

5 TALENTED ARTISTS TO WATCH

# Watercolor artist

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Every Beginner  
Should Know  
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THE EVOLUTION OF  
**STYLE**

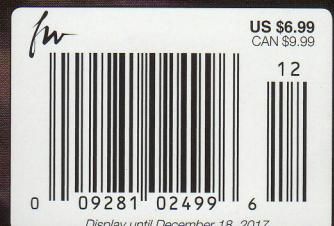
3 Artists, 3 Paths  
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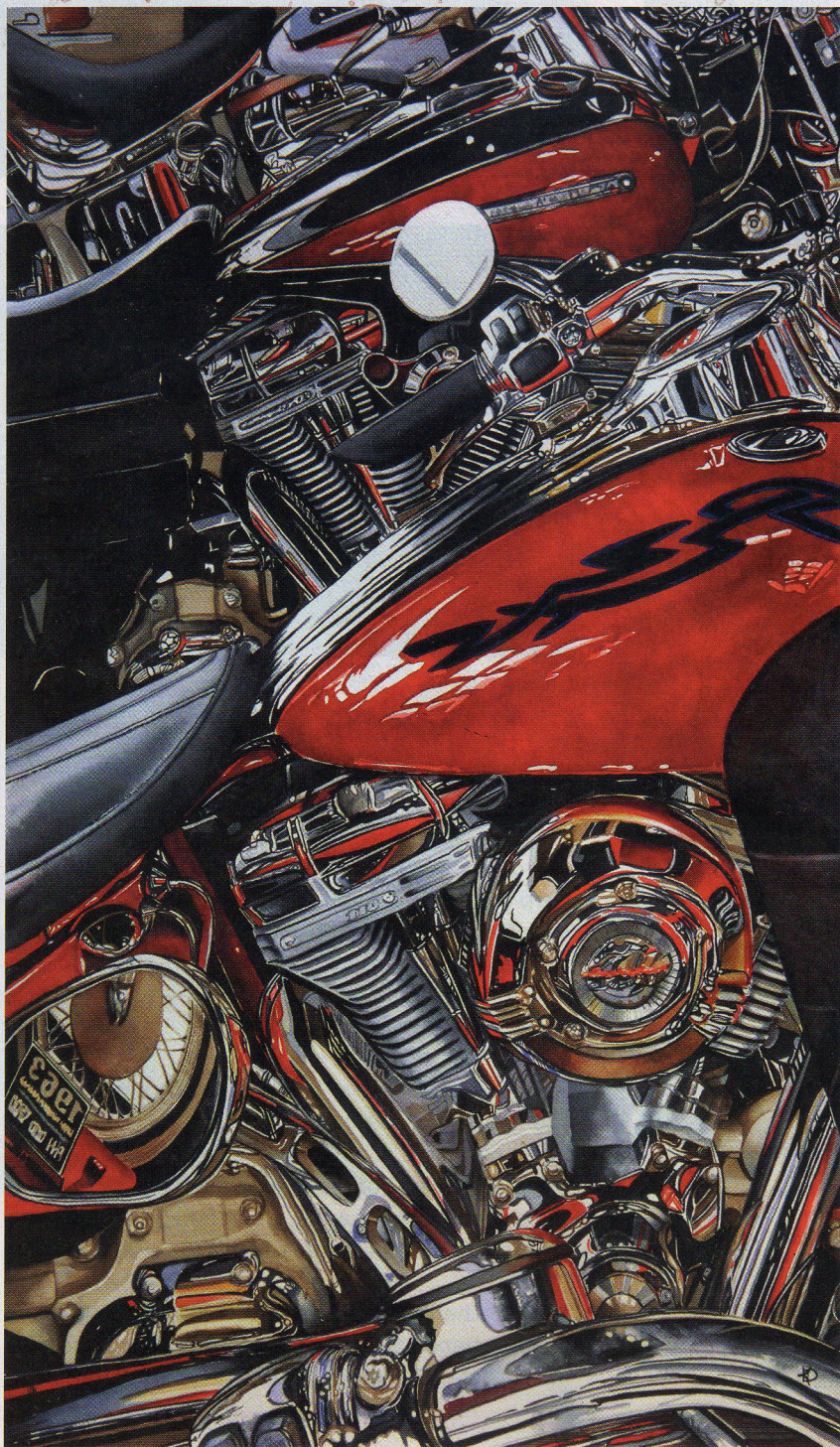
The Secret to Painting Chrome?  
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## Ticket to Ride

