



# Dramatic Light and Atmosphere

The artwork of Jennifer Annesley conveys the experience of being in the landscape or city scene.



Jennifer Annesley, a full-time artist since 1989, bases her artwork on her love of the Old Masters, historic architecture and the natural world, with the latter two subjects' contrasting worlds being a major source of inspiration. According to Annesley, "The order, elegance and relative safety of architectural spaces become even more pronounced and appreciated when juxtaposed with the chaotic and primitive landscape, a tension that provides me with energy and ideas."

Viewers of Annesley's art will notice she concentrates on technical contrasts as well, and she believes these differences are the "basis of perception, and are powerful expressive tools." She further explains, "Exploring thematic and visual contrasts and opposites—such as strength and fragility, permanence and transience, feminine and masculine—and how they can be balanced and expressed through formal opposites—such as light and shadow, warm and cool color—is an underlying theme in my work."

When composing her paintings, Annesley uses photo references she gathers while spending time in the backcountry canoeing, backpacking and skiing. She often looks for the transient, or fleeting, moments of light that she says are best captured with a camera. Then, upon returning to the studio, Annesley

combines several photographs to make a single composition. For her watercolor pieces, the artist draws with pencil on the watercolor paper and then paints multiple layers to achieve saturated color.

"I try to convey the dramatic effects of light and atmosphere, a specific sense of time and the feeling of being there, experiencing the landscape," Annesley says. "By portraying a transient, unrepeatable moment of light and time, my landscapes explore the relationship between the permanence of the land and the impermanence of weather and light conditions, and how that relationship effects our perception of the landscape and our experience in it."

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*Ascent*, watercolor,  
42 x 24"

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*Emerald River*,  
watercolor, 18 x 30"

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A look inside the  
studio of Canadian  
artist Jennifer  
Annesley.

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*Morning Song*,  
charcoal, 20 x 36"





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Among Annesley's works is *Emerald River*, a Scene painted in the midst of winter. "Light filters through the tall evergreen forest creating long shadows and patches of light on the ice and snow, hiding and revealing the riverbed under crystal-clear water. Where the river deepens, the emerald color is intense, contrasting with the golds in the shallows. Graphic straight lines of the fallen tree are a foil to the curvaceous edges of the ice and

round drifts of snow," describes the artist. "For me, looking into water is similar to staring at a fire, chaos coexisting with pattern, ever-changing and mesmerizing. The challenge in a snow painting is to keep the white of the paper perfectly clean to emulate snow, but with a warm gradient on the edges to hint at the warm late afternoon light."

Another piece that features snow is *Ascent*, which was from the artist's own journey up

the Great Divide between British Columbia and Alberta. The view she saw was of the valley and peaks of Yoho National Park. Of the piece, she explains, "I hoped to capture the feeling of vertigo and the precariousness of position and weather, looking down some 2,100 feet to the lake, with an impending autumn storm rolling in. From the emerald focal point of the lake at the bottom, the eye follows a shard of light tracking upward to

