



a winter walk IN MINIATURE

Joan Cornish Willies, member of the prestigious Royal Society of Miniature Painters, Sculptors and Gravers, graciously walks us through the process of miniature painting.

*by Joan Cornish Willies
Photography by Clive Beckett*



The techniques of painting a miniature began more than a thousand years ago. They were included in the very earliest of books and documents and were intended to illustrate the content of the written text. Few people could read, but most understood symbols and pictures however crudely they were drawn.

The Bible, The Talmud, The Koran, Book of Kells, and similar works, all contained beautifully detailed paintings within their pages, frequently highlighted with pure gold, and many also contained precious stones. The calligraphy text told the story and, in infinite detail, specialized painters incorporated pictures containing every possible detail about the subject of the text. The richer and more powerful the subject was, whether it was a person or his possessions, the richer the color became and the heavier the gold was laid.

A King, or wealthy Knight, a Leader, Saint, Prophet and God himself was created and illuminated as was the abode where the wealthy lived, including possessions like the servants, horses or army, their image created and added to the written word. Paintings called miniatures, after the red paint, *minium*, could take up a whole page of a book, or a small part of a book ranging from a tiny prayer book to a great Tome

which rested on an extravagantly carved stand or within a large scroll.

The technique of painting with tiny details was created. Inevitably the miniature technique was applied to other forms of art. Portraits were created, some as identification of the sender of the message, some as a personalized gift, some as a likeness of a prospective suitor.

Scaled reproductions

The standards of the miniature apply also to the scale miniatures for model houses; however, the content must be scaled to fit into a frame that is exactly scaled to the size of the dollhouse, or dollhouse room in which it is being hung. The more carefully these works are painted, the more they are collected by the serious collectors of scaled reproductions of houses, somewhat misnamed as dollhouses.

In this tutorial, we show the steps necessary for a detailed painting, and take it in easy stages to its completion. The painting is titled "Winter Walk." Although it looks complicated, taken stage by stage it is not difficult; however, you need to practice the brushwork.

Most of the work is done at the very tip of a Winsor & Newton series 7 Kolinsky sable brush (not however from their range named Miniature, these brushes are too short). The series 7 Kolinsky has a long tip that tapers to a fine point and has a wedge shaped base, which acts as a tiny reservoir for the paint. The hair holds together well at the tip and are springy and flexible.



YOU'LL need

- One Winsor Newton series 7 Kolinsky sable brush size 0 or 1
 - One other sable brush. (Silver Brush Company, Robert Simmons, or Escoda are a good but less expensive than Winsor Newton series 7 and can be used for effects, which do not need the finest point.)
 - Turpenoid made by Weber. (Do not purchase Turpentine, or Turpenoid Natural. Turpentine is too heavy, and Turpenoid Natural is made by Weber for cleaning and restoring brushes.)
 - Two soft mops in 1/2" and 1/4" I suggest Winsor & Newton, Loew Cornell, Silver Brush Company, Robert Simmons, and Ann's Mini Mops. Other and cheaper brushes will shed hairs; DO NOT use squirrel or ox hair.)
 - Sablon or similar angle brushes for stippling two or three in various sizes 1/4" 1/8" 1/2" (I suggest Winsor & Newton, Loew Cornell, Silver Brush Company. Cheaper makes will tend to splinter fairly rapidly. You need tight consistent edges to get mossy stippling effects.)
 - Viva Paper Towels. These are soft and lint free, other towels especially 1 ply will stick to painting.)
 - Liquin light gel for glazes. (Liquin original can be used but will need diluting.)
 - This painting is rendered in oils and alkyds - fast drying oil colors.
 - Winsor & Newton - Griffin Alkyd - fast drying oil colors
- Burnt Sienna
Burnt Umber
Dioxazine Purple
Olive Green
Mixing White
Paynes Gray
Permanent Green
Rose Madder
Phthalo Blue
Titanium White
Ultramarine or French Ultramarine
Viridian

