Ruby Theobald
--my sustained investigation--

I asked how I could bring inanimate scenes to life, so I chose buildings as my theme: a setting without visible people. I wanted to create a specific mood with each painting using color and detail, but I wanted them to all fit together, so I asked if I could unify them using just my own color palette.

I wanted the set to be unified by color but tried to avoid making every painting look too similar. I tried doing #6 bigger to change up the sizing, but I found that I prefer staying small because it lets me work more intimately with each painting. In fact, I was completing work #8 at the same time and I had more fun doing tiny details than just big blocks of color like in work #6.

Work #9 was a darker-toned oil painting, so I chose to do work #6 in oil to see if I could still get depth using lighter colors. I loved the outcome, but because it was a large size and in oil, it took me longer to complete. I didn't do any more oil paintings, but I decided that I would stick with a lighter color palette.

After completing work #7 I found that I love the detail that words add to the scene, so I found buildings with words to do for works #2, 5, 8, and 10.

rubytheo

Rooftops

Watercolor
11x14
NFS

This piece shows the difference between the life that is easily visible and the life that takes place farther in the distance. The windows in the foreground are not as clean or detailed as the elements at the very back of the scene, making the viewer's eye travel to a place it wouldn't typically dwell.

Biscuiteers

Watercolor
11x14
NFS

This piece shows a shop in London that displays a small-town atmosphere. The straight-on perspective along with the focus in the center creates the feeling that this store is a world of its own. In contrast to the colder surroundings, the warmth inside the windows gives life to the scene.

Somewhere in Paris, France

Watercolor

8x12

NFS

This piece uses clean lines and simple color to show modest elegance. There are some overlapping elements, but the sharpness of the lines keeps the view uncluttered and neat. It uses only 2 basic colors, but it effectively creates gentle contrast that helps the eye travel from one detail to the next. The simplicity of the scene creates a sense of tranquility and order.

Whitewall Tires

Watercolor

8x10

NFS

This piece shows how satisfying simplicity can be. At first glance, it's relatively straightforward, but when you look closer, there are a lot of details that offer character to the scene: the steps and plants, the railing and windows, the bicycle, and the bricks. However, the most important detail may be the window, because it shows that this world extends beyond the white wall.

Fine Ales

Watercolor

9x12

NFS

This piece has a very intimate mood, and the composition pulls you into the small cafe feeling. The little details, like the reflections on the pavement and the light in the windows, help create a complete world that the viewer wants to be a part of.

Fine Ales (detail)

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NFS

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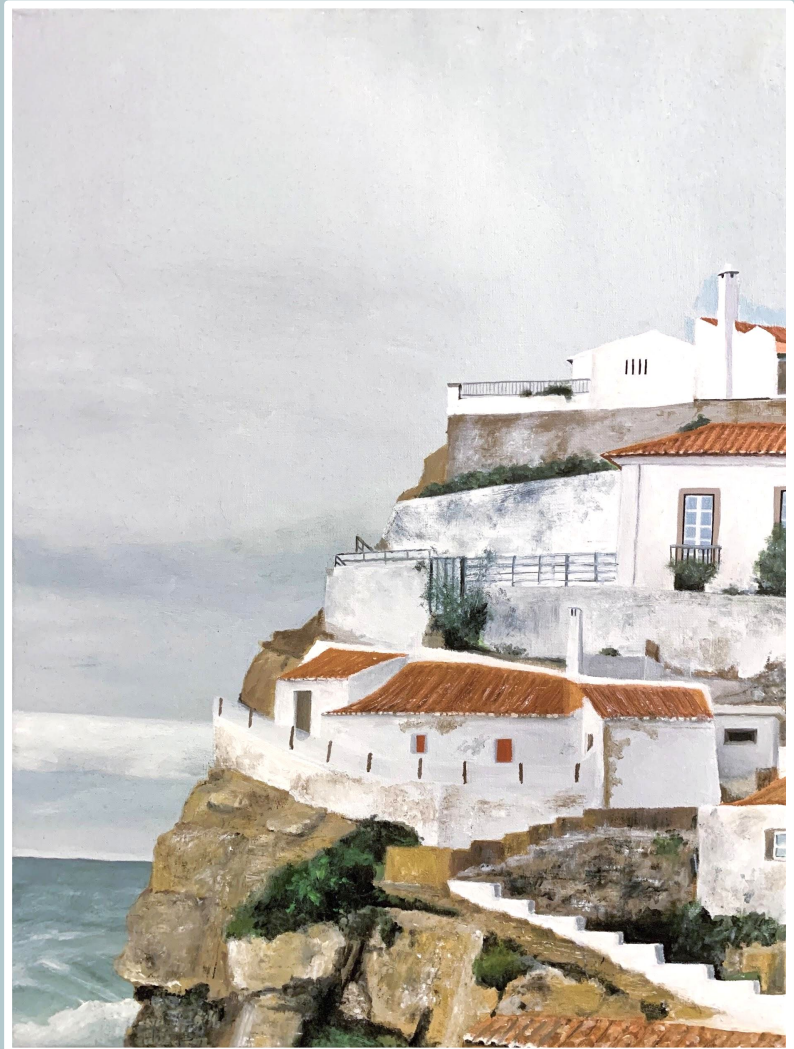
Portugal

Oil on stretched canvas
18x24
NFS

This piece uses blocks of color rather than precise detail to draw the viewer in. The stacked and overlapped layers allow for a sense of depth in the otherwise flat image. This scene uses different shades of white against darker greens and oranges to create a sense of brightness and liveliness.

