

the traditional transparent technique, I have held to it with the rationalization that you can scarcely desert a medium if you haven't licked it. This you never do, and the only cure for a watercolor is another one!

Without arguing that virtuosity is the ultimate goal in watercolor any more than it is in any other art medium, the fact remains that technical excellence is one of the valuable disciplines of the medium, and an integral part of expression with it.

In the practice of painting watercolors, I keep equipment, technical devices, and theoretical concepts of design and structure to a simplified minimum. My palette is based upon the fundamental premise that, of all the possible means of achieving contrast and relationships with color, the differentiation between warm and cool color is the most important to the painter. Therefore, the basic concept of the palette is more or less complete if it contains the warm and cool elements whether it be composed of one color in each category or a dozen of each, plus black.

I differ with those who argue that black should be left off the palette, but it has to be used with care, considered as a color and as a means of making neutral shades when they are needed. Black must not be allowed to lure one to depend upon value contrasts where contrasts of color intensities would be more exciting and desirable.

I experiment a great deal within the principle of the warm and cool aspects of color, choosing the most transparent colors since the very nature of the medium asks for this quality. At times I find Naples yellow useful, even though it is a somewhat opaque color. I seldom use white.

My working palette for direct, on-the-spot painting, consists of about sixteen colors, divided between warm and cool, and arranged on a wide plastic palette which I hold in my left hand as I would an oil palette.

I use four or five brushes, ranging from a fine pointed, long-haired Japanese brush, to a two-inch, wide flat ox hair — with a one-inch flat sable wash

brush and a number sixteen round ox hair being the two most used.

Having been one of the first, if not the first of the California "school" of watercolorists to use the full imperial sheet of watercolor paper, I have deliberately made a technique of painting large sheets out-of-doors, always striving to bring to these large papers the same spontaneity and breadth that is more typically realized on smaller sizes.

Again, because of my travels, I have made a habit of using, and am spoiled by, such quality papers as a 300 weight French paper, rough or smooth, and an English make of 400 weight. These papers do not require stretching and will stand a great deal of handling in folios, and in and out of frames. Otherwise, I fill scores of sketch books with small, quick watercolors and drawings.

Design is a means to an end, a presentation of a thought or concept graphically through an organization of space and color relationship. I attempt to find form in landscape painting by abstracting the basic design elements and making a statement of the scene before me — not by copying the scene, but by building a composition out of the elements offered

I find I must go continually to nature. Many of my pictures are painted in the studio, but in close relation to subject matter. I hold to this concern for nature and designing out of the experience of observation. I prefer not to impose style upon nature but rather to let forms in nature

dictate style. I do not make too conscious an effort to identify myself by an individual style, rather to identify myself with the many fine watercolorists who have made an art of the medium. If an artist is honest to the influences which have shaped his work and honest in his interpretations, personal style will emerge.

I try to avoid clichés and static attitudes in art. I believe that much that has been contributed by contemporary innovators has vitalized painting. I often find exhibits of abstract and nonobjective painting stimulating. The abstract aspect of painting has always been a concern to me in my own work as a basis for expression, but concrete intellectual demarcations have little meaning to me. I believe that any artistic thought is abstract thought. The artist's problem is to create art, whether the forms be objective or nonobjective.

Self-expression is a term which bores me. Unless I can be expressive of something other than self, I would have little of self to express.

Since my very beginnings as an artist, I have considered myself a professional. I often advise students to gain their fundamental knowledge quickly and to take the position of being an artist, willing to spend the rest of their lives learning, rather than to be perennial students.

Having long since made the not-too-startling discovery that art is not the best choice of profession by which to get rich, my belief is that one becomes an artist because of a certain