OILS

- Winsor & Newton, Sennelier, Old Holland, Holbein (Colors from these manufacturers are very pure, transparent and excellent for glazing. These can be mixed with Griffin alkyds to slow down the drying time and reduce drag to improve glazing).
 - Cadmium Red (in either oil or alkyd)
 - Flake White (instead of Mixing White if preferred)
 - Titanium White (This is a little more transparent than Titanium White in alkyd. Titanium White is also mixed with Griffin alkyd Titanium White to smooth out brush strokes for tiny details of the snow.)
 - Ultramarine or French Ultramarine
- The following are optional colors for the clothes.
- Green Umber
 - Intense Red or Bright Red
 - Phthalo Yellow



- This painting is best executed on Ivorine. The transparent effects can only be obtained by painting on Ivorine or on Ivory. Ivorine, and gold frames can be ordered via email from Joan Cornish Willies Studio, joan@joanwillies.com. All Artists supplies including Ivorine and brushes from: Masterpiece Art; artgoods@aol.com, Supplies for the Miniaturist from Nancy Still; nancy@miniartsupplies.biz

“The more carefully these works are painted, the more they are collected by the serious collectors.”

Brush techniques

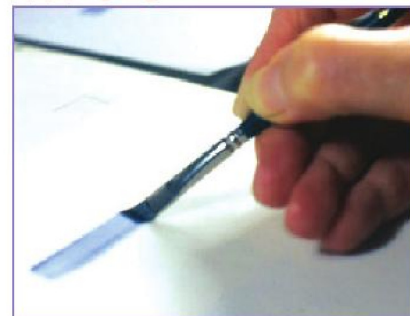
The key to producing a successful miniature is good brush technique. The following pictures will introduce you to some of the techniques used in this painting.

Twirling the brush to a point

Twist the brush handle with your fingers in fluid paint to attain a fine point.



Stroke away from the color on the palette as you twist the brush.

Applying a glaze

For a wash or glaze, flatten a brush such as 1/4" or 1/2" angle brush in a very fluid paint and pull the color along.

Stippling



To get the right effect in stippling, the paint should be only very slightly diluted.

Painting a fine line (a & b)



Put the brush point-down, just touching the surface.

Lifting off paint



To trim a shape or fine line, use the point to pick up unwanted paint before it has a chance to dry, the brush should always be held to a point.

Softening shapes



A mini-mop is used to soften the paint just applied.



Stroke without pressing down on the brush.

Loading a brush with two colors

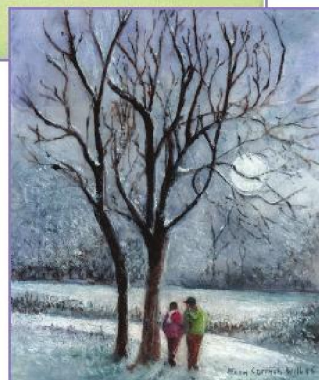
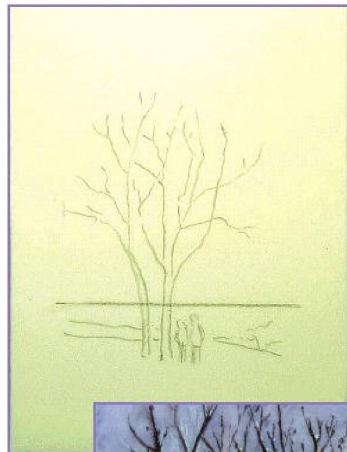


Using an angle brush flatten both sides of it into one color and then the other.

Getting started

Techniques given here are for painting on Ivoryine but can apply equally well to an Ivory piano key.

If you have Ivory piano keys available reduce the illustrations by scanning to your computer to fit the size of the piano key. However you will need to prepare the piano key. Piano keys available today are at least fifty years old, and grimed with a brownish lock to them. Sand them with a fine sander and remove the varnish, and wash well with detergent. Sand down both square corners to match the rounded corners on the front of the piano key.



Defining the technique

For the outline sketch, use a watercolor pencil in light Paynes Gray or mid gray. If you prefer, you may trace the outline sketch on a lightbox or against a window. Do not use graphite or charcoal pencils. The watercolor pencil drawing will accept oil glazes over it and will not break up. Drawn in the basic color of gray or blue the lines will not show through as the work progresses.

Painting the background



Pressing to drag brush across work, use light brush strokes to darken the glaze.

