

3

Fundamentals of Painting

3 INTRODUCTION

Painting can be defined as portraying an object through the medium of colours or in black and white. A painter works with pigments usually applied to a flat surface by means of a spatula, palette, knife or brush. Today computers can also be used to paint pictures on the screen and later printed, either in colour or in black and white, and as required.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying and practicing this lesson learner should be able to:

- identify the materials used to make a painting;
- differentiate between water colour, acrylic and oil colour;
- state the names of different brushes;
- arrange 2 or 3 forms properly in a given space to create a theme;
- handle the materials effectively to create the composition;
- draw animate, inanimate objects and forms.

3.2 MATERIALS OR TOOLS ARE REQUIRED

To start with one needs a clean sheet of paper and basic drawing tools such as a pencil and an eraser (Fig No. 3.1). Colour can be added using various mediums such as watercolours acrylic poster colours and brushes of various sizes. (Fig.3.2A and 3.2B) Then again, one can use crayons or other wax-based colours. The above-mentioned mediums are best suited for someone who has just started painting. These mediums give very good results when used on cartridge paper. But one should start with ordinary drawing paper before moving on to more sophisticated materials such as pencils of different grades from B to 4B, eraser and sharpener etc.

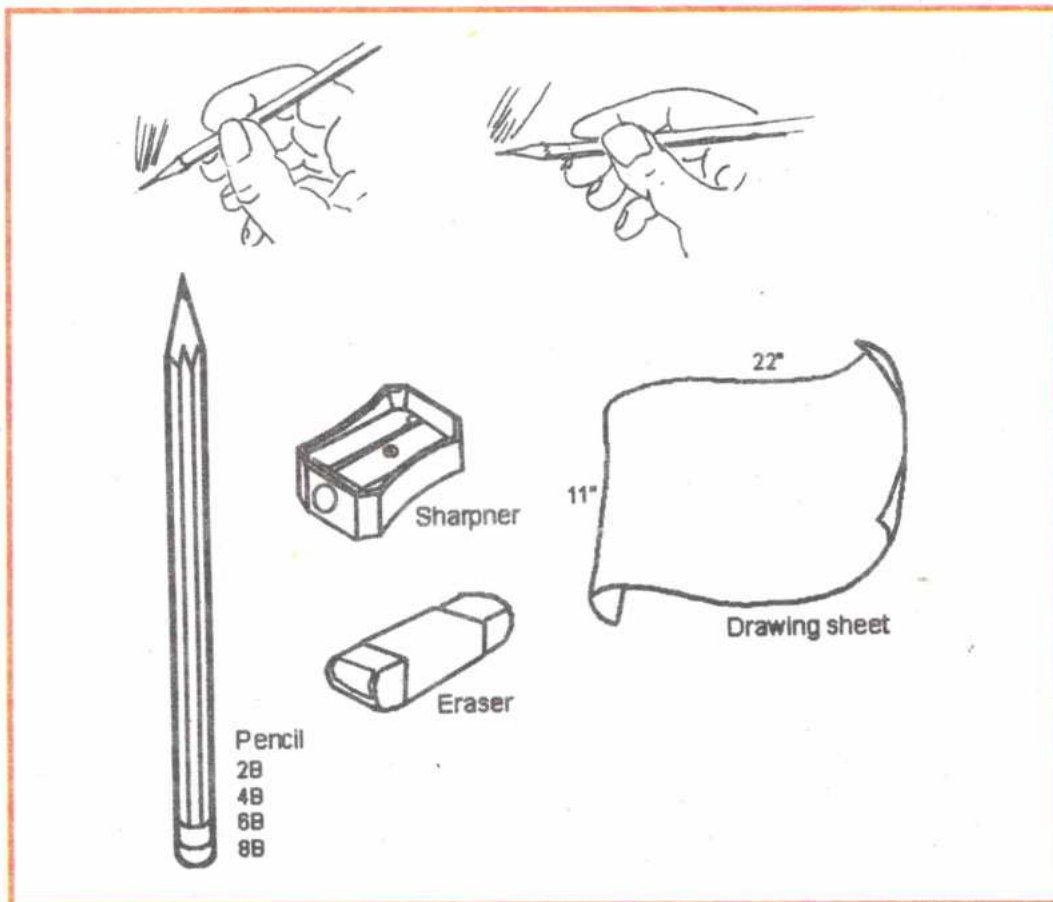


Fig. 3.1



Fig. 3.2A



Fig. 3.2B

Types of brushes used for painting

Once a certain amount of proficiency is reached one may shift to oil-based painting on canvas.

