

SCOTT ANTHONY

Grounded in Painting

Californian Scott Anthony builds guitars, works as a webmaster, and plays banjo professionally, yet he maintains his love of painting in watercolors or acrylics.

Like many people profiled in this magazine, Scott Anthony can't be defined as just a plein air painter. In fact, it would even be too limiting to say he is only a visual artist, because his creative interests include performing music, making screen prints, building guitars, painting in his studio, and sketching outdoors. But ever since he was an undergraduate at Dartmouth College, Anthony has had a passion for painting. In fact, he dropped out of a graduate studies program at Princeton University to become a full-time artist and musician. Since then, he has successfully pursued his career as a watercolor and acrylic painter, sometimes taking jobs in other fields, as with his current work as a freelance webmaster and software designer.

"My father was a textile designer in New York, and as a kid I was always interested in art," Anthony recalls. "As a kid, I tried painting with oils, but I was too impatient. In college, I started sketching and painting in watercolors, and a fortunate thing happened: A local gallery in Hanover, New Hampshire, expressed interest in exhibiting and selling my paintings. By the time I graduated, I had a substantial following among collectors.

"My major in college was biology, with a particular focus on ecology and evolutionary biology, so I did the 'sensible' thing and I started graduate school in that field. But my heart just wasn't in it. I wanted to paint and play music, so I quit school and embarked on the life I imagined for myself."

Countryside To Studio

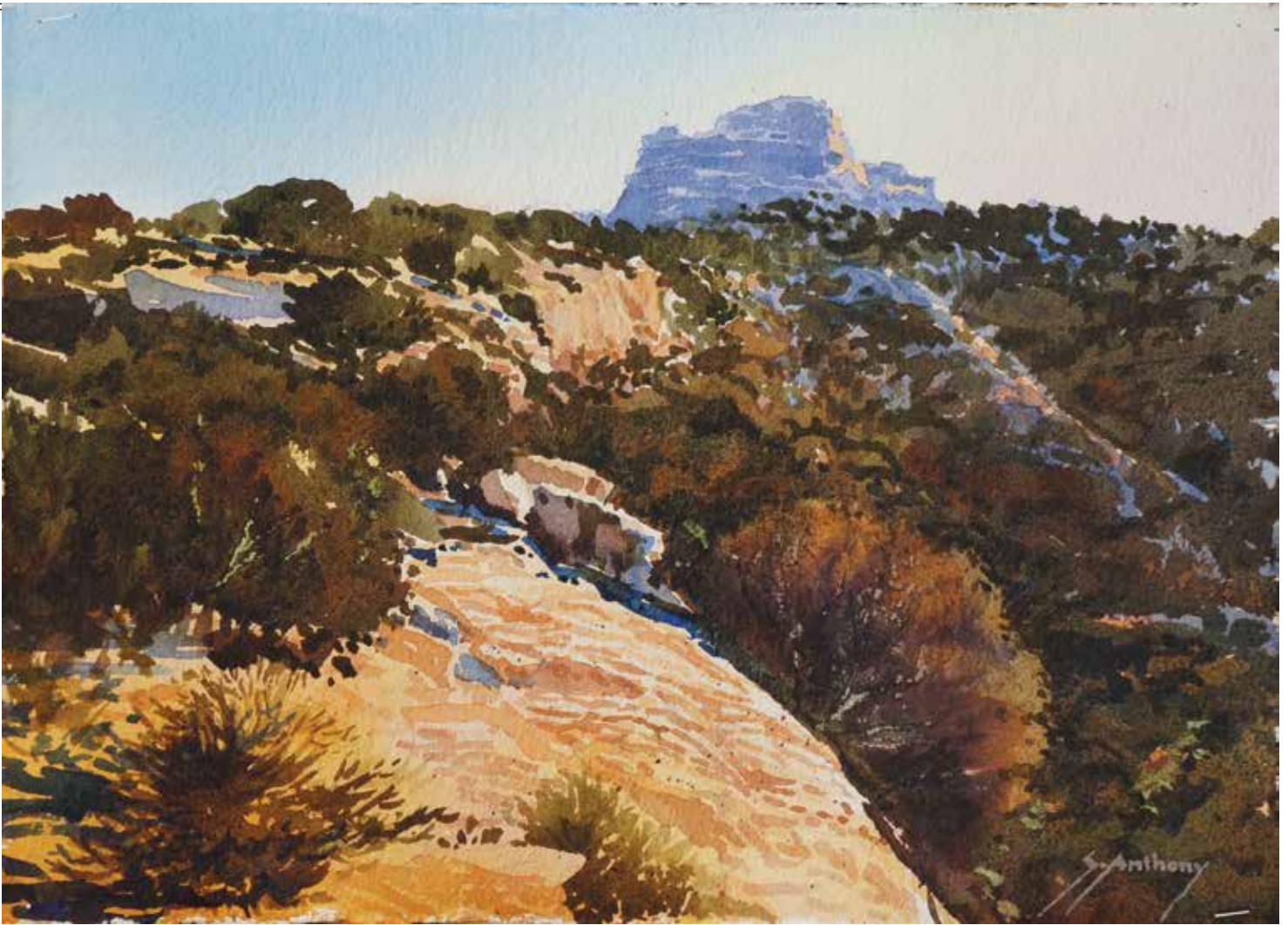
"At various times I have spent time drawing and painting outdoors, but now I prefer to work in my studio from images on a computer monitor," says Anthony. "For a number of years, I would work outdoors every week with a good friend who was a retired physician, and we