TOP tip

For the outline sketch, use a watercolor pencil. Do not use graphite or charcoal pencils. The watercolor pencil drawing will accept oil glazes over it and will not break up.

- Place some Ultramarine Blue Griffin alkyd on the palette. Select a 1/2" angle brush and dip it in Turpenoid and squeeze between paper towels. Lay the brush flat in the paint and drag downwards, tap to the paper towel. Turn over the brush and do the same on the other side, and then squeeze the brush between the paper towels.

- Lay brush on its side and drag across the whole of the painting. The color should be just a pale tint of blue.

- Repeat the stroke, going all the way across the Ivorine, and continue these strokes all the way down to the bottom working across the drawing. The brush should not be held down heavily, just lightly enough to lay in a pale pastel blue. The watercolor pencil drawing will resist the



Practice pointing the brush.

oils and not smudge unless the brush is pressed down heavily.

- If the color is not light enough, take the paper towel and GENTLY rub. This way you will take off the surplus without smudging the drawing. To deepen the overall blue, repeat the process.

- Allow to dry.

Painting the tree and branches

- Before painting the tree and branches, practice pointing the series 7 brush. Place a small amount of Burnt Umber on the palette and a similar amount of Paynes Gray. Take a series 7#1 Kolinsky sable brush, dip it in the Turpenoid, touch it to the paper towel

and lay it ON ITS SIDE in the Burnt Umber, pressing down on the side of the brush. Slightly twirl the brush gently to a point then pull away from the deposit of paint on the palette.

- Without squeezing the brush, pull it gently through a folded paper towel it will reform the point. Place the tip of the same brush which already has the Burnt Umber on its tip - into the Paynes Gray, twirl it gently and pull away from the paint deposit, and lightly touch the paper towel.

- You will now have a tip of Paynes Gray over the Burnt Umber on the brush. Test this point on your spare Ivorine or a plastic palette. It should draw a fine dark line; the colors mix as the fine line is drawn.

- Now you are ready to paint the trunk of the tree and the main branches. On the trunk of the tree, you can use little taps to apply a more solid color. This does not mean putting a lot of paint on the brush. Put paint on the brush just as I have described and use your skill with the point to tap in all over the width of the trunk and thicker branches. During all of this, you will need to refresh the brush several times. Continue to load the brush with two colors



Painting after the application of color glazes.



Painting the tree and branches.



Trimming back a branch with point of brush.

as I have previously described, tapping it in to the trunk and larger branches. Do not add more paint until really necessary.

- When the trunk and main branches have been painted, you can add the small branches and fine twigs.
- Working on the point of the brush and mixing colors as you work is a skill that



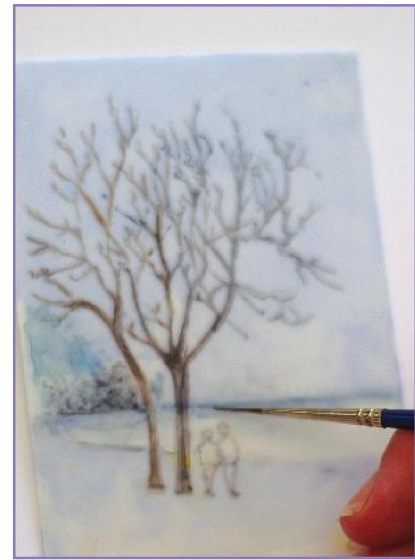
Softening edges of the moon.

is essential for the mastery of thin lines of paint in a small scale. Imagine the point being the tip of a fine straight pin or needle.

- When you need to widen the branches, press down about halfway on the length of the brush hairs and pull the brush along the branch, it will widen slightly and even set up a fine line on each side of the point thus sharpening the edge.

- If the branch appears too thick, clean the brush and twirl it to a point in Turpenoid then taper the end of the branch by lifting the brush slightly as you gradually drag it towards the tree. *(See brush techniques - twirling the brush to a point)*

- Study trees and you will see that the branches, however small, will be wider at the base where they are attached to a larger branch. Allow to dry. Check the surface of the work for any raised bits of dust or hairs. If found, buff the surface with a silk pad from an old silk shoulder pad, or



Trim back the far bank of the lake.

a folded piece of silk. Make sure that the silk is indelibly dyed and will not shed color when rubbed on surface of work.

