



#8

Some basic concepts to help you become a better painter

On location

Be **prepared:**

It's **dangerous** out there!

If you've ever tried painting on location, you'll know (and fear) the sudden appearance of the "interested" on-looker. Hovering at your elbow, this uninformed and visually illiterate individual will honor and enlighten you with his opinions

on your particular work and on art in general. He'll ask any number of predictable and irritating questions. Uninvited, he'll give you his deepest thoughts on art.

After 10 minutes of this, you may be sorely tempted to throttle him, but don't. In most states attacking the aesthetically impaired is a felony. (In California, an enlightened state, it is considered a misdemeanor punishable by serving 20 hours of community service teaching painting to the truly untalented.)

Short of spattering him with paint, there is little you can legally do to discourage the persistent on-looker. Better to face his attack head-on with answers you have prepared beforehand. Here are some possibilities you might try.



"Friends of Monhegan" by William Lawrence

Watercolor, 20" x 26"

- Q.** "How long does it take you to paint one of those things?"
- A.** "Sometimes months, sometimes years. What you see here is only the beginning." This might discourage the questioner. How can you comment on a work that is only 1% completed?

Q. "Have you been painting long?"

A. "I started at about 10:30."

Q. "Do you sell your paintings?"

A. "Are you interested in buying one?"

Q. "Isn't watercolor very difficult?"

A. "Almost impossible. That is why we have to sell them for thousands of dollars. Are you interested in buying one?"

These are some predictable comments that you should be prepared for:

"That doesn't look like a boat (or a barn or a tree or whatever)." Your reply: "It isn't; it's a

painting of one. This paper is much too thin to support a boat." To illustrate this point, take your paper off the board and show him how thin it is.

"I have a daughter (or niece or brother, etc.) who can draw anything." Your reply: "What galleries is she (or he) in? I may have seen her work."

Of course, if none of this works to drive the pest off, you can always do what we do: pack up and leave.