

# The fastest brush in the West shares her secrets

Macaulay's quick-draw technique allows anyone to "journal" wherever they are in the world

LONG BEACH, Wash. — She might be the fastest brush in the West.

In the time it takes other plein air artists to set up their easel and lay out their paints, Kath Macaulay will have two new scenes drying in her "journal." Using only the basic art supplies she can fit into a compact fanny pack, Macaulay will crank out one stunning watercolor after another — none taking more than 25 minutes.

Her workshop, Pocket Sketching for Fun and Travel, is coming June 14-16 at the Breakers in Long Beach, 210 26th St. NW, sponsored by Wiegardt Gallery. Phone Wiegardt Studio Gallery at 360-665-5976, or go to [info@ericwiegardt.com](mailto:info@ericwiegardt.com) for information and reservations.

Macaulay said the hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. each of three days. The tuition is \$225 per person. You can request a supply list; however, supplies for each participant will be available for \$45 for the package.

Based in Tucson, Ariz., Macaulay's quick-draw technique allows anyone to "journal" wherever they are in the world using only a 4-by-6 art pad, a pen, a small paint set, a brush and a film canister of water — all neatly stashed in her portable kit.

"Take it anywhere and you can whip it out in a minute," Macaulay said. "And there's no cleanup."

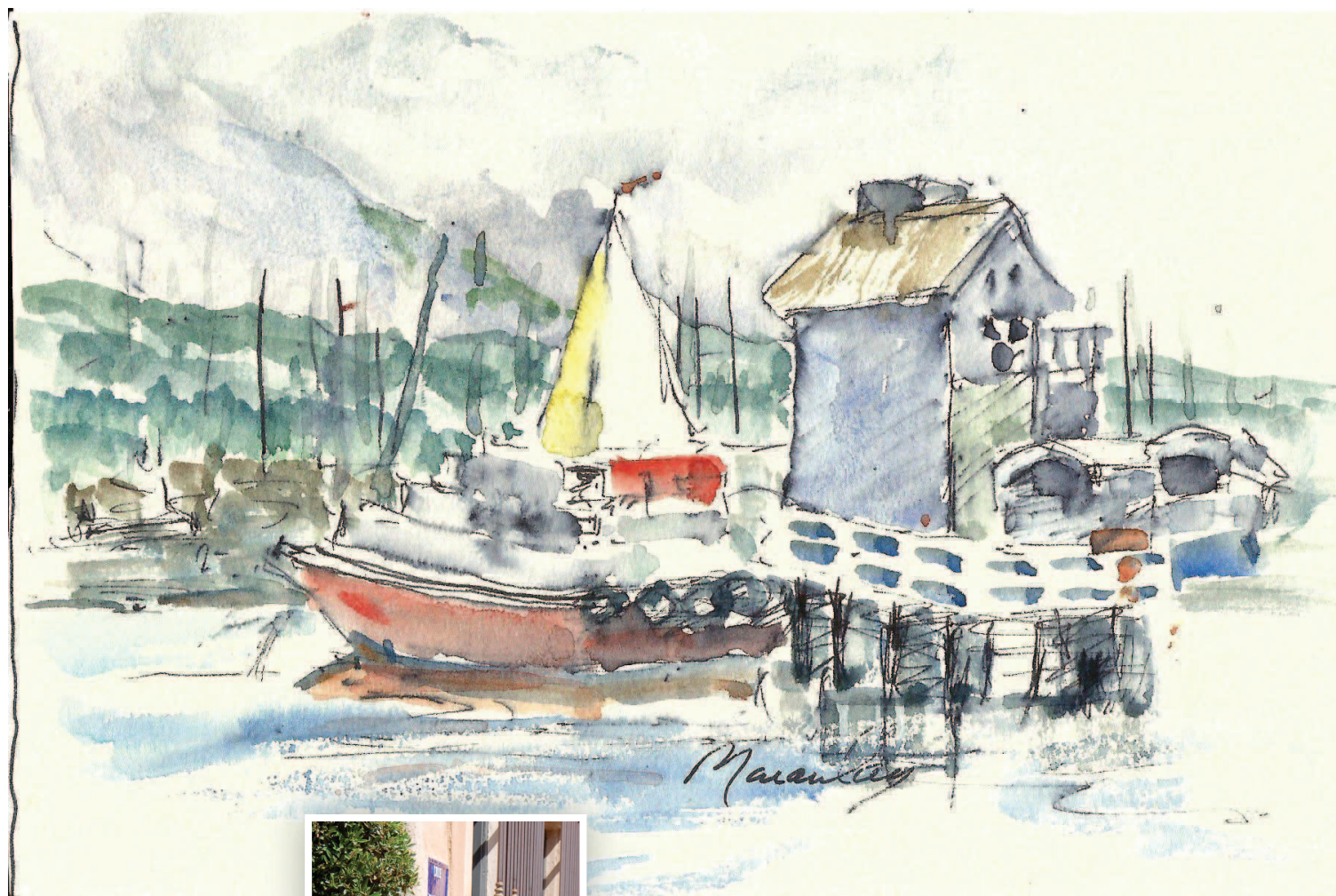
Macaulay travels the country teaching her technique. The workshops are attended by both professional artists and those who have had no experience since grade school. The format is intensive and very hands-on — almost like an art boot camp.

At a recent class in Whitefish, Mont., she required the class to paint their lunch before eating, and every painting had to be completed in 25 minutes or less.

"If you have more time, you'll paint every detail and you'll hate it," she explained. "You'll ruin any energy the painting has."

She compared the technique to sketches by renowned Western artist Charlie Russell. "They are fresh, it's what you see right now," she said. "You don't work it to death."

In 20 minutes you know if the painting is good or bad," Macaulay said. "If it's not promising, it's just delightful to say 'I'm



outta here. I only spent 20 minutes out of my life."

Her technique was born out of a trip to Glacier National Park in northwest Montana. Macaulay had set up her paints and easel and set to work when a big rainstorm moved in. She was soaked by the time she packed up her gear and ran back to the car.

"There was paint everywhere — even in my hair," she said. "With this technique, if it rains or a grizzly bear shows up, you just leave. It's perfect for hiking."

She'll use her journals as a way to document trips instead of using a camera.

"It's a travel log," she said. "If I see something, I can quickly stop and paint."

It's also ideal for timid artists who want to paint in public. An easel attracts atten-



Kath Macaulay

tion, but pocket sketching is done inside your personal space. "No one is looking over your shoulder critiquing your work," she said.

Perhaps the biggest benefit is seeing the world in a whole new light like a little kid. It's almost like getting cataracts removed: people comment after the first day, "I see colors I've never noticed before all around me. My whole outlook has changed in one day of class!"

Macaulay was one of the few artists invited to be on faculty at the Plein Air Convention and Expo held last April in San Diego. The photo of her working, fully equipped, is in her newly published book "Pocket Sketching, the Portable Workshop." Her motto is "Learn enough to play for a lifetime."

Santa Barbara by Kath Macaulay



Bouncing Kids by Kath Macaulay