Background color and liftout light areas

- You can now decide on whether you want the sky to be early evening or later. If you prefer the sky to be darker repeat the first glazing steps. Drag a small angle brush dipped in color horizontally across the painting and even over the tree and branches.

- The light areas around the moon and on the lake can be lifted out with Turpenoid on a fine pointed brush after each glaze. You can also change the glazing colors. In this painting I used layers of transparent blues. A touch of Phthalo Blue with Paynes Gray, over that Dioxazine Purple mixed with Viridian. This makes a lovely blue with a hint of green in it. French Ultramarine with Paynes Gray will add a night sky glaze.

- All of these pigments are transparent. Dragging them over previous thin and transparent layers will create a subtle, but not heavy luminous tint and all the details of the tree and branches will easily show through. Using a clean paper towel rub out paint in the area for the moon and moon glow, before allowing the glaze to dry.

- Use a soft mop to rub around the edges of the moon glow merging it into the surrounding darker area. Some matching sky color, or a touch of Ultramarine Blue, can be rubbed in with the towel across



Lift-out color from background to form the moon.



Stippling the bushes.

the frozen lake. If you dip the brush in Turpenoid and pull to a point, you can then lift out some lines for the moon reflection whilst the latest glaze is still wet.

■ So long as the layers of color, which you glaze on the work, are transparent, you can deepen the night color to your choice, but be sure to keep rubbing out the light around the moon and reflections in the lake with your paper towel as you go. The crystals in the Ivorine or Ivory will reflect light through these glazes.

Do not add white yet as it is opaque and will not allow the reflected light from the ground through it as transparent colors do.

■ Just thinning colors does not make them transparent. The pigments themselves have to be transparent or semi transparent. The transparency of the colors is usually given on the side of the paint tube.

■ When each glaze is dry buff down any raised bits, then isolate it with some Liquin Light Gel rubbed into the painting with the Viva towel.

■ It is important to remember that layers MUST be thoroughly dry before another layer is placed over it. REMEMBER that after the first couple of paint layers, the work when dry, should be checked and buffed or sanded gently to remove bits of dust and lint, which get attracted from the air when the painting is in progress. Then isolate with a light rub in of Liquin Light gel over every dry layer to aid in the luminosity of the piece.

■ Do not leave any raised lines of gel on



Stippling bushes at the front right side of the path.

the painting, as it is very hard to even out when dry.

Bushes in the background

■ When previous work is dry, trim back the far bank of the lake. Apply a line of Paynes Gray and Ultramarine Blue to the far bank of the lake. The finest series 7 brush should be twirled in a mix of both colors by flattening and twirling as described earlier, it is not necessary to twirl each color separately as described when painting fine lines, for this you could mix the two colors, twirl in the mixed colors and bring the brush to a point and drag the point across the far edge of the lake, press slightly as you go, then blot with paper towel.

■ Take a small angle brush, flatten both sides of it into the Ultramarine Blue, and touch the tips of the hairs into Paynes Gray. Squeeze the brush between a paper towel and lightly stipple - just tap lightly - across and downwards in the area where the background bushes are. Try to get a tight velvet look.



Buffing with silk.

■ Paynes Gray will show first, followed by the Ultramarine Blue; the colors will appear as variable. You do not need to draw any part of the bushes, just stipple up and down until you have a stippled area approximately similar to the reference picture. The paint can be taken across the painted tree trunk and lifted off with a brush clipped in Turpenoid and wiped in the towel.



Applying isolator.



Working on the moon.

■ Refer to the picture of the completed painting, and after lightly stippling with a mixture of Ultramarine Blue and Paynes Gray across the whole of the rear of the lake, blot gently with the paper towel folded to a thick square. This can be repeated, once dry, a couple of times, gradually darkening the bushes with each layer, isolating with the Liquin light gel lightly rubbed in to every dry layer. This also adds luminosity to every layer.



Softening the moon with a soft mop.

