



EDGES ARE A VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENT.

Winter has blanketed our area in snow and it provides a wonderful opportunity to observe edges and study how the light creates them. Look at the world around you and notice how many edges are really defined and sharp. There are many edges outside our area of focus, or not well illuminated, which we do not see sharply. Keep this in mind as you paint.

Be sure you do not carefully define every edge of every object. That would be unrealistic, although it could be utilized to create a stylized, or abstract work of art. If you choose to do that, do so knowing that is your goal and exploit it fully. However, if you intend to create a realistic work, be sure to have a good distribution and variety of hard and soft edges. Your paintings will be more believable and will invite the viewer to move through the piece.



All Soft Edges

Skipped
Spot



Broken Edges

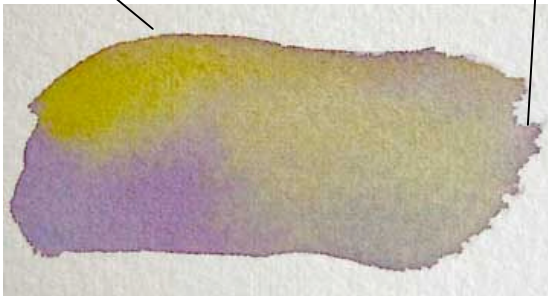
Hard Edges

Soft edges

Use hard edges to define the subject and important shapes where the light is strongest and use soft edges to allow movement through the painting. The hard edges will stop the viewer's eye, so be sure to design the painting with this in mind. Too many hard

edges create confusion about where the focal point is. A painting with all soft edges will be boring, with no focus to draw the viewer's attention.

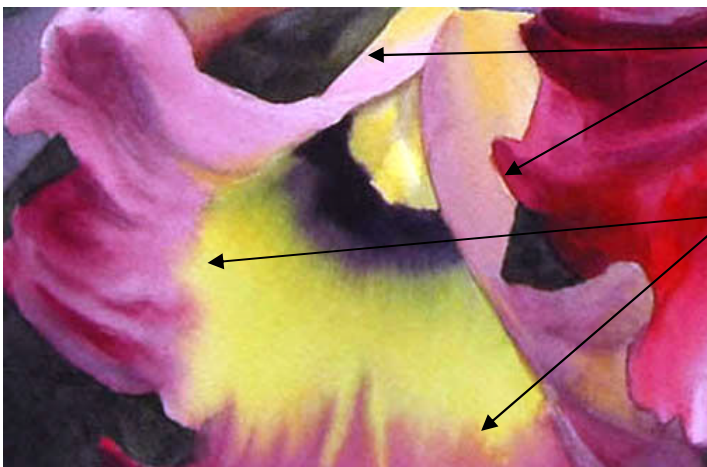
Cleanly Painted Edges Broken Edge



The texture of broken edges, or chatter marks, will also draw attention and should be quieted if they are distracting. Do that by softening the area with a clean damp brush. Prevent them by wetting the paper surface there before painting to create a soft edge; or carefully paint on dry paper using

enough paint to make a hard edge. If there is not enough paint on the brush it will make a dry brush mark as it skips over the surface. This kind of paint quality can be very distracting when it occurs within the painted area. It is useful to convey areas of texture, such as rough siding or a roof on a building. However, if this happens within a smooth flower petal, it will draw attention and create confusion of the shape and details of the petal. It is not always a painterly way of stating a passage. It just means you did not pick up enough paint to cover the paper. Be intentional about how you apply paint to paper.

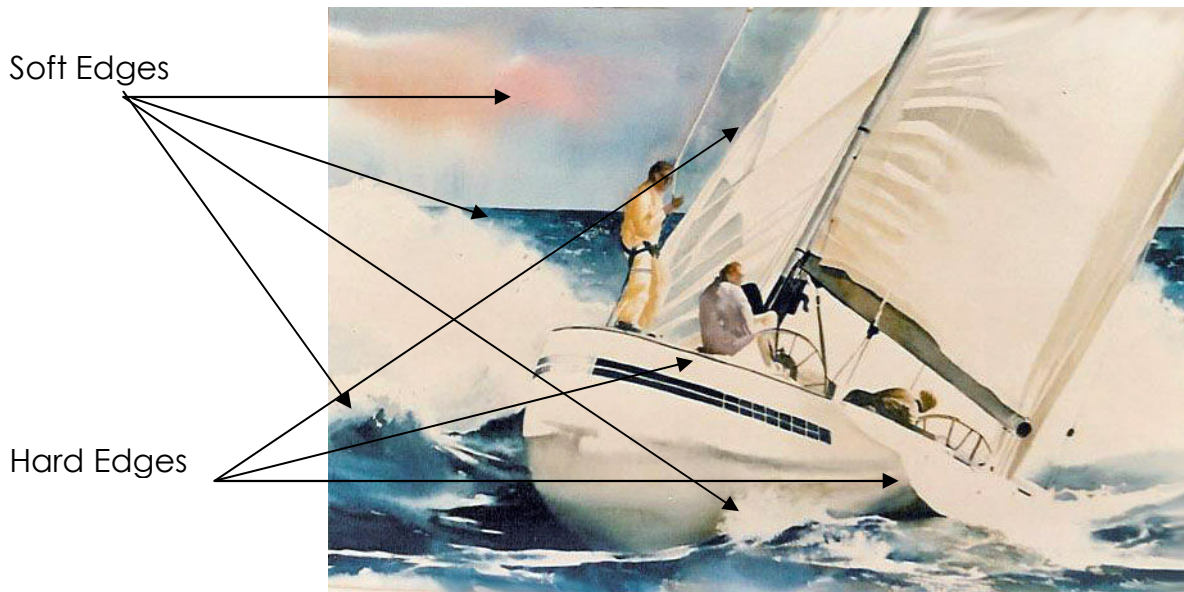
Paint with conviction and care. Decide what kind of result you desire and think about how to produce it. Envision it before you touch paint to paper!



Hard Edges

Soft Edges

“CLOSE-HAULED”



In this painting the use of hard and soft edges make the painting work. The hard edges define the subject and the soft edges support it without screaming for attention. Soft edges were created by painting on wet paper, or by softening with a damp brush. Hard edges were carefully stated using enough paint.