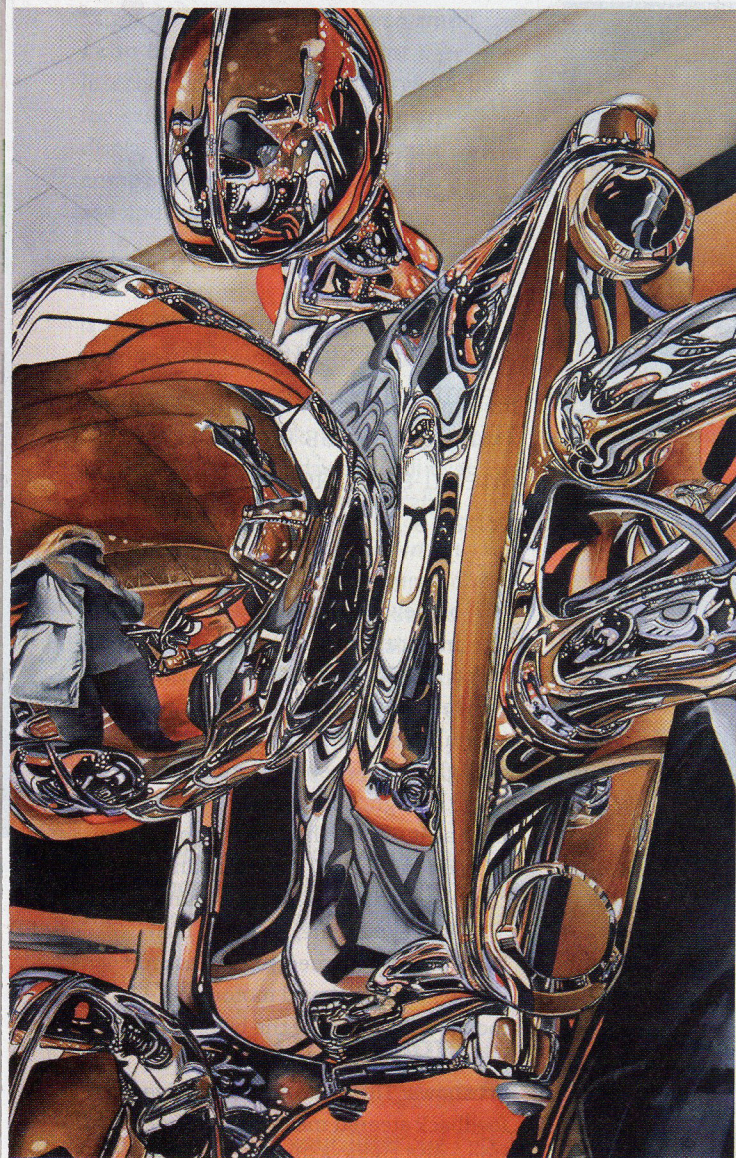
Learn the secret to painting chrome. (Hint: It's less about the metal and more about what's reflected in it.)

**Y**ou never know where or when inspiration will strike. Case in point: I took a workshop at which I learned how to paint flowers and crystal. The instructor demonstrated how glass is transparent and allows light through, but crystal refracts the light as it passes through. Chrome, on the other hand, is opaque and completely reflects its environment.