■ When dry, glaze over the stippled area. Mix the Dioxazine Purple with the Viridian, until it has more of a blue look than green, and if you wish add a little Paynes Gray as well, add a minute amount of Liquin light gel, flatten the angle brush in this, then pull across the painting over the lower part of the bushes straight across from left to right. The more gel you add to the color, the fainter the color in the glaze will be, test the depth of the glaze color on another piece of Ivorine, check the effects.

■ You can gradually build up depth of

color by adding more color to a further third or fourth glaze; however, the area beneath each glaze must be completely dry.

■ Stipple bushes at the front right of the path, and with a series 7 #1 or series #0 put in tiny little fine branches and twigs, letting them disappear into the center of the stipple and let them silhouette against the edge of the path.

■ Flatten the small angle brush again, into Titanium White, squeeze it tightly between the towel, and then with the very lightest of touch, tap the ends of its hairs gently to the parts of the bushes either side of the glow from the moon and pat dry. This will resemble distant snow on the bushes. Allow to dry.

■ A touch of Phthalo Blue can be added to the Paynes Gray, for a final layer and gently rubbed into the base of the bushes with the paper towel (instead of an angle brush) for a final layer. Some of these blues can be very gently pulled, with a soft mop, or rubbed with the Viva towel downwards into the lake making reflections.

■ Reflections always go straight down, beneath the reflected object, so if a bush goes to a peak, you must pull down a long peaked reflection straight down below it on

the water or ice, then blot or lay the mop on its side (not straight down on its tip) and pat down very, very lightly. Allow to dry.

■ Remember to buff with the silk any areas where you can feel raised paint or particles every time you wish to apply another layer of paint.

Brightening the white

■ The painting should be dry, buffed, and have a thin coat of Liquin Light Gel rubbed in. Clean a Series 7 brush in turpenoid; twirl it in a little Liquin Light Gel and touch to the towel. Twirl in Titanium White and pull through the towel to make a point and remove surplus paint.

■ Touch the loaded brush to the area of the lake which reflects the moon, press down slightly on the tip and drag it lightly along the horizon line, starting just to the left of the moon and continuing on to the right in a steady continuous line. It does not matter if you overlap the tree a little, as you can remove the overlap with some turpenoid on a clean brush.

■ Take a small mop and gently pull the painted line downward until it disappears, you will also be dragging it right over the outline of the figures.

■ Take another clean small mop and then very gently pull it SIDEWAYS along the white below the horizon line. This should put the look of a shine on the surface of the lake and the reflections of the bushes.

■ Stipple bushes at the front right of the path, and with a series 7 #1 or #0 brush twirled in Paynes grey and Burnt Umber put in the fine branches and twigs, letting them disappear into the center of the stipple, and also pulling them out fractionally in silhouette against the edge of the path. Allow all to dry.

The path and other touches

■ There should be some pale blues on the path by now. Stipple over them with Titanium White using the angle brush, which has been wetted in the Turpenoid, tapped to the towel, then flattened and dragged down in the paint on the palette on both sides. Touch the brush lightly here and there over the blues on the path and you will produce sparkles of white, and trampled snow - which will reflect the moonlight in tiny specks.

■ If you have old small spiky brushes, which can be flattened similarly in the paint, you can find other little speckles from these brushes also, instead of the angle brush. It is fun to experiment and see what you can do with these old spiky brushes.

■ Be sure however, not to cover the blue and blue grays beneath entirely, as you could lose the effects of the broken snow and their shadows, try it a little at a time.

The moon

■ Take a dry angle brush, or Silver Brush #1; do not dip in the turpenoid to thin it. Touch it to the Titanium White paint, and a little Mixing White, or flake white, and just gently dab the brush haphazardly on the moon. Blot with the towel.

■ Take a soft mop, which must be perfectly dry, and drag the dry paint from the moon outwards around it with the mop, fluffing the mop around as you go. Frequently remove the paint the mop has picked up by wiping it in a clean paper towel but do not clean it in the Turpenoid, return to the painting and press and drag the paint which is now left on the moon, outwards and rub away and into the night colors. Don't let it stay lumpy on the painting, if this occurs substitute the mop with the paper towel. Putting the paint on this way is known as scumbling, frequently used by artists in all sizes to make clouds.

■ I also went over the painting by rubbing mixing white, which is transparent, into the reflection of the lake and on the white of the snow on the path. This has the effect of softening out the blues in the path also. With Titanium White on the fine brush pulled to a point, dot in snow in the crooks of the branches of the tree.