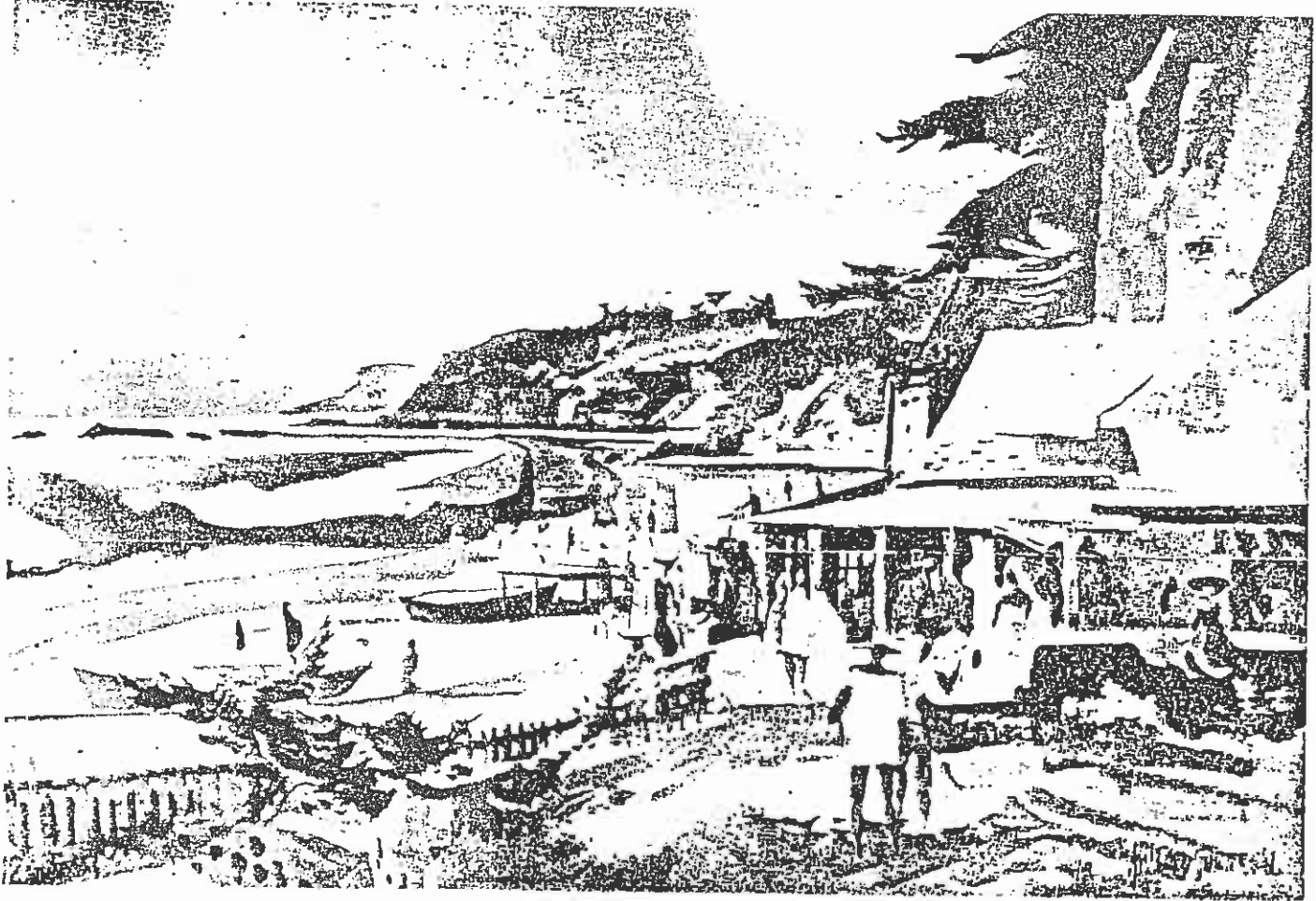
independence of spirit. To give up that independence is to give up the real reward of being an artist. Because of this, I have steadily rejected being commercial with my work, and while I now realize about a third of my income from the sale of paintings, I can only produce work if I do it in the spirit of creative search. When I have had the experience of painting a picture and the picture is done, I offer it for sale; and now and then know the added satisfaction of having communicated to the extent that someone wants to own the picture. This seems to complete a cycle.

While I have been a teacher of painting almost as long as I have been a painter, I have never sought a teaching position and I avoid being a professional teacher just as I avoid being commercial in painting. I teach in the same spirit that I go to nature to paint. Teaching painting is relating to people through the language of art. One tries to create a student much as he would create a picture.

One should, I suppose, be apologetic for an art career characterized, for the most part, by the practice of many years of sitting on a hill some place trying to make a watercolor work. My hills have often been in some remote and unusual places in the world from China and India to Mexico and from Hobart to Greenland. I must believe that in long hours spent in the sun and wind, by the sea, in some mountain place or city street I have found, and continue to find, my real adventure.

ZORNES, '1

ONE-HAN



# MILFORD ZORNES believes:

## *Forms in Nature should dictate Style*



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*American Artist*

MILFORD ZORNES was born in Camargo, Oklahoma, in 1908. Studied at Santa Maria Junior College, Pomona College, Otis Art Institute, and with F. Tolles Chamberlin. He has taught at several California colleges and universities; Otis Art Institute, and the Pasadena School of Fine Arts. Since 1931, his work has received ten major prizes, numerous lesser awards, and in 1963, the American Medal of Honor, American Watercolor Society. His work has been widely exhibited in national exhibitions from coast to coast and belongs in fifteen public collections and many private ones. In addition to his work in watercolor, Zornes has painted several murals, and from 1943-45 was an official artist in the Far East, with the U.S. Army. He is an active member of several art organizations, including the American and California Watercolor Societies.

BEACH PARTY (reproduced in color here) is an immediate interpretation of a scene, or more exactly, a situation painted on location. It is descriptive of things seen only to the extent that actual description was helpful or necessary in expressing the truth of the subject as I saw it, or felt it, at the moment.

This, I believe, is what watercolor painting should be or can be — a moment in time — an immediate expression which sums up all of an artist's experience and skill and the substance of his artistic thought much as a surgeon brings all of his training to bear during an operation, or as an athlete combines the exercise of mind and body to execute a critical play.

Having worked in many painting mediums, I have, because of the coincidence of travel and the need to carry expedient materials, become a watercolorist by default, and because of the challenge posed by