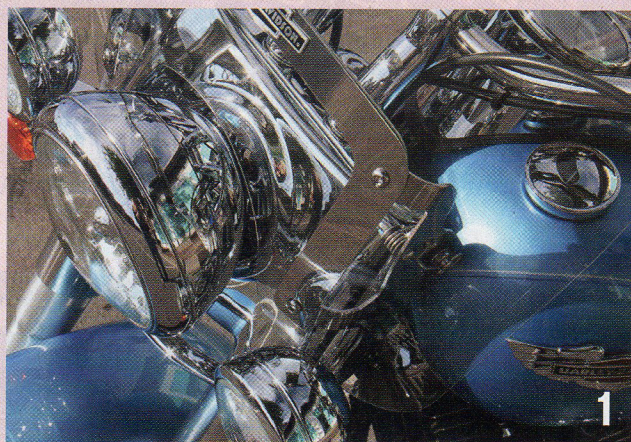
When I got home, I told my husband what I'd learned, and he asked if I'd paint his beloved motorcycle. I took lots of photos of the bike, painted it and entered the work into local art shows. The awards and positive feedback steered me in a new direction—and I was ready for the ride.

**Chrome and Mirrors** (watercolor on paper, 24x14) is my latest motorcycle painting. I saw this lineup of bikes at a dealership and immediately took some photos. I especially liked the reflections in the mirrors. I used frisket on the white reflections and on the black artwork on the red tank. I rarely use frisket, but in this case, it was necessary to achieve the effects I wanted.





**Reflections on a London Harley** (watercolor on paper, 21½x15½) wasn't the composition I was expecting from the visions I had of scenes I might capture while on vacation in London. When we visited a dealership, I anticipated painting a lineup of bikes outside, their modern silhouettes juxtaposed against a backdrop of classic architecture. It was pouring rain during our visit, however, so I could only take photos inside the dealership. I turned an unexpected situation into a positive one, though. Good indoor lighting and a different color profile resulted in a more interesting painting. (That's my reflection in the headlight.)



