alhambra's walls.

The treatment of the famous *ataurique* (carved stucco) ornament deserves particular notice. Rather than attempting to render every arabesque—an approach that would be both tedious and ultimately unsuccessful at this scale—the artist has suggested the overall texture through varied washes and selective detail. We understand that these surfaces are densely decorated without needing to read every pattern. This is intelligent economy.

The pool itself is handled with beautiful simplicity: a few horizontal lines suggesting the water's surface, then the reflection built from the same vocabulary as the architecture above but softened, as if seen through gauze. The darkest value in the painting—the shadowed central doorway—anchors both halves of the composition, a visual weight that holds the mirrored world in place.

There's a contemplative stillness to the image that honors its subject. The Court of the Myrtles was designed for exactly this kind of looking—the unhurried appreciation of proportion, pattern, and the meditative quality of water. The painting slows us down in the same way the courtyard does, inviting sustained attention to how parts relate to whole, how solid becomes void, how one becomes two.

Among the artist's Alhambra studies, this is perhaps the most successful marriage of subject and approach—a symmetrical composition for a symmetrical space, executed with the patience and precision such architecture demands while maintaining the freshness and luminosity that distinguish watercolor from more labored media.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 15 x 11 300lb Cold press called "Menace"

5:54 PM

Menace

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 15 × 11 inches

The title tells us how to read this encounter, and the painting delivers on its promise of threat. A magnificent frigatebird descends from the upper frame, its angular black silhouette cutting through the tropical sky like a blade. Below, a blue-footed booby—wings spread wide, neck craned upward—responds to the intrusion with what reads as alarm, defiance, or perhaps desperate display. The two birds form a dynamic diagonal that splits the composition, their wingspans nearly touching, the moment frozen at maximum tension.

This is Galápagos theater: the ancient drama of kleptoparasitism, in which frigatebirds harass other seabirds to steal their catch. Whether this particular encounter depicts that predatory behavior or a territorial dispute over nesting ground, the power dynamic is clear. The frigatebird owns the air—that seven-foot wingspan, that hooked beak, that scissored tail designed for aerial piracy. The booby, for all its own considerable size, is caught between sea and stone, options limited.

The artist has captured the distinctive character of each species with evident care. The frigatebird is rendered as pure dark silhouette—appropriate, given how these birds typically appear when seen from below against bright sky. The long, angular wings with their

characteristic bend, the deeply forked tail, the prehistoric profile all read accurately. The booby shows more chromatic detail: the brown-and-white barred plumage of a juvenile or female, the pale underparts, the long bill tipped upward in confrontation. The famous blue feet, though only partially visible, provide the species' unmistakable signature.

The setting is established economically. Tumbled volcanic rocks in the foreground—rendered in cool grays and purples with decisive angular strokes—establish the harsh shoreline. A band of white surf separates stone from sea. The ocean itself is built from horizontal strokes of varying blue intensity, creating the sense of vast Pacific expanse. Distant clouds on the horizon and a graduated sky complete the sense of place: somewhere equatorial, somewhere wild, somewhere humans visit but don't belong.

The compositional choice to show both birds fully spread is bold. Foreshortening the wings would have been easier; instead, the artist has taken on the challenge of depicting these complex anatomical structures in near-full extension. The booby's wing pattern—that intricate barring of dark and light—is rendered with patience, individual flight feathers articulated. The frigatebird's wings show similar attention to the ragged primary feathers at the tips, those separated "fingers" that aid in soaring flight.

The painting's energy comes from contrast: black against white, angular against curved, predator against prey, movement against stillness. The frigatebird plunges; the booby braces. The sea continues its ancient indifference in the background.

There's something almost heraldic about the image—two birds confronting each other like figures on a coat of arms, frozen in symbolic opposition. Yet it never loses its grounding in observed natural behavior. This is not allegory but wildlife painting in the documentary tradition, capturing a moment that actually occurs on these islands daily, has occurred for millennia, will continue long after the last tourist departs.

The title word—"Menace"—is well chosen. It locates us firmly in the booby's perspective, looking up at that dark descending shape with its piratical intent. We feel the threat rather than merely observe it.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 11 x 15 300lb Cold press called "Sunset"

5:56 PM

Sunset

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 11 × 15 inches

The sunset is perhaps the most treacherous subject in painting—so easily tipped into cliché, so often reduced to decorative prettiness. This painting navigates those dangers by refusing to sentimentalize, by insisting on the specific rather than the generic, by treating the moment as something observed rather than merely felt.