3.3 PROJECT-I

Choose any simple potted plant or bush that interests you. Observe this object very carefully—the shape of its leaves, the texture of its stem, the variations of colours and also take careful note of the light falling on it. Look at the angle of the light, the areas in shade and the areas that are highlighted, where the shadows are falling. These observations will help you to draw the plant more accurately. Always take time to carefully observe the object you want to paint and don't be in a hurry to put the pencil on the paper. Just this little extra effort may mean all the difference between a good and an average painting (Fig 3.3).

Now take an ordinary drawing sheet and sketch the plant with a soft pencil like 2B. When you have finished, take another paper and sketch the plant again, this time trying to avoid the mistakes that you might have made in your previous drawing. Keep sketching till you don't draw the plant correctly with all the details. Once you manage to do this, take a better quality paper and redraw the same. You will find that by now you are able to paint the plant quite accurately and with considerable amount of ease. Always take care that you keep the drawing in proportion to the size of paper used.

In the beginning it is wise to draw the outline and do some detailing of the plant with a pencil before you start colouring. To get a particular shade of colour not ready-made on the palette, one may need to apply coats of colours, one on top of another. This could go on to many layers depending on the colour that is required to be portrayed.

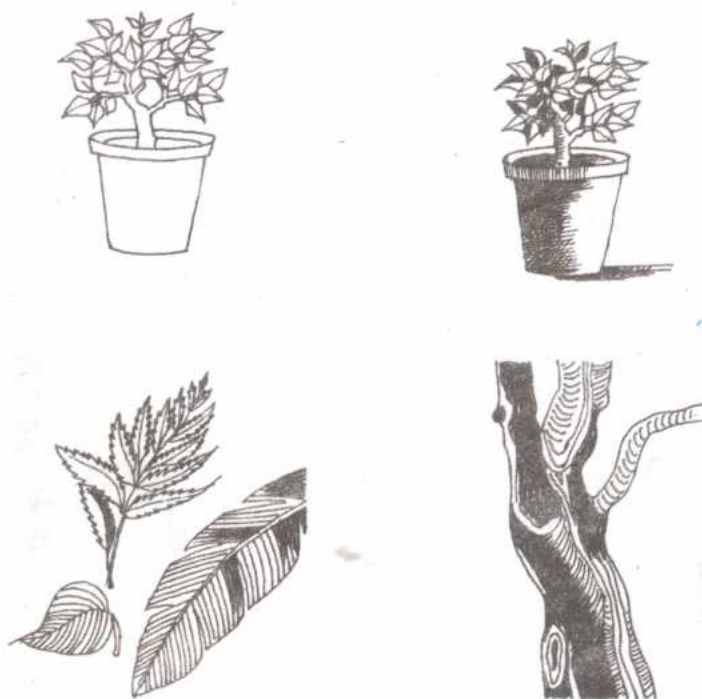


Fig. 3.3

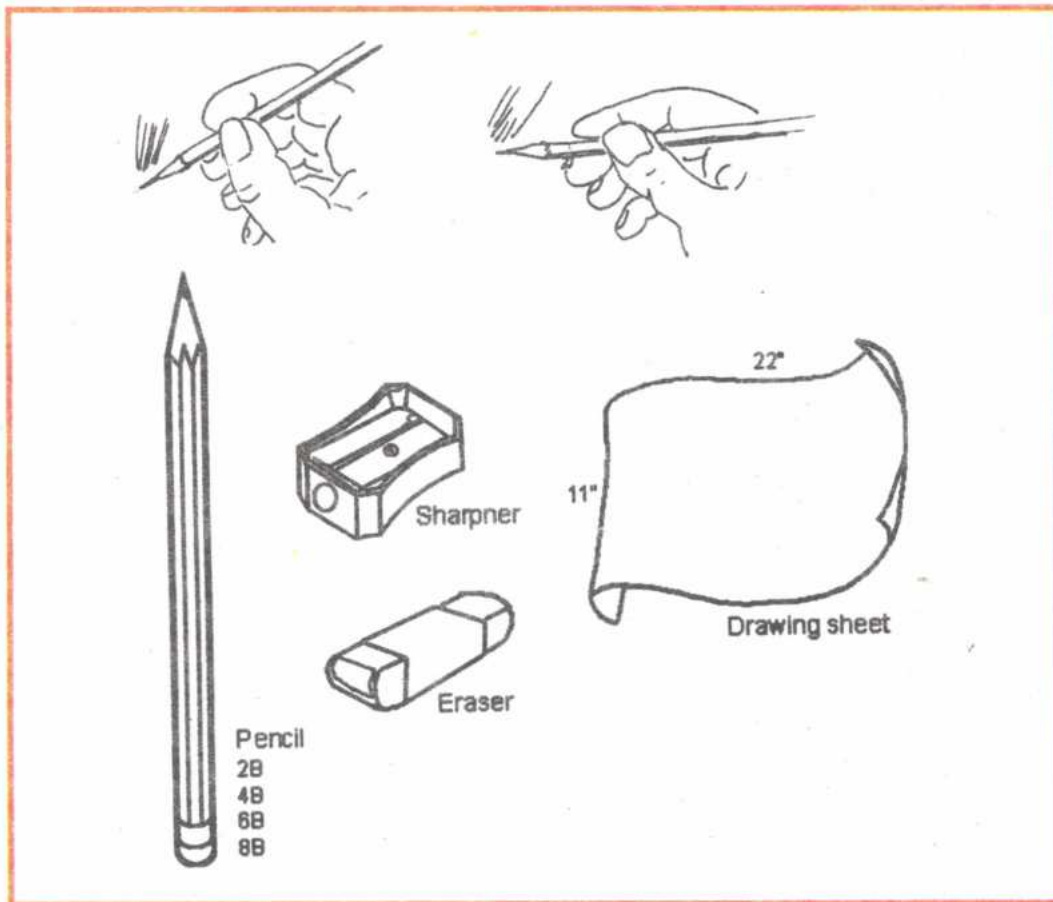


Fig. 3.1



Fig. 3.2A



Fig. 3.2B

Types of brushes used for painting

3.4 PROJECT II

Pick any other simple still-life subject that may be painted using poster colours. Keep in mind that such a subject should mostly be of high contrast in nature. This means that there should not be many areas of medium tones - the object must have highlights and dark tones, no mid tones. In such a case, drawing with pencil is not required.

However, before starting on a poster-colour artwork, it is important that you understand the difference between opaque and transparent colour. A high contrast painting uses more of opaque colours such as poster colours, while soft merged pastel effects are achieved by using transparent colours like watercolours. In opaque paintings, the colour is generally thick and white is used frequently for tonal variations, whereas in transparent paintings a small amount of colour is mixed with a larger amount of water and applied in such a manner that it flows and the base colour is seen through. (Fig.3.4)