Marin Ranch
2015, watercolor, 11 x 15 in.
Collection the artist
Plein air

Marin Ranch, Sketch
2015, graphite on paper, 8 1/2 x 11 in.
Collection the artist
Plein air





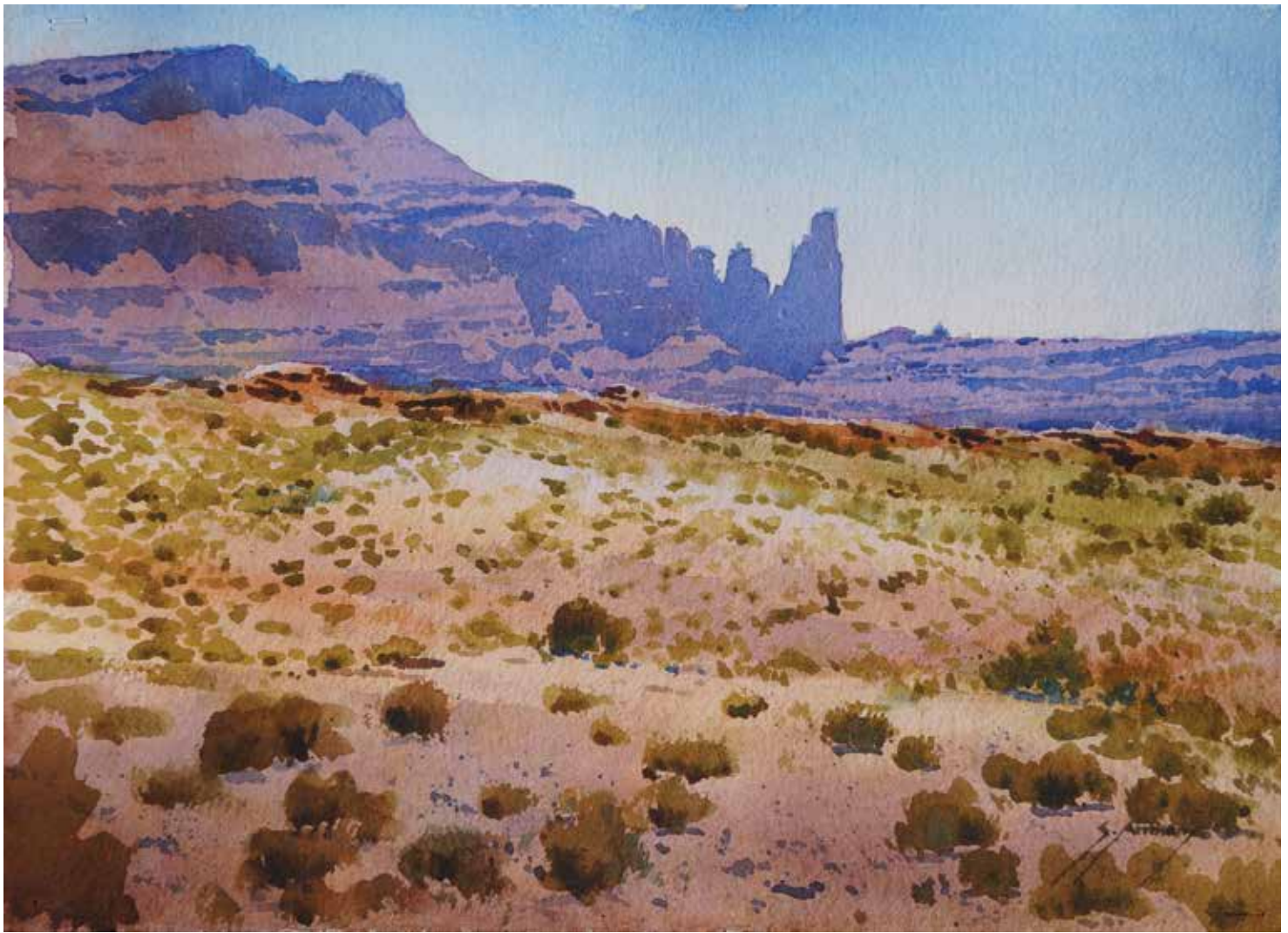
Sedimentary Colorado
2015, watercolor, 11 x 15 in.
Collection the artist
Studio



