



#### Transparent and opaque

Watercolor lends its fluidity and transparency; pastel contributes an intensity of pigment and opacity in *Stampede Pass* (mixed media, 24x30).

## Catherine Gill

### Combining watercolor and pastel

In her landscape paintings, Catherine Gill explores mixed media with gusto, combining watercolor and pastel in an inventive, spontaneous manner. On location, Gill is apt to ask herself, Can you feel the sun; can you hear the wind? She makes her students close their eyes, as she herself does. It's important, she points out, "to focus on one sense at a time to get the feel of the place you're painting."

"As I directly engage myself with nature, the process becomes a collaboration," says Gill. To render this collaboration, Gill complements watercolor with pastel. "My art is all about

combining things, mixing images, as well as mixing techniques. Combining watercolor and pastel is such an immediate process that I literally have to dance on my feet: responding immediately to the surface, keeping the paper wet, as I work on the watercolor with pastel." For Gill, painting with mixed media is a thorough mixing of the two media—in this case, watercolor and pastel—in many integrated layers, not just one layer over another. Gill starts by soaking Lanaquarelle hot-pressed, 140-lb paper. If near a stream or river, she'll soak it in that. On wet paper, she blocks in the basic shapes of land, sea and sky with watercolor, using a large brush and bold strokes, on top of which she draws with pastel in a light or midtone value, making energetic lines, usually with different colors from

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—Catherine Gill