Return to the bushes

■ Return to the bushes laid in the background and following the reference picture, stipple in some darker colors over the lighter ones, near to the bottom. Use Paynes Gray mixed with Green Umber, or Olive Green for the darkest stipples, add in Phthalo Blue (just a hint) to make a glow to the bushes. Add white to Ultramarine Blue to make blue toned snow, and touch to the lightest side and upper area of the bushes.

■ Similarly lightly stipple at the base of the bushes in front left of the picture in front of the lake, darken at bottom, add lighter

colors higher up, and pale blues stippled here and there for the snow. Stipples should be as tiny as possible. Blot and allow to dry.

■ Check raised areas, and buff or sand as necessary, rub in Liquin light gel, allow to dry. Then mix the triple shadow color, Rose Madder, Viridian and Paynes Gray, with the light gel and with your sable brush glaze all over the left of the painting, including the tree, and bring it over the pale blue in front of the painting.

■ Go to the left corner and glaze there as well, and also the top left of the painting.

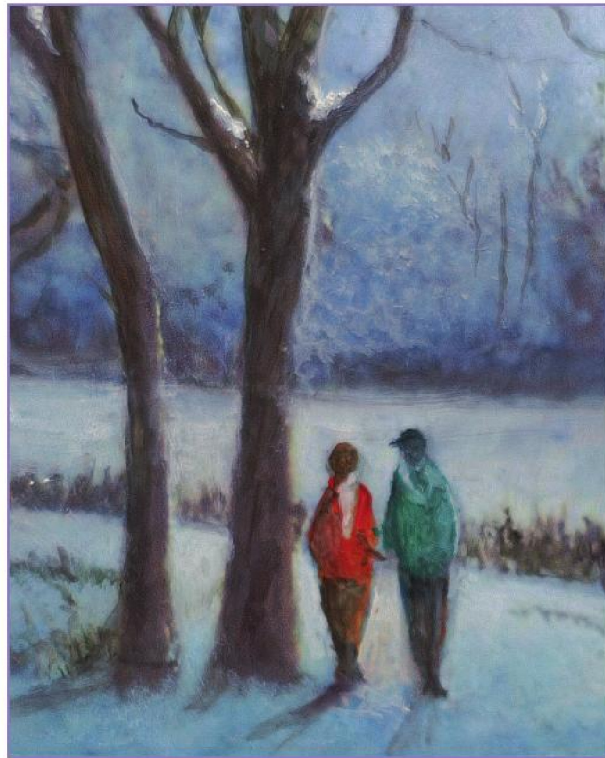
Take the paper towel and rub the color gently in towards, but not over, the moon, this will allow the moon to shine a little brighter, and pull together the night shadows, making the most of light on the path, the figures (when you paint them) and the reflections in the lake.

■ This process could be repeated if you want the night to be darker. Allow to get tacky. Point your series 7 #1 brush into the Turpenoid, tap it to the towel, then twirl the point in the Titanium White, hold the brush so that the fine tip is almost horizontal, and touch in specks of snow on the pale blue specks you painted earlier. The tacky surface will accept the paint softly and some will merge with the tacky surface. Take the side of a clean mop, and holding it on its side gently tap over the applications of snow.

The figures

■ Before beginning this stage, the painting should be buffed; Liquin gel rubbed in and allowed to dry.

■ Now let's start painting on the little figures. Choose the color you like for their clothes; however, if you use complementary colors or dissonant colors, this small addition of bright color should be rather



Close up of figures.