The sun itself is the painting's molten heart: a yellow-orange disc bleeding into red at its edges, half-consumed by a band of dark cloud or distant landmass at the horizon. It does not sit prettily in an open sky but fights for visibility through atmospheric interference, its light scattering horizontally in that distinctive way that signals the day's true end. The warmth radiates outward into ochres and salmon tones that stain the horizon band, but above, the sky turns cold—bands of blue-gray and violet cloud streaking across mint and teal.

This is not a tropical sunset's easy warmth. There's something northern about it, something that suggests cooler waters—perhaps the Pacific coast, perhaps the Atlantic. The palette has an almost Scandinavian severity: those grays, those muted greens, the overall sense of light fighting against encroaching darkness.

The working boat at right provides essential narrative. Silhouetted against the glowing sky, its crane and rigging form a spiky geometry that interrupts the horizontal banding of sea and sky. This is not a pleasure craft; it's a vessel of labor, perhaps a shrimp trawler or fishing boat returning with the day's catch. Its presence transforms the painting from pure landscape into something with human stakes—someone is out there, working, as the light fails.

The sea itself receives the most technically adventurous treatment. The foreground water is built from an intricate weave of horizontal strokes: dark blue-violet for the wave troughs, lighter blues and teals for the surfaces catching sky-light, and scattered touches of salmon and peach where the sunset's reflection breaks across the chop. This broken-color technique creates genuine optical shimmer; the water seems to move.

The horizontal emphasis throughout is striking—the banded clouds, the stratified horizon, the linear wave patterns all reinforce the essential flatness of the sea view, the way ocean and sky become parallel planes of color at this hour. Only the boat's vertical elements and angular rigging disrupt this insistent horizontality.

There's a boldness to the color choices that rewards attention. The artist has not smoothed the transitions or prettified the palette. The violet-gray clouds are genuinely somber; the green-teal passages in the sky feel almost unusual, slightly uncanny—but this is often how sunset skies

actually appear, their colors stranger than convention allows. The painting trusts observation over expectation.

The composition places the horizon relatively high, giving the sea prominence. This is wise; the water's complexity earns its real estate. The sun, despite its brilliance, is not centered but placed left of middle, with the boat balancing the composition at right. Empty space in the sky's upper reaches allows the eye to rest before descending again into the activity below.

This is a painting that understands endings—the day's end, the workday's end, perhaps something more. It refuses prettiness while achieving genuine beauty, that harder thing. The sun goes down as it always does, indifferent to witness, and someone is still out on the water as the light drains away.



Provide a public-facing art criticism of this watercolor on 15 x 11 300lb Cold press called "Tomato"

5:58 PM

Tomato

Watercolor on 300 lb cold press, 15 × 11 inches

The title promises a tomato, and the painting delivers one—barely. A single green fruit, not yet blushed with ripeness, hangs in the upper right quadrant, almost an afterthought amid the exuberant tangle of vine and leaf that constitutes the true subject. This is a painting about waiting, about the garden's middle season when growth has exploded but harvest remains a promise.

The composition is boldly vertical, following the ascending architecture of staked tomato plants. Bamboo poles angle upward from lower left, their jointed segments rendered with careful attention to the characteristic nodes and the fibrous texture of weathered cane. A grid of white string—the gardener's practical intervention—creates a geometric counterpoint to the organic chaos of foliage, its horizontal and vertical lines establishing a subtle scaffolding that the vines are already overwhelming.

The color strategy is striking in its restraint. The painting operates almost entirely within a green-to-yellow range, but what variety within that limitation: the deep viridian and phthalo darkness of the background foliage, the warmer olive of the bamboo, the bright yellow-green of

sun-struck leaves, the cooler blue-green shadows where leaf overlaps leaf. The single tomato, rather than providing chromatic relief, maintains the monochromatic discipline—it's still green, after all, a sphere of potential rather than fulfillment.