North Coast Beach
2015, acrylic on hardboard, 12 x 16 in.
Collection the artist
Studio

ARTIST DATA

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Arches National Park
2015, watercolor, 11 x 15 in.
Collection the artist
Studio

would travel all over the San Francisco Bay area and up in Marin County to draw and paint. Dr. Wright always had a red convertible, and he had a palette made that would fit over the spare tire in the trunk. We had great fun together exploring the countryside, drawing and painting, and enjoying each other's company.

"As I mentioned, I'm impatient, so sketching worked better for me than painting. And, being a computer guy, I have recently been using a digital tablet and stylus to draw. I watched some YouTube videos on how to work with the tools, and I found that drawing with the stylus is almost like using a pencil. The only limitation is that the programs are not yet conducive to 'painting' digitally for me because of the delay in making a 'stroke' and seeing it appear on the screen."

Anthony continues, "I don't consider my outdoor drawings and paintings to be finished works of art. To me, they are ideas to explore in the studio on larger sheets of paper or on hard-board panels. I prefer to paint on really good watercolor paper and have been hoarding sheets of Whatman paper from the 1970s because they are some of the finest ever made. I also paint on cold-pressed D'Arches and Jackson's Two River watercolor paper from England."

Acrylic Approaches

"Watercolors and acrylics have opposite physical properties even though they are both thinned and washed up with water," Anthony explains. "Watercolors don't dry impervious to water, so one has to be conscious of the

fact that one layer will intermix with the ones underneath. They have to be applied to paper so the pigment will stain and become embedded in the fibers. Acrylics, on the other hand, dry quickly and are impervious to water, so one can paint light colors over dark ones without concern for the layers intermixing.

"I use Winsor & Newton watercolors that I buy in large tubes, and when I paint with acrylics I use Liquitex brand standard paints. For years I used Liquitex Modular Color acrylics because the colors were pre-mixed according to a graduated value — light and dark — system that corresponded to a color chart. They were very helpful to someone like me who has a mathematical mind but who is impatient with a trial-and-error system of color mixing. Unfortunately, Liquitex

**Litigator**

2006, acrylic on hardboard, 16 x 24 in.

Private collection

Studio

discontinued manufacturing Modular Colors, and they are no longer available anywhere as far as I know.”

Anthony’s brushes include white sable watercolor brushes shaped as liners, flats, and fan brushes. He also keeps a separate set of synthetic hair brushes for painting with acrylics: “The synthetic brushes hold paint well and keep their shape, but once I use a brush with acrylics, I can’t use it with watercolors.”

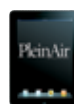
It sometimes takes Anthony several attempts to realize a watercolor painting that meets his standards. For example, he made three separate 11 x 15-inch paintings of the same image before his final effort achieved the right balance of color and values in *Sedimentary Colorado*. “I like working on small, quarter-sheet pieces of

watercolor paper when I am painting outdoors or in the small studio I am using at the moment,” he says. “I apply many layers of watercolor paint, generally starting with wet paper, over which I wash a warm tone of burnt sienna in the foreground. I then paint the sky with blues and the horizon sometimes with a light purple. I then apply a couple more layers of deeper-valued colors, without overworking the surface so much that the layers underneath start to intermix and muddy the colors on top.”

Anthony’s technique for handling acrylic paint is quite different; he says, “After blocking in the big shapes, I apply the colors as dots and dashes, so to speak, in a kind of pointillist technique that resembles oil paintings by Camille Pissarro [1830-1903]. I do that in part because I

like the way the colors intermix in the viewer’s eyes without having to be completely blended on the canvas, and because the acrylic paint gets a bit gummy and it becomes hard to get flowing strokes of color. In *North Coast Beach*, for example, I first painted the sky with opaque blue and developed blocks of dark colors that would become the underpainting for the rocks.”

M. STEPHEN DOHERTY *his editor-in-chief of PleinAir.*



See more of Scott Anthony’s paintings in the expanded digital edition of PleinAir.



Sonoma Coast
2011, acrylic on canvas, 18 x 24 in.
Collection the artist
Studio



Late Sun in Westport
2014, acrylic on particle board, 24 x 36 in.
Collection the artist
Studio

ARTIST PROFILE



New Mexico Landscape
2015, watercolor, 11 x 15 in.
Collection the artist
Studio



Pacifica Morning Fog
2011, acrylic on hardboard, 16 x 24 in.
Collection the artist
Studio