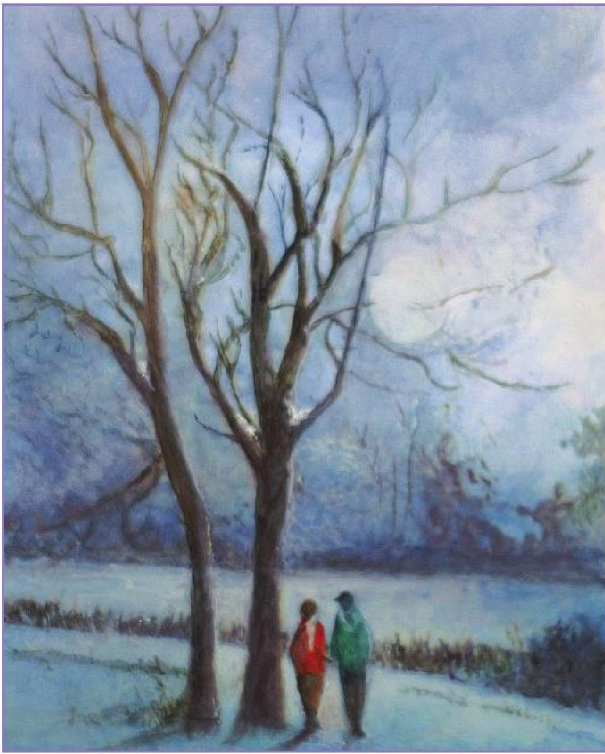
cooler and quiet colors can be enchanting.

■ For the girl, I under painted her coat in Cadmium Red, and the man's coat in a pale layer of Permanent Green. I allowed both to dry and, in the meantime, painted her pants in a thin layer of Burnt Sienna and his pants a pale layer of Paynes Gray, allowing both to dry.

■ Green is the complement of red on the color wheel. When Red and Green are laid side by side both become more brilliant to the eye. I made their boots with a few dots of Burnt Umber mixed with Paynes Gray, and used the same mix for her hair. The man's cap was painted in Paynes Gray. Prepare by dipping the series 7 brush into the Turpenoid, touching it to the towel then the paint and twirled to a fine point. The paint was then dotted in to make the cap and its peak. Holding your breath during the painting of tiny dots and lines will make your hand very steady.

■ When the figures are dry, go over them again adding another layer of color. Do not try to lay a color over another color if it is still wet, this will result only in an ugly lump.

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Sparkle of snow in the crooks and twigs of the tree.

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Make sure you allow it to dry, this will take only about an hour or so, as both Liquin and turpenoid aid in drying. But it is worth waiting for to get the bright touch of color, which you need. When this layer is dry, glaze in the body shadow to the left of her coat and the left of her pants with the triple shadow color (Paynes Gray, Rose Madder & Viridian). Shade the man similarly.

■ The triple shadow mix can be used for the color of any thrown shadows. I have used it to throw the shadows behind the figures and the tree in the painting. It is a good mix to remember, as it closely resembles actual shadows. Thrown or cast shadows as they are called are transparent and one can see details through them. It is difficult to get this illusion when using watercolors, but when using oil colors it is extremely easy especially if one knows the suitable color.

■ The objects are painted just as they are without any shadowing then, following the angle of a bright light hitting the object, a shadow is cast behind it, the higher the light, such as the sun, and where it is situated in the sky controls the length and size of light hitting an object and the shadow cast behind it.

■ A body shadow, however, is made when there is direct light in front of an object but not much light behind it. In softer light cast shadows are not well seen, but body shadows are formed when the light is not bright enough to light the object all around. Everything seen in any light has a shadow; even the smallest drop of water, and it is worth remembering that this finesse should also apply to a miniature however small it is.

■ This is why I have shadowed the backs of figures and as the moonlight facing them is very bright. Now we should perk up the

light hitting them from the moon. Take a very tiny spot of the intense red or bright red and dot it to her shoulder. Take Permanent Green with white, and touch it lightly to the man's green coat where the moonlight hits it. A touch of yellow ochre with white would illuminate the man's right leg just a dot.

■ The girl's leg should catch a little light dot of Burnt Sienna with white on her upper thigh. Shadows should be added to the left and middle of the tree trunks these should be just glazed on with the point of the smallest series 7 brush. The shadows at the back of the tree are body shadows. Shadows thrown by the tree are thrown shadows.

■ With a magnifying glass, look at the reference picture of the completed painting and check to see where you need to add minuscule shadows. Use the triple shadow color for it; by the way, cast shadows only need to be laid on once to allow the detail to come through them.

■ Allow the painting to thoroughly dry, buff as usual, and rub in the Liquin Light Gel and allow this to dry.