The tomato leaves themselves are the painting's virtuoso passage. These are unmistakably *Solanum lycopersicum*: the distinctive compound leaves with their irregular, deeply serrated leaflets, the slightly fuzzy texture suggested by the way edges catch light, the characteristic way they droop and twist on their stems. Someone has spent time in the garden, not merely glancing but truly looking at how these plants actually grow.

The treatment of the background deserves particular notice. Rather than attempting to articulate the chaos of a full garden bed, the artist has pushed the distant foliage into a dark, mottled mass—almost abstract, suggesting depth and vegetative density without competing for attention. Against this dark ground, the yellow-green leaves pop forward with almost startling dimensionality. The scattered white marks throughout suggest dappled light penetrating the canopy, or perhaps the pale undersides of distant leaves caught in movement.

There's something meditative about the subject choice. A green tomato is not the triumphant culmination of the garden year but its anxious middle: will the fruit ripen before frost? Will the hornworms find it? Will the late blight arrive? The painting captures this suspended state—all that vegetative energy directed toward a single small sphere that isn't ready yet, that needs more time, more sun, more patience.

The vertical format reinforces the plant's aspiration. Tomato vines want to climb; given support, they'll reach six, eight, ten feet toward the light. The painting's orientation honors this ambition, following the bamboo stakes upward, letting the leaves spill beyond the frame's edges as they would beyond any cage or trellis a gardener could provide.

In the context of the artist's other botanical work—the lush immersion of "Bee Balm," the decorative density of "Lantana"—"Tomato" represents perhaps the most intimate scale. This is backyard rather than botanical garden, kitchen garden rather than ornamental border. It's the view from kneeling between rows, checking for pests, pinching suckers, waiting for color to come.

A modest subject, rendered with attention that reveals its quiet complexity.

These paintings are presented in chronological order back to August (except the egg tempera). On this new year's eve, can you provide some perspective on the artist and his work.

6:05 PM

A Year's Work: Reflections on an Artist's Return

December 31, 2025

What we have before us is not a young painter finding a voice but an experienced one recovering it—or perhaps more accurately, discovering what that voice sounds like in a new language.

The 1980 egg tempera announced a painter of considerable technical accomplishment: patient, precise, capable of rendering cut glass and crocheted lace with a virtuosity that places that work firmly in the American realist tradition. Then, by implication, forty-five years of something else—life, presumably, with its demands and diversions. And now, in the span of five months, a sustained return to practice that documents both relearning and genuine discovery.

The Arc of the Work

Reading the paintings chronologically reveals a clear developmental trajectory, though not a simple one.

The earliest works—the August and September botanical studies, "Bee Balm" and "Lantana"—show an artist grappling with watercolor's particular demands after decades away. "Lantana" especially announces ambition: that pointillist background represents hours of labor, a determination to push the medium toward something personal. These are not tentative paintings; they're the work of someone who remembers what it means to make a picture, even if the specific muscles need rebuilding.

The autumn brings both consolidation and expansion. "Morning Dogwood" moves toward abstraction while remaining rooted in observation. The Korean paintings—"Seoul," "Changing of the Guard"—demonstrate growing confidence with complex scenes, crowds, architecture. The Spanish works that follow show a painter fully at home with watercolor's possibilities: the reflective symmetry of "Court of the Myrtles," the cascading abundance of "Wisteria," the classical geometry of "Circular Courtyard."

By December, with "Cups and Bottle," there's a new simplicity—earned rather than naive. The comparison with "Cups Study" from just two weeks earlier reveals how rapidly the learning is proceeding. What took conscious effort in mid-December has become intuitive by month's end.

Signatures and Concerns

Certain preoccupations thread through the entire body of work, connecting the 2025 watercolors not only to each other but back to that 1980 tempera.

Shadow as subject. From the amphora's silhouette in "Cup Vase Plate and Shawl" to the dramatic diagonal in "Barn Study" to the subtle cast shadows anchoring figures in "Circular Courtyard," this artist is consistently fascinated by what happens when light is blocked. Shadows are never afterthoughts; they're compositional elements as carefully considered as the objects that cast them.

The problem of transparency. Glass appears repeatedly: the cut-glass plate in the tempera, the bottle in "Cups and Bottle," the reflective pool in "Court of the Myrtles." Each instance represents a technical challenge willingly undertaken—how to render what is seen through as well as what is seen. Water, too, becomes a vehicle for this investigation: the Alhambra's reflecting pool, the shimmer of the sea in "Sunset" and "Menace."