Place the objects on the top of a table or on a board. First draw the objects in pencil outline. Cover the objects with first tone (Water Colour)



first tone
Step 1



Let the first tone dry. Apply the second tone and let it dry again.



second tone

Step 2



Let the second tone dry. Apply the third tone and let it dry again.



third tone

Step 3

Fig. 3.4

**Colour used - Prussian Blue & SAP Green*

3.4 ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD PAINTING

There are many attributes to a good painting. One will be able to create an attractive painting if one understands both the aesthetic and the technical aspects of a painting. A few important qualities one must keep in mind while painting are rhythm, balance, harmony, composition, colour and subject matter, light and shade, texture, perspective, centre of interest, handling and originality.

Let us discuss the following qualities in brief:

Rhythm : Rhythm is an element used to create the illusion of movement. This effect is mostly achieved by repetition of lines, shapes and/or colours. This rhythm is present in all forms of art like poetry, dance, music, etc. An example could be a series of birds or cattle, painted one after the other with slight variations in shapes and sizes. This would bring about a feeling of the birds flying and the cattle on the move. (Fig 3.5A)



Fig. 3.5A

Balance: Balance is the principle of design that deals with visual weight in a work of art. This refers to the quality of introducing a figure, colour or mass in a painting to counteract the effect of another element dominating the scene in the picture. For example a giant tree on one side of the frame can be balanced with a bright red coloured hut on the other side of the frame. (Fig 3.5B)



Fig. 3.5B

Harmony: Refers to ways similarities in a work are accentuated to create an uncomplicated, uniform appearance. Harmony is achieved by repetition of characteristics that are the same or similar. Harmony is a pleasing relationship between parts of an artwork. It is the quality of rhythmic composition in a picture - the opposite element is as important as the elements in the front and the back. Both play useful roles when used properly. (Fig 3.5C)



Fig. 3.5C

Composition: Composition is the arrangements of visual elements in a work of art. The elements combine together in a certain form to create a unified whole. And it is the conscious decision of the artist to place various elements that might determine the effectiveness of the painting. All three preceding qualities - harmony, rhythm and balance have to be kept in mind while making a composition. A good composition means to put all the elements in a befitting manner. Before arriving at a satisfying composition you have to make several sketches.