## painting reflections

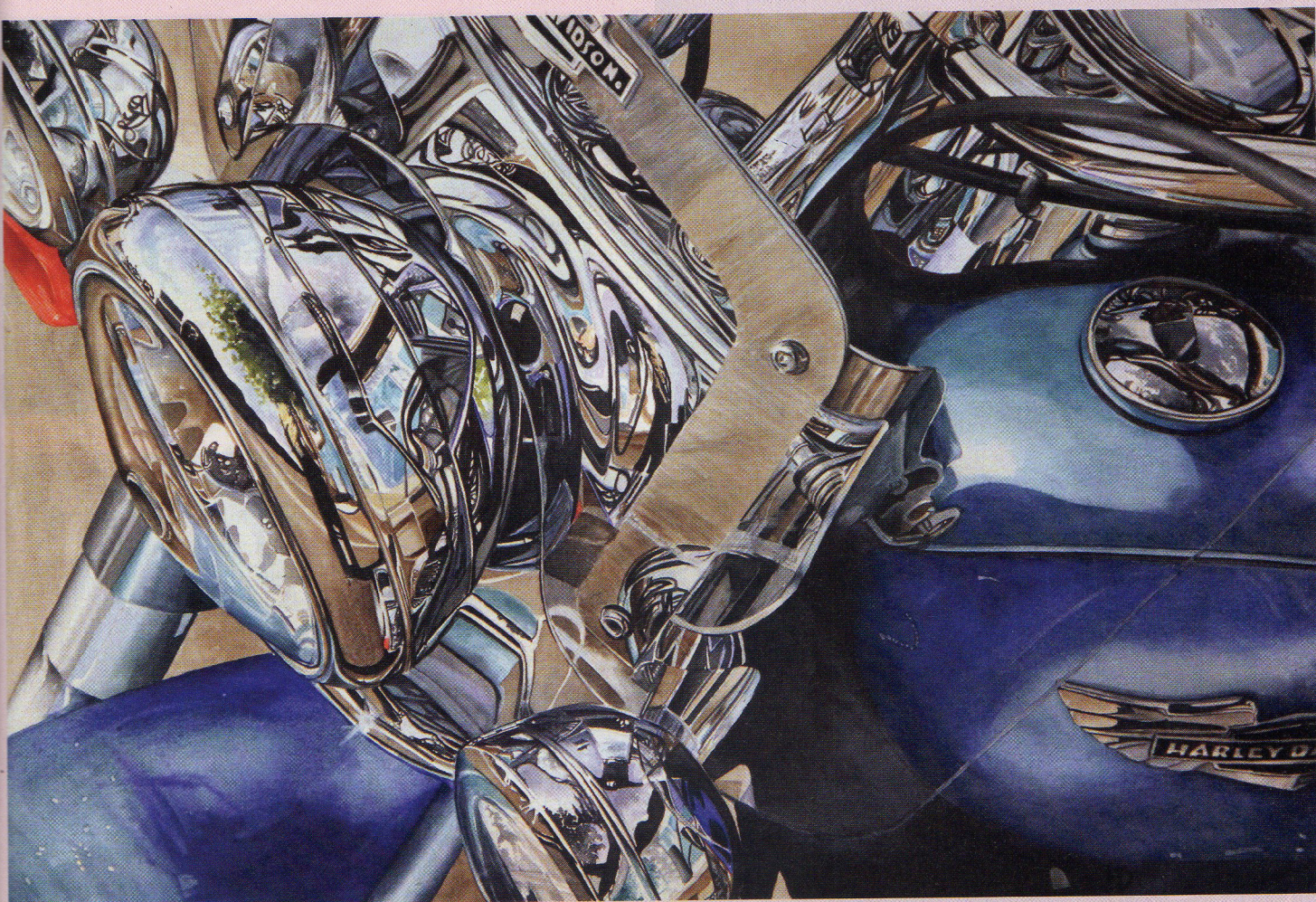
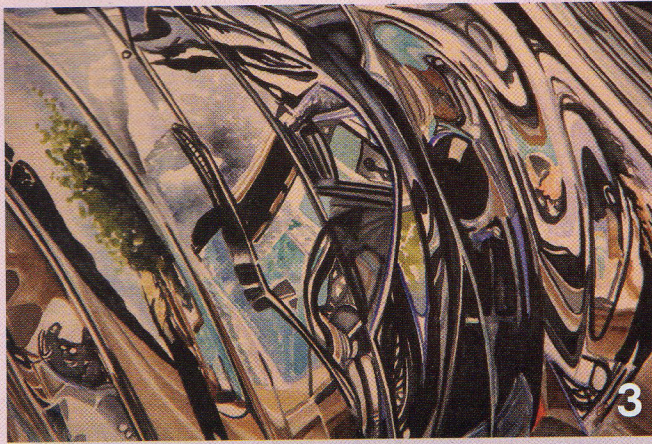
**Step 1:** A photo is always my entry point to one of my motorcycle paintings. It's the foundation for a realistic effect.

**Step 2:** When working on chrome reflections, it's important to remember that all the closeup detail work eventually will coalesce into a recognizable image. Here, it just looks like some random lines and color layers.

**Step 3:** Pulling further back, the motorcycle parts still don't resemble anything. I just keep following my detailed drawing and layer in the grays to achieve the level of darkness I need. It's possible to begin to recognize the green foliage of the tree leaves reflected in the headlight.

**Step 4:** There are lots of reflected surfaces here. It's now becoming more evident that these are motorcycle headlights. Again, the parts made of





