Watercolors in the Wild: Autumn Flora

October 9–11, 2020  ●  Andie Thrams

$192 per person / $177 for Mono Lake Committee members
enrollment limited to 12 participants

Create a series of intimate botanical watercolor studies of autumn’s delightful forms and colors, including leaves, lichen, and seed pods using watercolors, ink, pencil, gouache, and found materials. During gentle forays into nearby aspen groves, and while in the studio, we’ll collect ideas, leaves, and other objects; carefully observe fall flora; and experiment with drawing and painting techniques designed to empower painting comfortably and effectively in the outdoors. We’ll invite natural materials into our process: using leaves for printing and as stencils; staining our paper with bark and fungi; dipping twigs into ink for drawing; and working with found forest charcoal. Step-by-step demos will include painting wet into wet/wet over dry, accurate color mixing, glazing in layers to build complexity, using ink with paint, painting light over dark with gouache, when and how to use various brushes and other tools, drawing with colored pencil over painted surfaces, and more. Your watercolor studies will be a reference and inspiration source for future projects. All levels are invited.

California-based visual artist Andie Thrams uses watercolors onsite in wildland forests to create paintings and artist’s books that explore mystery, reverence, and delight, while also grappling with the vanishing habitats of our era. Merging the lineages of illuminated manuscripts and natural history field journals with a contemporary art and science awareness, her paintings weave intricate botanical detail into rich layers of shape, color, and hand-lettered text to evoke the complex interconnections within ecosystems of the Greater West.
ITINERARY

Friday, October 9, 6:30pm: Meet at the Lee Vining Community Center (296 Mattly Avenue). Please bring all your art supplies (see “art supply list” below). We’ll introduce ourselves, discuss weekend plans, and go over our art materials in depth. Andie will demonstrate a few approaches, and we’ll all do some art warm-ups.

Saturday, October 10, 9:00am: Meet back at the Community Center, where we’ll work inside for a while. Next we’ll carpool to upper Lee Vining Creek near Tioga Pass and work in that area until later in the afternoon. Depending on energies and temperatures, we’ll reconvene at the Community Center for painting as long as people wish, as the light fades.

Sunday, October 11, 9:00am: Meet at Community Center once again and we will carpool to an outdoor painting location determined the previous day. We will work until 2:00pm, then do a final group discussion and wrap-up. The seminar will end at about 3:00pm so students can start the drive home.

PLEASE NOTE

Field trip locations may vary, depending on weather and fall color. Our group size is limited to offer time for individual attention. Students should have enough stamina to work outdoors for most of the day. There will be some easy walking. Essential gear is listed below under the “to bring” and “art supply list” headings.

Altitude and Dehydration Cautions: Although this seminar will not require strenuous hiking, participants should be in reasonably good physical shape. Remember to bring (and drink!) lots of water because your body loses more water at the higher altitudes of the Mono Basin. Also, the sun is rather fierce at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool and cloudy days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly using sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat. Rain will bring us indoors so we can continue painting.

MEALS

Please bring bag lunches for both Saturday and Sunday. All other meals are on your own. Make sure you also bring along plenty of water and snacks for each day. Thermoses are nice to have!

LODGING

The town of Lee Vining has several motels, all of which can be full well in advance. Please make your lodging reservations as soon as you register for this class; otherwise, you may not be able to reserve a room in town. For Lee Vining motels, visit leevining.com. Other accommodations are located in the town of June Lake, approximately 15 miles south of Lee Vining.

TO BRING

__ daypack with enough space to carry all your stuff: clothing, water, lunch, art supplies, etc.
__ appropriate layered clothing to stay warm while sitting still for long periods of time: warm layers, rain/wind jacket, etc.
__ water bottle and plenty of water
__ packed lunch and snacks each day
__ sit-upon, portable stool, Crazy Creek chair, or something so you can sit comfortably on the ground (so your seat stays warm and dry). A small, light tarp can be handy too.
__ comfortable boots/shoes suitable for short hikes
sunglasses, sunhat, sunscreen, warm hat
binoculars & camera (optional)
art supplies (listed below)

ART SUPPLY LIST
To maximize your fun, please bring as many of the following as you are able to. If you are missing a few items, don’t worry too much. Andie will have lots of supplies on hand to share and a few items for sale. You may also purchase a complete supply kit for $85, if you contact Andie at least a month before the workshop.

- 2 full-size sheets of 140-lb. hot press and/or cold press watercolor paper (Arches or Fabriano are recommended. Buy the best you can afford. Student-grade papers will not work as nicely as better papers will.) Cut or tear your sheets into six equal pieces measuring approximately 10x11” before coming to our workshop. One full-size sheet of watercolor paper (22x30”), will yield six 10x11” pieces. You must do this before coming to class—we will not have the space or tools to do it on site!
- clipboard, foam board, or other lightweight board approximately 12x12”, with 2 clips big enough to hold your paper to the board
- No. 2 or HB drawing pencil
- pencil sharpener
- kneaded eraser
- eye dropper
- zip-lock bag for collecting leaves, etc.
- fine or extra fine black felt tip pen (such as Pigma micron in size .01, or bigger if you prefer)
- 3 or 4 colored pencils in any colors you like—with at least 2 light colors. Prismacolor “Cream” is a helpful color to have.
- ruler about 12 inches long
- 1 push pin
- manila file folder
- scissors
- black or brown ink (any type)
- plastic lettuce bin cover, butcher tray, open palette, or other large paint mixing space
- #12 and #6 round watercolor brushes. Recommended brushes include: Winsor & Newton Cotman, Cirrus, Septre Gold synthetic and Series 7 sable brushes; Princeton Aqua Elite or Velvetouch synthetic brushes; Creative Mark Rhapsody sable brushes; or any other brushes you like to use. It will pay off over time to buy the best brush you can afford!
- Pentel large water brush
- optional brushes: 1/4-inch angle brush; 1-inch flat watercolor brush; stiff bristle brush of any type; a script, rigger, or liner brush; and any other brushes you like
- 2 small containers for paint mixing & painting water, such as a small yogurt containers or jars
- small spray bottle
- rags or paper towels
- watercolor travel kit or much better: a lightweight folding palette filled with tube watercolor paints. The better brands are Winsor & Newton, Daniel Smith, M. Graham, Utrecht, and Holbein. Andie will have extra paint to share, so if you are missing a color, that is okay.
- Recommended colors for the best basic watercolor kit ever:
Quinacridone rose, or quinacridone pink, or permanent rose (purple-biased red)
Cadmium red (orange-biased red)
Ultramarine blue (purple-biased blue)
Phthalo blue, or manganese blue, or cerulean blue (green-biased blue)
Lemon yellow, or cadmium yellow pale, or hansa yellow light (green-biased yellow)
Cadmium yellow deep (orange-biased yellow)
Sap green (good all-around green)
Oxide of chromium (helpful green for plants)
Ultramarine violet or other purple
Any orange you like
Burnt sienna
Quinacridone gold
Paynes grey or neutral tint
Permanent white gouache (not watercolor)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
- DickBlick.com
- JerrysArtarama.com
- DanielSmith.com
- LeeVining.com
- Andie’s website: andiethrams.com
- Andie’s email: andie@andiethrams.com
- Andie’s Instagram: @andiethramsartworks

SUGGESTED READING
Many of these books are available at the Mono Lake Committee:
- Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada by John Muir Laws
- The Laws Guide to Nature Drawing and Journaling by John Muir Laws
- Fearless Creating by Eric Maisiel
- The Practice of the Wild by Gary Snyder
- The Creative Habit by Twayla Tharp
- Blue and Yellow Don’t Make Green by Michael Wilcox