

## Exploring Home

Tara Murdock

### Abstract

*This series is an exploration of watercolor that has allowed me to explore the medium while depicting something very personal. Throughout my life, my family has traveled to Vermont. The scenery has always left me in awe and inspired me to create. I've always had this idea to depict scenery from the state, but it wasn't until I discovered watercolor that my idea fully came to fruition. I narrowed my concept down to depicting my favorite places at my home away from home. Through these paintings, I used color to express the emotions attached to the locations. It challenged me to think about the use of color and the emotional connection they can create with the viewer. Although it's not a medium I was used to, my exploration pushed my artwork to grow in numerous ways.*

The work I chose to present represents a series of artwork inspired by scenery in Vermont. The concept was created upon being given my final project assignment. It gave me the opportunity to express the serenity I feel when in nature, and in Vermont. It's always been an escape and a place that my family considers a home away from home. Having learned the skills and techniques of watercolor, I was motivated to use them in a way that brought my concept to fruition.

I started each painting by sketching the scenery using a photo reference. Using a reference photo has continuously been a critical part in my painting process. This helps me in conveying the beauty of the scenery. From these photos, I can examine things such as the temperature of the tones, as well as shadows and highlight. After

sketching, I would then begin to apply the watercolors. For this, I use the wet-on-dry technique. This simply means that the paint is applied on a dry piece of paper rather than a dampened one. This technique gives more control in the application which is important when adding details like leaves and branches. I also explored ways in achieving different textures by using a variety of tools, such as a sponge. Each painting is done one at a time as I tend to focus on the detail of one painting, rather than dividing my attention between multiple.

This series strays from the themes of my previous work. I predominantly work with ceramics, but classes at Millersville have allowed me to explore other mediums. In these different classes, I have mainly focused on portraying the figure and still lives. Throughout this process, I have been

influenced by the watercolor artist, Graham Nickson. His landscape paintings evoke many emotions in the viewer, which is something I wish to achieve. I hope that this series allows the viewer to appreciate the beauty of nature and can relate to the feeling

they get when thinking of their happy place. I plan to expand this series as I continue to take photos of the scenery in the state. In the future, I hope to broaden my paintings to sceneries in different states as well.

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**Recommended Citation**

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