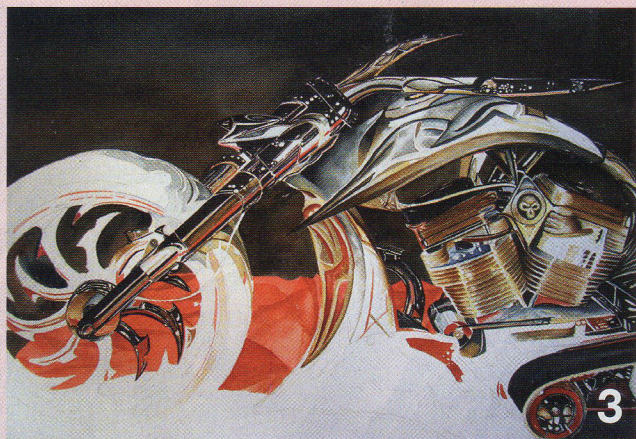
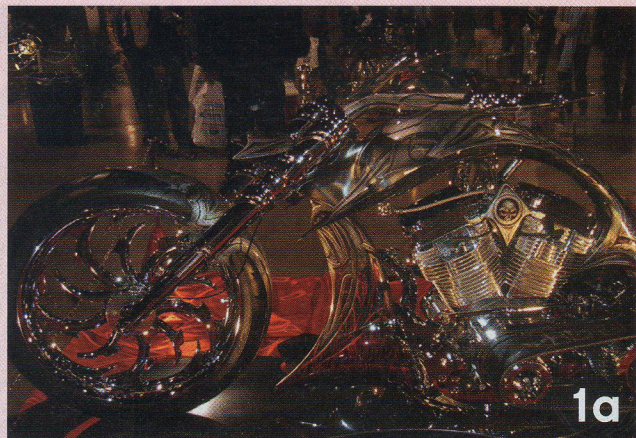
I used Winsor blue, cobalt blue and a bit of turquoise to build the body of the bike in **Reflections in Blue** (watercolor on paper, 14x21). The black is comprised of layers of Payne's gray, and the whites are just the white of the paper surface.

chrome simply reflect the environment. I'm not thinking about what it is that I'm actually painting, I'm just thinking about painting the actual shapes that I see.





**American Chrome** (watercolor on paper, 20"x13½") is based on a visit to a San Francisco Harley-Davidson dealership on a sunny day. This work received its name because of its red, white and blue color scheme. I created a really dark background to call more attention to the headlights.



## making chrome shine

**Step 1:** I spent several weeks referencing the photo (1a) and creating the motorcycle drawing. Because I was painting machinery, it was especially important that it be rendered accurately.

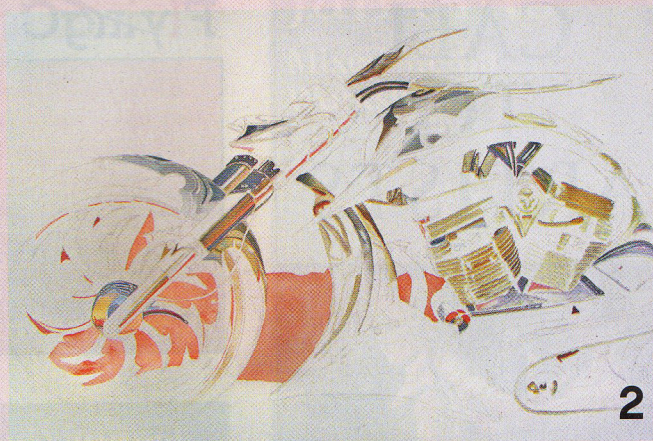
Once I was completely satisfied with the drawing, I transferred it onto a sheet of watercolor paper (1b). I paint exclusively on Winsor & Newton 140-lb. cold-pressed paper, which provides a vivid white base that allows reflections to stand out. The reflections are actually the brightness of the unpainted sections of the paper. After I transferred the image, I then put down the lightest values.

**Step 2:** With more color added, the painting slowly began to take shape. I added some darks, which helped to anchor the painting. This ensured that achieving the other values accurately would be much easier. I liked the fancy wheel spokes, so I added in a few of those reflections. They were purely chrome; no other color was reflected in