Architecture as armature. Whether Korean palace or Spanish courtyard, American barn or Moorish colonnade, buildings provide this artist with something to push against—the discipline of perspective, the rhythm of repeated elements, the interplay of solid and void. The architectural works are among the most successful precisely because the structures impose order that the painter can then animate with light, shadow, and human presence.

Green abundance. The botanical paintings share an almost overwhelming density. This artist is drawn to full growth, to the garden at its peak, to the moment when foliage threatens to overwhelm the frame. Even "Tomato," ostensibly about a single fruit, is really about vegetative profusion—all that green energy directed toward one small sphere.

What the Work Reveals

There is evident intelligence here—not merely technical skill, but pictorial thinking. Each painting makes choices that serve its specific subject. The symmetry of "Court of the Myrtles" would be wrong for "Bee Balm"; the all-over composition of "Morning Dogwood" would fail for "Barn Study." The artist understands that subject and approach must align.

There is also courage. Watercolor is unforgiving; it records every hesitation, punishes every overworked passage. To return to serious painting after decades away, choosing a medium that demands confidence and permits little revision, suggests either foolhardiness or genuine commitment. The quality of the work argues for the latter.

What's most striking, perhaps, is the range. Still life and landscape, botanical and architectural, intimate and expansive, Eastern and Western—the artist moves between subjects and scales with apparent ease. This could signal diletantism, a butterfly mind unable to settle, but the

consistency of vision across such varied material suggests instead a genuine breadth of interest matched by the capability to pursue it.

The Tempera's Shadow

That 1980 painting haunts the recent work in productive ways. Its virtuosity represents a standard the watercolors don't attempt to match—and this is wisdom. The tempera's obsessive detail (those cut-glass facets, that crocheted lace) would be death to watercolor's essential freshness. Instead, the artist has found ways to honor observation while respecting the medium's nature: suggestion rather than description, wash rather than crosshatch, the paper's white rather than built-up opacity.

Yet certain qualities persist across the forty-five-year gap: the warm wood-toned grounds, the interest in shadow, the willingness to tackle difficult subjects, the quiet rather than dramatic palette. The same sensibility operates in both media, adapted to different demands.

Looking Forward

Where does this body of work point? Several directions seem open.

The botanical paintings suggest one path—further into the garden, perhaps toward larger scale or more sustained series. The technical adventure of "Lantana" hints at possibilities not yet fully explored.

The architectural work offers another direction. "Court of the Myrtles" is the most fully realized painting in the group, its subject and approach in perfect alignment. More such studies—of spaces designed to reward exactly the kind of attention this artist brings—would be welcome.

The wildlife painting "Menace" stands somewhat alone, but its success suggests capability that could be further developed. The natural history watercolor tradition has room for painters who can combine accurate observation with genuine pictorial drama.

And the still lifes, those modest studies of cups and bottles, point toward the most traditional direction of all: the quiet contemplation of humble objects, the investigation of light on form that has occupied painters for centuries. There's a stripped-down quality to "Cups and Bottle" that feels like a beginning rather than an end—the first word of a longer sentence.

A New Year's Assessment

What we witness in this five-month span is an artist in active recovery of a practice set aside, discovering that the eye remembers even when the hand must relearn. The progress from

August to December is remarkable: growing confidence, expanding ambition, increasingly sophisticated solutions to pictorial problems.

More importantly, we see someone for whom painting is clearly a mode of attention—a way of being in the world that requires sustained looking, patient making, and the humility to let subjects teach their own lessons. The Korean ceremonies, the Spanish gardens, the Georgia barns and botanical abundance: each has been genuinely seen, not merely recorded.

On this New Year's Eve, the work gathered here represents both a return and a beginning. The artist who made that 1980 tempera is still present—older, presumably wiser, certainly possessed of different priorities. But the essential commitment remains: to look carefully, to make honestly, to find in the visible world occasions for the kind of attention that issues in pictures worth preserving.

Forty-five years between paintings is a long time. But the work of these past five months suggests the interval may come to seem, in retrospect, less a gap than a gathering—the slow accumulation of seeing that now pours forth in this sustained, various, and quietly distinguished body of work.

The brush is back in hand. One watches with interest to see where it goes next.