



Reflecting on Nature

by Scott Burdick

Window Falls is a waterfall located just fifteen minutes from my house near Hanging Rock State Park. When I feel myself getting stale in the studio, I love going out to locations like this one to simply relax, experience nature, and paint something just for the joy of it. I feel no pressure painting such small studies since I don't have any expectations other than to represent the beauty before me, and most of the time, I don't even send the paintings out to the galleries. Sometimes you paint with the final work as the goal, while other times it is just the experience itself that matters. In this case, I was happy with the painting that resulted, but that was merely a bonus to the experience itself.

What drew me to this composition was the way the overhanging cliff cast much of the foreground into shadow and emphasized the brilliant sunlight behind on the rocks and water. In such paintings, the

challenge isn't painting the bright colors of the background, but restraining yourself enough to get the proper balance of the subtle grays in the foreground rocks.

When you sit or stand in a spot for hours, it's fun watching the light slowly changing, seeing the animals and birds; noticing the ebb and flow of nature go about its daily routine. You find yourself imagining how many people in the past might have experienced the beauty of this very same spot. Grandparents who came here as children, Revolutionary War soldiers on their way to raids, Indian hunting parties waiting out storms under the shelter of the overhang. Each moment is unique and no one else will experience exactly the same one you are experiencing and it is your job to honestly record what is before you.