

# SUSIE'S WATERCOLOR TECHNIQUES TIPS AND TRICKS!

## Instructions for Scratching and Scraping Trees in the Winter Landscape

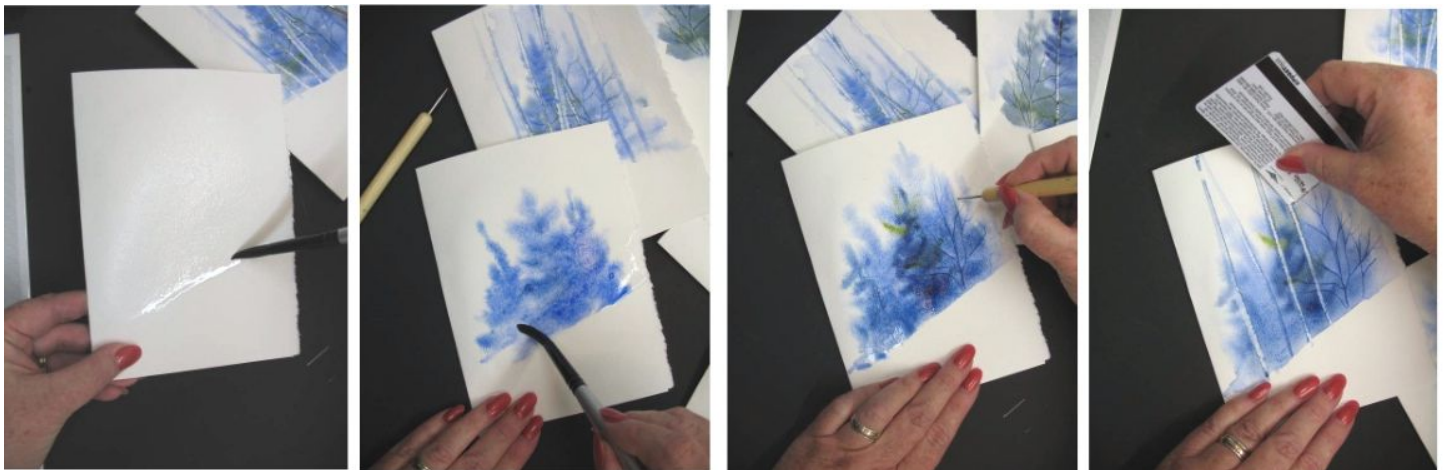
Use these watercolor tricks and techniques to create a variety of Winter Landscape Cards. Please refer to this outline for information on "how to" start many of the cards in my collection. I suggest you set up an assembly line and have several cards ready for painting. As you paint several cards you will get more ideas on what you can add to jazz them up and make them interesting. Many of my cards have a large area reserved for writing special greetings in the foreground at the bottom of the card. Interesting elements like an icy stream or a fallen tree can be added to the bottom of your cards to make each one unique and different. Let's get started!

If you are using generic card stock test it first to see if you can watercolor on it. Some surfaces will not hold moisture and others will soak it up. There are several brands of blank cards made specifically for working with watercolor and they come with envelopes included in the package. Check with your local art supplier to see what's available in your area. Most art stores carry Strathmore or Canson blank cards. And of course you can use your regular watercolor paper cut to size also.

Step 1: Moisten/wet the top portion of the card's surface down to where you want the snow line to be. A slight angle in either direction will be more interesting than straight across. Most watercolor cards won't take a lot of water so test to see just how much moisture your particular card can hold.

Step 2: Drop color into the wet area. Use your brush to push the paint around to form tree shapes. Vary the intensity of your paint to add depth and to help give more contrast when you scrape out the white bark in the following steps.

Step 3: When the card is still shiny wet, you can scratch twigs or small branches in the wet area with a toothpick or something with a rounded point. (Stylus or an empty ballpoint pen are ideal.) The scratch you make will "bruise" the paper slightly and the paint will sink into the scratch making a dark mark.



Step 4: Allow your card to dry slightly (until the shine is almost gone) but it is still damp. Create those white tree trunks by gently scraping the paint from the cards surface. In this example I used a plastic credit card. Some watercolor brush handles have a slanted end that works great too for scraping. This may take some practice. Too much pressure will ruin your card and too little pressure won't pick up the paint. Wipe off the paint you pick up between scrapes. If you time it right you can even scrape out a few tiny twigs too!

Step 5: Allow your card to dry completely.

Step 6: Next, add some details to the white trees, such as the darker bark, more branches, and some darker evergreens behind the white tree trunks for more contrast. Picking up some thicker paint on the short end of your credit card then dragging it over the white scrapes will create a nice bark look. You may need to “rough up” the edge of your card with an emery board or piece of sandpaper if it gives you a bold line instead of random splatches.

(See my “Credit Card Trees” instruction sheet for complete details.)



Step 7: Even if you plan to add a greeting to your card shadows in the snow will add drama and interest to the empty snow area in the foreground. Soften the edges to give a soft contoured look to your foreground snow.



Step 8: Now it's time to sign your card! I use several tools for making my signature depending on where I decide to write my name. Many times I use a small brush with a good point to paint a stylized signature.

For most of my cards I use a stylus to make an imprint while the card is wet during the painting process. This is similar to scratching in those tiny trigs in step 3 above. If

your card is dry you can dampen it with clear water and add color to make your signature scratch show. Be sure to apply the clear water well beyond the painted area so it blends in and doesn't leave a hard edge if you blot it away.

I also like the look of archival metallic gel pens when I want to sign my name in dark paint. Permanent markers (such as the “Sharpie”) will bleed through my card so I try to avoid those. Another choice I've used is a very sharp watercolor pencil in a hue that blends in with the other colors I've used for painting my card.

**Have fun!** I'd love to see your cards....email me a jpg of your card(s) [susie@susieshort.net](mailto:susie@susieshort.net) for more Winter Holiday Card ideas visit my website <http://www.susieshort.net/holidaycards.html>

© Susie Short Studio LLC All Rights Reserved For more watercolor tips visit [www.susieshort.net/watercolor-tips.html](http://www.susieshort.net/watercolor-tips.html)