Colour: This is an element of art derived from reflected light. The sensation of colours aroused in the human mind as vision responds to various wavelengths of light. The three properties of colour are hue, value and intensity. To create a painting to one's satisfaction one has to be very judicious about choosing the colours that one uses. For instance, if one is trying to portray a happy summer day one ought to be careful with black and grey tones, since using too much of these colours might bring about a feeling of sadness rather than a cheerful mood. Similarly if one wants to portray a scene with a lot of unrest and agony one should not use a lot of white colour, instead the colour red should be the choice of the artist.

Subject: It is the topic or idea represented in an artwork. If one wants to do justice to a subject then one should be ready to observe the subject for a long period of time. This observation would facilitate the understanding of the subject and hence the artist would be in a better position to paint it accurately.

Paintings that depict the subject in a realistic manner and in their true form are known as naturalistic or representational works. Others that slightly distort the subject matter are called semi-representational or semi-abstract works. Still others that do not use any recognizable subject from the world, but only shapes generated in the imagination of the artist are known as non-representational or non-objective paintings.

Focal Point (Centre of Interest): It is that area of an artwork which immediately attracts the viewer's attention. This is the area of action in painting, the area the artist wants us to view first. Contrast, location, isolation, convergence and the unusual are used to create focal points. (Fig 3.5D)

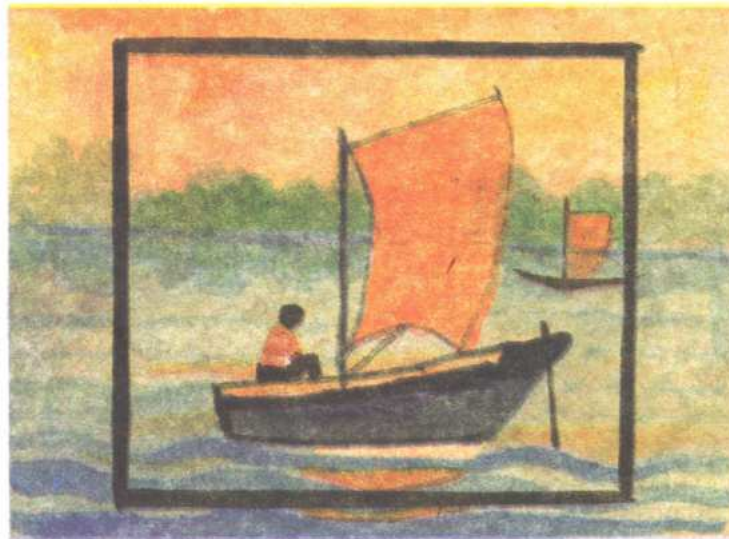


Fig. 3.5D

Texture: Texture is the element of art that refers to how things feel, or look as if they might feel, if touched. It refers to surface quality - rough or smooth. This character can be attained by the quantity of colour used or how it is applied on the painting area. Brush or pencil strokes can be used to bring forth the feeling of texture. Fig. 3.5E



Fig. 3.5E

Perspective: Is the method used to create the illusion of space on a two-dimensional surface. It is usually created by size variations. The theory of this optical illusion is that the further away an object is from a person, the smaller it looks. If we look at railway track, the lines that are actually parallel seem to get closer and closer as they move further and then finally merge. This point where they merge is called the horizon.

Most students while painting make the mistake of putting the cart before the horse. They feel that if they can master the handling of their materials, they can paint well. Though learning all skills are essential. One must first take time to study observe the subject in great detail. The student should know what is the context of the subject: Is it a grim or cheerful subject, is it dynamic or one with an atmosphere of absolute stillness, then again is it indoors or outdoors, and so on. Once you are sure about the context and the feel of the subject, then you should give a good amount of thought to which medium would be the most appropriate to execute the painting in.

When colouring, one must be careful about how much colour one uses. Especially in case of transparent paints, such as watercolours, one has to be judicious with the amount of colour one picks up on the brush. Too little, and the painting has not tonal variations. Too much, and the effect becomes jarring. You may need to darken or lighten the paint so that it recreates the illusion of various masses and volumes on a flat surface. The judicious use of colour can also effectively create the feeling of the third dimension-depth.

In your painting depth, light, air and space should be given due importance and you must always keep these elements in mind. At the onset, it is wise to keep the elements in the paintings as simple as possible. As you move on, you will be able to work upon these simple elements to bring forth all the complexities of the subject at hand. And this will happen only with practice and by constantly painting the same subject again and again. Every time you repaint the subject, you will be able to achieve a higher level of precision. With time you will acquire the ability to look at a subject and decide what are the main elements - what makes the subject attractive. Most often, the minute details are not important in a painting, but the overall effect. For example, you need not show how many bricks there are in wall or leaves on a branch. You must instead try to capture the pattern created by the play of light on the subject - the light, dark and medium tone of the areas.

