

## ART April M. Rimpo Artist's Statement

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Sometimes I think that I don't select my subject matter, it selects me. This might explain why you will see landscapes, urban scenes, or paintings of people doing everyday things. I've always loved learning about other cultures and places, so in my artwork I strive to show bits of life that grabbed my attention and made me feel I just had to tell the story.

I start by taking countless photographs any time I travel abroad or across the United State. Other artists, who have traveled with me, have said I see things that they never see.

When I'm ready to start a new painting one of my photographs will come to mind, I'll locate the photographs of that subject, and spend some time remembering why I was drawn to the scene. To develop a composition I look to emphasize three things. Of highest priority is the story I see in the photographs; second priority is the mood or emotion I felt when I took the photographs; and, lastly, I look for the pattern of lights and darks that I believe will help me tell the story. I work in a photo editing program to combine images, adjust colors to communicate the mood or emotion, and simplify the image to the essence that I think best tells the story. The time "playing" with the photos helps me gel the concept.

There are common themes in my paintings, but I seldom develop a series sequentially. For example, I paint many scenes of urban life, which tend to be detailed. I oscillate between these very detailed city scenes and much less detailed, but more emotional, scenes with figures. This approach balances the right and left side of my brain and keeps me happy.

Watercolor and fluid acrylics allow me to work more loosely than the tight rendering characteristic of my earlier oil and pencil work. I believe it is the fact that watercolor and fluid acrylic flow in unpredictable ways that inspires me. It absorbs me into the work; allowing the piece to develop in directions not fully planned as I respond to the flow of paint. This is part of the thrill of working in watermedia that I didn't find in other media.

My artwork has also become more interpretive and semi-abstract over time. By adding more of my emotional content than in the past I think those who see my art are more drawn to the story. In fact a visitor at one exhibit told me she thought my artwork was very happy and that she felt drawn into it in a way that a photograph could not accomplish.

Initially I measure success when I feel the mood I want is achieved and the story shines through the finished painting. However, real success comes when others tell me the story they see in a painting. Often it is not the same as mine, but it doesn't matter. I have been able to bring back a memory for them and that is the best I could ever ask for.