

# BRUSHING UP



**Five artists** share their go-to brushes for achieving their signature looks.

BY BETH WILLIAMS



“Every artist dips his brush in his own soul and paints his own nature into his pictures,” said Henry Ward Beecher, American clergyman, social reformer and speaker. That brush—whether round or rigger, flat or fan, sable or synthetic—serves as the conduit to the final effect—and emotion—the artist wants to convey. In this special look, five watercolorists share their must-have painting tools, accompanied by some tips for getting the most from your brushes.

## Chizuru Morii Kaplan

GO-TO BRUSHES:  
**BRISTOL OIL  
& HAKE**

I primarily use two kinds of brushes: a Bristol oil brush (Richeson No. 12, Series 9579, 1 inch) and a hake brush (Mandalay Hake, various sizes ranging from 5 to 8 inches). Using them in conjunction with each other creates the specific effect I want to achieve.

I begin with the Bristol brush to materialize the image. Since I’m not striving to create a realistic painting, this rough brush works well. I find it difficult to control for fine detail work, which works to my advantage in helping me to avoid getting caught up in refining those details too precisely. This allows me to focus on expressing what I want from a holistic perspective.

Once I’ve created the image—in opposition to the work of the Bristol brush—I employ the hake brush. With this brush I dematerialize the image I just constructed. Because the hake is soft and holds a lot of water, I use it for glazing, spattering, splashing and sliding paint onto the paper.

To achieve a specific effect, I’ll use these various techniques multiple times—perhaps as many as 50 to 60 times in some sections of a painting—to build up texture through glazing, layer by layer.

The back-and-forth of construction/deconstruction, a fundamental aspect of my process, is what enables me to create the images I want.

In *Villa Borghese* (watercolor on paper, 45x62), the dark details on the buildings and sculptures were painted with the Bristol brush. The trees, large shadows and drippings were created with the hake brush.