No Right Turn

Watercolor

9x12

NFS

This New York day is bustling with activity, but even though there are suggestions of people, the element that gives it the most life is the color and light. The inanimate buildings are brought to life by all the little details in the scene: the contrast created by the position of the sun, the pops of bright red in the signs and traffic lights, the reflections in the windows. The depth created by the fading color down the street leads the eye even farther into this world.

Amstel 34

Watercolor
8x12
NFS

This piece presents itself as a portrait of three Dutch buildings, but it also hints at there being more there than the eye can see. The buildings are relatively flat, and, if not for the windows, their height would create a wall that the stops the viewer from going any deeper. But being able to just barely see into some of the windows teases the idea that there is so much life just beyond our immediate view.

Amstel 34 (detail)

Watercolor

8x12

NFS

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New York Moment

Oil on canvas
9x12
NFS

This wintry New York day pulls the viewer in, making them want to travel from the outside to the center, where the most life seems to be happening. The contrast of the bright colored cars and lights against the slick road and shadowy buildings creates a sense of both warmth and coldness simultaneously. The street feels enclosed and almost protected by the looming buildings, creating a sense of intimacy in a big-city setting.
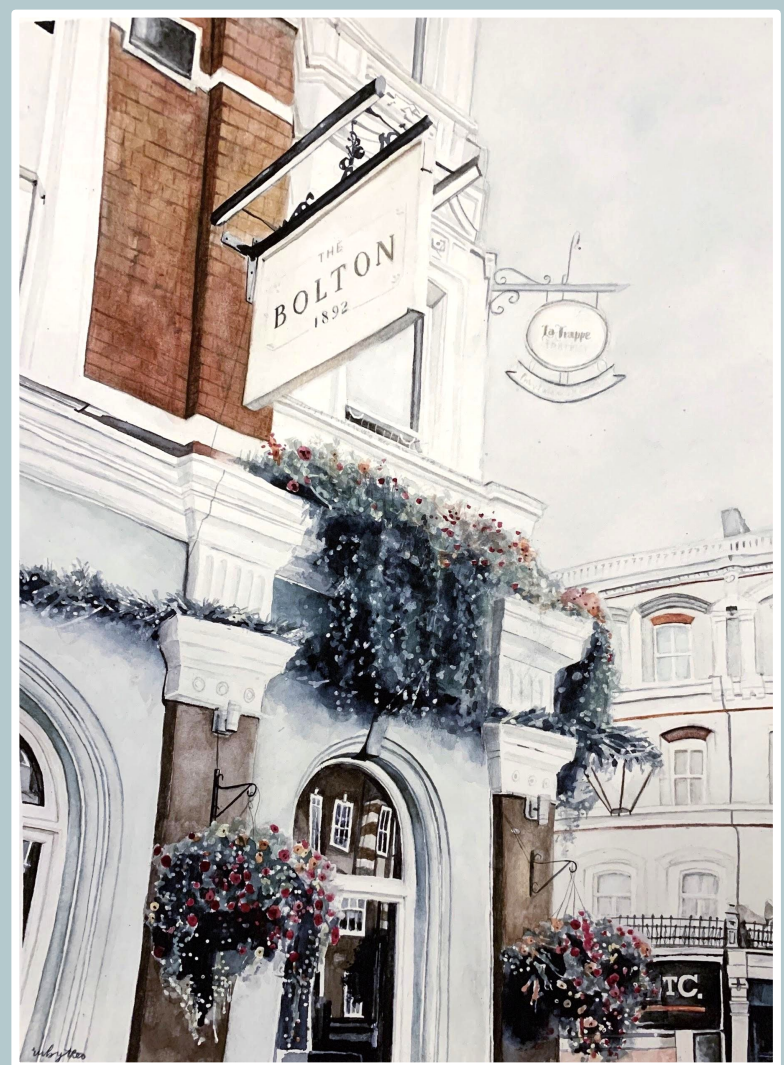
The Bolton

Watercolor

11x14

NFS

This piece focuses on the beauty of soft contrast and a simple color palette. It uses mostly variations in hue and value of the same two basic colors, which unifies all the elements of the scene. The intricate details help create an immaculate world of precision. The plants growing on the building represent the idea that this building houses life, and this reflects what we can assume is happening inside--life and growth.

The Bolton (detail)

Watercolor

11x14

NFS

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