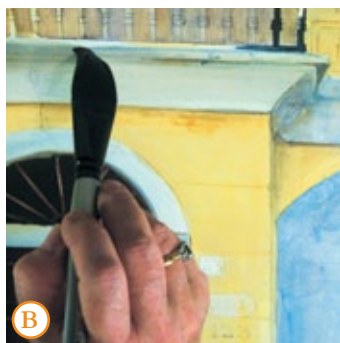


Traditional Watercolors & Aquabord™, the Perfect Fit

by Karen Vernon

"*The Awning*" is a watercolor painted in traditional, transparent watercolor on Aquabord™, the clay-coated watercolor panel made by Ampersand. Aquabord allows unlimited washes and layered glazes and I've found it permits lifting and re-glazing to create the textures and patterns I need to achieve unlike any other surface I've used.

To begin this painting, I developed a value sketch and established a good compositional format. Next, I sketched a line drawing directly onto the board. Sometimes, I prefer to transfer a very complex piece from a completed drawing with wax-free graphite paper to save on time. When I finished the sketch, I painted in a very wet area of water. For this, I used Daniel Smith's 1" Cats Tongue brush. This brush carries a full load of water and has a wonderful point that allows me to cut in around areas I don't wish to get wet (B).



After brushing the water in where I wanted the color to flow onto the walls and awning, I dropped pigment into the wet areas using a combination of Mars Yellow, New Gamboge, and Brown Madder. The colors were pre-mixed and then mixed

with water for a very light value. After this layer dried, I glazed on a second layer to create a deeper value and to add concrete textural effects. While this layer was damp, I put in a light Cerulean Blue wash over the stone that is in shadow and began washing in the shadows on the awning (A). Then, I created darker values with a combination of Cerulean Blue, Permanent Violet, and Mars Yellow.

After the shadow layers dried, I began painting in the blue stripes on the awning with Manganese Blue and Cobalt Blue. The darkest blue is a combination of these two colors that was glazed and layered on after the initial blue layers dried.

The doors and shutters were washed in with a combination of Brown Madder, Permanent Violet, and Pthalo Blue. After these washes dried, I used a 1" flat brush and pulled it



"THE AWNING" BY KAREN VERNON, WATERCOLOR ON AQUABORD™

along a T-square to lift off the architectural details and highlights (C). Then, I re-glazed color over the lifted areas to create varying tonal effects. I added value glazes to the building where needed and then started lifting out textural effects using a 1" flat brush.

Extremely detailed areas such as the pipes, wires and plants were added last (D). The clotheslines and highlights on the rails were lifted off. I continued to develop color and value patterns, adding and subtracting as needed. The joy of working on Aquabord is that it is so simple to develop pattern and detail. No masking is required because colors are so easy to lift. Uniquely however, colors do not slip and slide around on the surface, thus allowing pigment to be stacked and glazed to create values and intensity. I love how I can keep working forever without damaging the surface or worrying about buckling and warping.



Once the painting was complete, I first sprayed it with an acrylic spray fixative in order to "set" the watercolor in place. After a few coats of fixative, I brushed on Golden's Polymer Varnish UVLS in Satin. This archival finishing process allows me to present watercolors without glass and to showcase the pure natural beauty of traditional watercolors. ■

About the Artist

Texas based artist, Karen Vernon has more than 40 years of painting and teaching expertise. Her watercolors on Aquabord™ have won international recognition as well as best of show in numerous art shows. For more information, visit www.karenvernon.com.

Materials List

- Aquabord™
1/8" or 2" Deep Cradle
- Golden® polymer Varnish UVLS (satin finish)
- Daniel Smith Extra Fine™ Watercolors

- Daniel Smith Platinum Series 24
1" Cat's tongue & 1" flat wash brush
- Wax-free graphite paper
- T-square
- Acrylic Spray fixative