■ Go over the moon again with Titanium White and trim the edge to sharpen it. If you have put branches across the moon as I

have in the painting, and accidentally brush over them with the white, just clean and point the brush and carefully lift off the tiny line to restore the branch.

■ Check out the sparkle of the snow in the crooks and twigs of the tree and brighten if necessary with a dot of white on the point of the brush.

■ Remember to check any bits on the work. If the silk pad does not remove all of them, a very good fine sander can be purchased for very little from Home Depot. It is 4" yellow in color and is called Norton 3 X ultra fine grit. This will take off small particles without scratching the painting at all. One side is used for sanding, the other side for buffing. However, try the silk first. Even with the silk, the first two glazes might come off if you rub too hard, so be careful.

Signing the painting

■ When you are satisfied with the painting, sign it at the bottom, making sure that you allow enough room from the edge



Signing your name completes it.

so that the frame does not obscure it.

■ This is the hardest part, so if you are concerned about it just use your initials. If however you want to have a go at it use the magnifying glass. Sit comfortably resting your wrist on the lip of or slope of the easel. Dip the brush in Turpenoid, pull through the towel, and then twirl the point into a color that will show up. I used Paynes Gray.

■ Twirl the series 7 brush to a point and paint the first letter. For small case e's do a c first then add a slanted line. For letters with two straight lines, like H for instance do the straight legs first then add the cross pieces. If you can bear to leave the parts of the letters to dry, then come back and add the final strokes this will work. Most people like to give it a full go! Holding your breath is necessary for each letter.

Varnishing your painting

■ The only varnish I can recommend for the delicate glazes used in Miniature Painting on Ivory or Ivorine, especially the dollhouse size, is Schmincke Matte film 408. It is made in Germany but has been tested in the USA for CFC's and VOC's.



Beautifully framed.

■ Schmincke Varnish is obtainable from Dick Blick Catalog, and Jerry's Artarama, also from Masterpiece Art. Contact Schmincke at www.Schmincke.de if you cannot find it.

■ The wrong varnish can destroy many paintings. A Damar content once caused one of my Miniatures to crackle the paint! If you have a varnish that you think you can use, paint a few glazes of color on Ivorine, let it dry and test the varnish out, wait several days, as some varnishes can darken the work.

■ Remember you are using a translucent ground, transparent and semi transparent paints also. Even test the Schmincke before you apply it. To do this lay the work flat on a paper. Wear a mask and spray lightly from about two feet away. The spray will land on the painting in little dots.

■ Allow to dry (about five minutes) Spray again, this time getting nearer and letting the dots fill in, but do not let it get heavily wet. Wait at least half an hour before touching it to see if it is dry - an hour is better. If the varnish is not smooth, spray a third time making sure that the painting is resting level, and leave it untouched overnight under a protection from dust blowing from an air conditioner or open window. It is safer to use a spray varnish as brushing could remove the paint, especially if the varnish is too strong.

■ After total drying, the shine will turn into

a matt finish. You can however make it into soft shine by vigorously buffing with your silk pads. You will be amazed at the lovely finish. I protect my paintings and their frames from air pollution by adding a spray of pledge. I have used it ever since Pledge first appeared on the market many years ago. This also brings up more soft shine and enhances the colors in the painting.

■ Finally, trim the painting to the frame. It is advisable to trim the Ivorine to the frame before beginning; however, Ivorine can be cut with scissors and trimmed at the end if you wish. As Ivorine is translucent, place a thin white acid free card behind the painting.

■ If you intend to glue your painting to the backing use ONLY Scotch 3M Glue. This has been tested for mounting Ivorine with perfect results over an equivalent of 100 years; I do not recommend any other glue. DMM



The artist strikes a pose.

Personalities painted by Joan Cornish Willies
 Royal Society of Miniature Painters, RMS. MAA. HS. WSMPG



The late Rudolf Nureyev
 Owner: Princess Helene Obolensky



Mis Barbara Walters Owner



Mr Mike Wallace
 Owner



Mr Paul Hogan
 Owner Mrs Rilla Underwood (family)



Miss Haley Malls, Owner



The late Earnest Hemingway
 Owner Member of the American Diabetes Association



Mrs Dietgard Bindel
 Owner



Joan captures various celebrities in miniature.