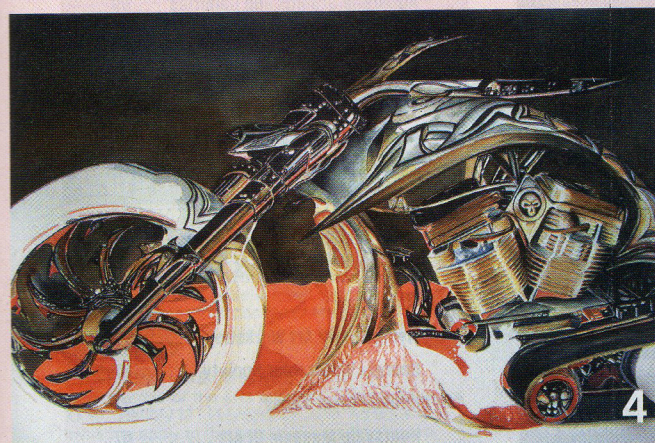




1b



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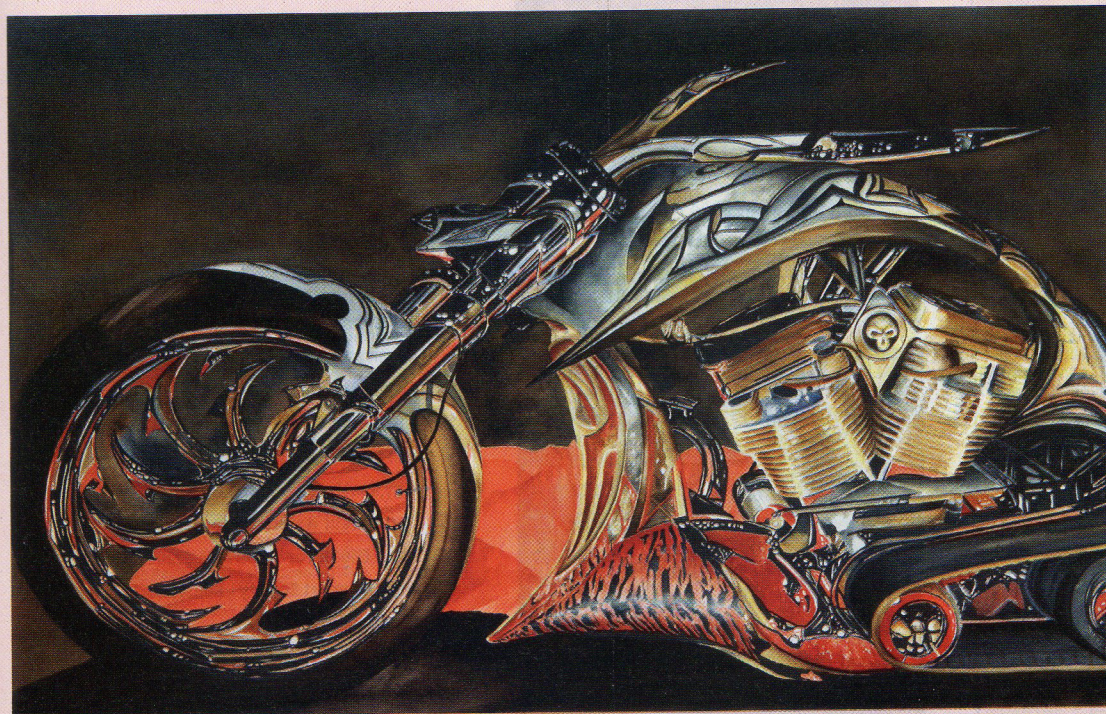
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the metal. (Note: Any colors on the spokes are purely a reflection from the surrounding environment.)

**Step 3:** I wanted a deep background to make the motorcycle “pop” off the paper. Once I painted the dark background behind it, I saw that all the time I’d spent getting the angles on the handlebars just right was worth the trouble. At this point, I could see the chrome emerge.

I glazed the grays, let them dry, and then put down more layers until I had achieved the desired value.

**Step 4:** I continued layering color and following my detailed drawing. The gold color is yellow ochre; vermilion was the perfect color for the flame. ▀



The metal in **Study in Chrome and Vermilion** (watercolor on paper, 13½x21¼) looks three-dimensional as intended, and the deep background helps the chrome—and the motorcycle—stand out.