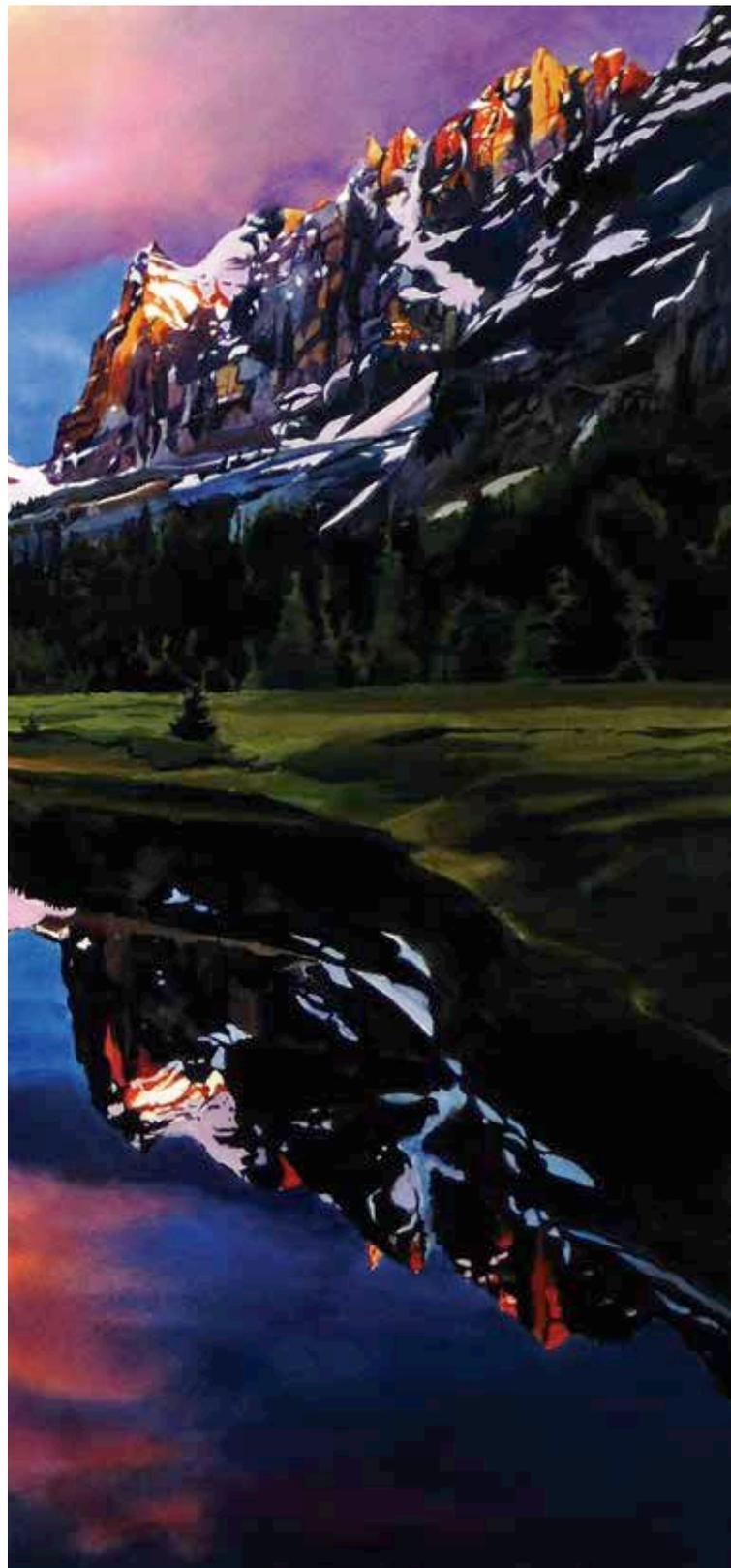


the second focus of the mountain towering in the background. Shadowy pinnacles loom like gargoyles on a cathedral.”

Yoho National Park also is on view in her piece *Alpine Prospects*. During a weeklong hiking trip in the area, she was inspired by a colorful swirling sunset just prior to a

storm. The artist took a series of photos of the scene, waiting for the ideal moment to capture the light and cloud patterns. “The red and golds were vibrant, and the near perfect reflection in glass calm water before the storm magnified the beauty of the entire experience,” she says.

On an eight-day canoeing trip in the Cariboo Mountains in British Columbia, Annesley found the source for her charcoal drawing *Morning Song*. “[W]e experienced every kind of weather, varied ecosystems and moments of pure silent awe, as I’ve tried to capture in this charcoal,” she explains. Another



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charcoal work is her cityscape *Grand Cloister*, which she discovered by London's Westminster Abbey. "I took a few hundred photographs here, trying to gather details between the many tourists walking by, and back in my studio, I referred to several photographs to piece together my impression of place." Annesley is represented by Canada House



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Gallery in Banff, Alberta, which will host her next solo exhibition, *The Architecture of Landscape*, from April 6 to 19. In November, her 23<sup>rd</sup> annual one-night exhibition will be held in Edmonton, Alberta. ●  
Annesley was the Grand Prize Winner of *International Artist magazine's Challenge No. 92, Landscapes*.

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*Alpine Prospects*, watercolor, 28 x 38". This painting received the Grand Prize award in *International Artist's Challenge No. 92, Landscapes*.

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*Grand Cloister*, charcoal, 43 x 19"