12-14-1935

Paul to Sam Dec. 15, 1935

Paul Sargent
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Dear Sam,

Ten more days to go until this Christmas rush is over for another year.

No winter of consequence yet. Is slightly snowing tonight and was a trace on Thanksgiving, but that has been all. Coldest night was down about 15 degrees. Rainy and fog with clear days mixed has been the layout so far. Too many days of dark cloudy weather for me to get much painting done.

A teacher at T.C. here wants to know what are some good books on the making of etchings. If you know what they are or will ask of McCoy I will be glad t know.

So far there has been little interest in buying pictures. People look at them and think they are good, but that is as far as it goes. Not as good prospects as 1st year. One man at Casey I think will buy a $50 water picture. I had one of that size when he was here at my studio so last weeks I have been making two of that size from my others. I have found the principal defect in the water pictures was too short a foreground of rocks. In these later ones I have added more rocks in front with better composition—a better lead in to the pictures. You should remember this when you paint the water again.

When you paint now you will have to do your own criticizing, unless you find another instructor. You can have your girl get for you that book on painting by Carlson. If an artist could paint a thousand years he would still be striving for better results. One of the principal things to keep in mind when painting is a simple statement of the effect in nature. The three big flaws of nature—the sky, the land and the trees-have to be considered with care, so that their values do not confuse. The center of interest in the picture is in one of these large planes so greater space is given to that plane, than the other two planes are of secondary importance and must be held in check, and also used by color and value to brace up the effect in the plane where the interest is to be. So you must strive for a simple effect, by keeping the big planes more or less flat in value but with broken color if the mass is large. As Birge Harrison says in his book, nature deals in broken color but not broken values. That is the variation in color in a mass may be considerable but the variation in value in that same mass will not be very great. When a mass becomes spotty, something is wrong with the colors or values or both. A good rule for broken
color in a mass is to use about three variations. For example, in a sky blue, purple and green are used. The same in snow also in water if the ocean. In a snow picture in sunlight the lights are pink, yellow and yellow green, in the shadows are blue, purple and blue green. Notice how when colors are made so they balance and look right the three primaries, red, blue and yellow, are evenly distributed in light and shadow—that is the dovetail of color that hold lights and shadows together. To get a balance of color the three primaries may be mixed together or left more or less pure side by side, as the Impressionists painted, but there is more life and vibrations the latter way.

The large wild flower picture I made out there, and the 20X24 pictures of the storm in mountains I sent to Marian, Indiana the other day. Am trying to decide what to get ready for the Hoosier show in Chicago next month—whatever it will be water or mountain-pictures. Don’t think it a good plan to send one of each—the judges like to see you are a specialist. By sending a water picture I stand a chance for their prize for a marine picture. Thought I might send a large one from the sketch of the desert and mountains I made the morning out at Indio. People like the same 12X16 sketch on the desert I made last spring, that the people out there liked. And these people here never saw the desert. Wonder what is the explanation?

Pearl came down today. She says you and Opal moved in with Coral and Ray.

The permanent pigment colors seem to have gone up quite a bit. Suppose they will get about like the rest.

Sincerely,

Paul