



*Rocky Shoreline, oil, 18" by 24"*

*"This painting was done one afternoon in Laguna at a location called Moss Point. The ocean is one subject that will always entice painters. In the genre of plein air, it is one of the most difficult and humbling. I have always lived near the ocean and have the utmost respect for it. Trying to capture its subtlety, while maintaining integrity, is the goal."*


to avoid being typecast as painting only certain subjects. "I just paint the things that motivate me," he says. "I'm just a guy who likes to paint. It's what I do, it's what I love; it's what I get up for every day."

The only problem is finding time to focus on his own work. Watts recently scaled back the number of classes he teaches himself—from almost 14 to five or six—in order to have time to create his own art. "It feels good to be painting more," he says. "I feel like I'm moving in a good direction."

No matter where his work takes Watts, it likely won't steer him

away from the creative energy of his atelier. He feels a strong sense of responsibility to share what he's learned with others. "It's very important to me, as an artist, to give back," he says. "If I can help others do well, then I'll be better myself. It's a respect thing. And I love to teach. I really believe that everybody with a certain skill set should take the time to pass it on."

Although Watts still bikes—recreationally only, he says—and chooses yoga over more competitive sports, the discipline of his early physical training has helped to further his art career. "That self-

discipline is definitely a mindset that comes from sports," he says. "It helps me to inspire myself, and it makes me a good teacher." 

*Sara Gilbert is a writer living in Mankato, Minnesota.*