

KEEPING A TRAVEL JOURNAL

Written September 12, 2008
by
Julie Frye ©

Sketching the fabulous Notre Dame Cathedral from the banks of the Seine, the intricate Rouen Cathedral painted so prolifically by Claude Monet, capturing in pen and ink the famous Matterhorn from our balcony in Zermatt, notating while awestruck by the beauty of the Colorado Rockies; All these things have created for me the opportunity to relive these excursions abroad and in our own beautiful country. Drawing and sketching is a passion for me, and with only a few very lightweight materials the artist, whether beginner or more experienced, can create a wonderful memory to be relived over and over.

I have filled many a sketchbook over the years but my personal favorite for this type of journaling is the Kilimanjaro Watercolor Paintbook, 10 in X 5 ½ in. (I ordered mine from Cheap Joe's) This sketchbook contains alternating sheets of drawing paper and watercolor paper. I use a variety of black and/or brown pens to record what I see on the drawing paper sheets. My favorites are "Pilot" ball point pen, medium black, and a medium-point felt tip called Espresso. (Both are available at supermarkets as well as Office supply stores) On the watercolor sheets, I use watercolor pencils after I have sketched the subject, adding the water last with a small soft brush to bring out the subtle color. (If adding water be sure you have used a pen that is NOT water soluble or it will smear!)

I sketch directly with the pen and ink using no pre-drawing with pencil. This takes a little time and experience but if you START this way, knowing you can't erase, you will look twice and sketch once! I did a lot of practicing sketching trees in my backyard, and then graduated to Encanto Park and Arizona Center, sitting unobserved on a park bench in the shade. Be bold, dare to branch out of the comfortable pencil, eraser mode. Sketching in this manner improves your eye-hand coordination and WILL IMPROVE YOUR PAINTING! Imagine all that and a fun keepsake of any trip you take, whether near or far! Try it once and you'll be HOOKED!

I have been fortunate to have been able to experience many parts of the world and I treasure the sketch journals I have created. I re-read them often and they give me much pleasure and satisfaction as I relive wonderful memories.



Vincent Van Gogh
(Starry Starry Night) - Don McLean