You also have to bear in mind that a truly successful painting has about it an aura of complete sincerity and honesty. It should bear the imprint of the artist. It should have something that would let the viewer recognise and relate to the painting instantaneously.

3.5 INTRODUCTION OF COLOUR

The enjoyment and appreciation of colour is universal. It plays a very important role in our lives. It can excite and soothe, or even lift us to heights of emotion. For example, red is used to signify danger while blue represents calmness and tranquility.

Colour is also a very powerful component of any painting. It communicates the mood and message of the painting. Colour is like the dress that makes one distinct in a particular setting from the rest. It differentiates.

For any student of art, it is very essential to have a full knowledge and understanding of the Colour Wheel.

Colour Wheel: The Colour Wheel describes the relationships between colors. It is an artists tool of the colour spectrum bent into a circle displaying primary, secondary and intermediate/tertiary colours and useful in organizing colour schemes. (Fig 3.6)

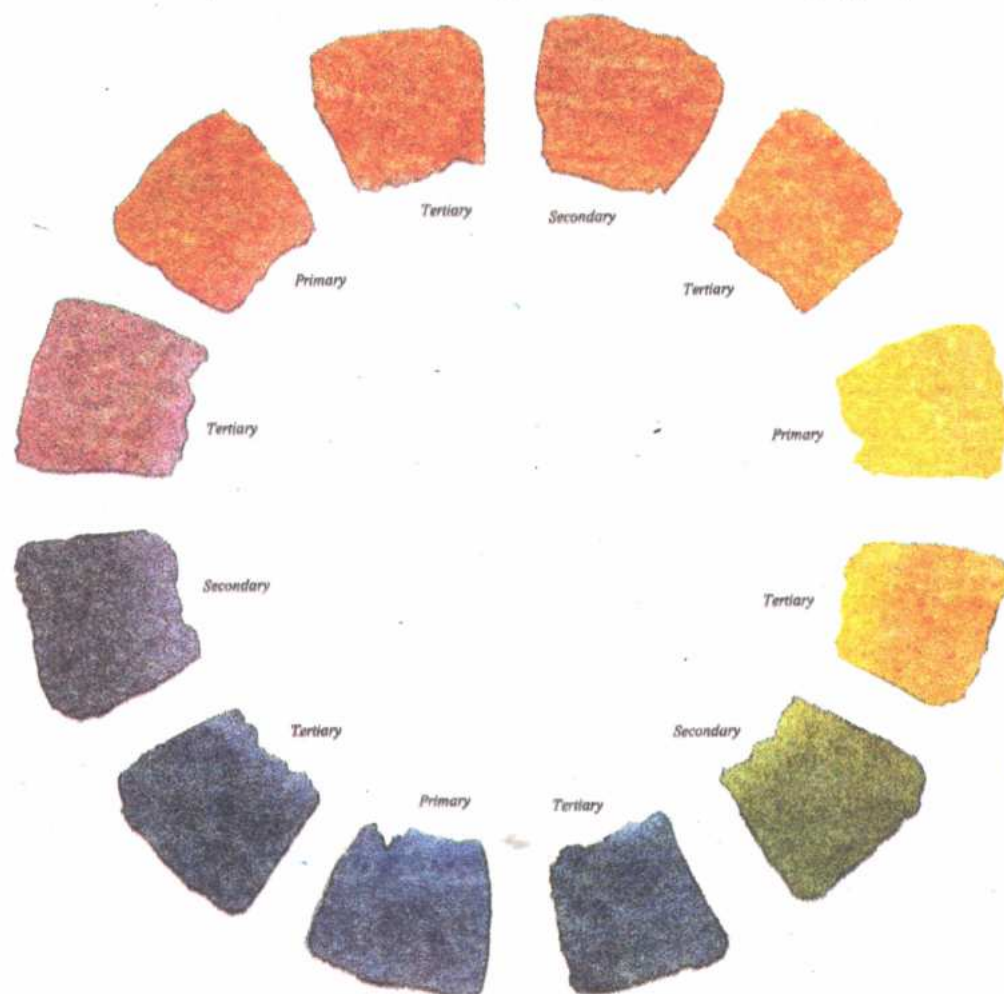


Fig. 3.6

Primary Colours are basic and cannot be mixed from other elements. Three primary colours are 1. Red 2. Blue 3. Yellow.

These three primary colours when mixed together produce the secondary colours as gives:

Red + Yellow = Orange

Blue + Yellow = Green

Red + Blue = Violet

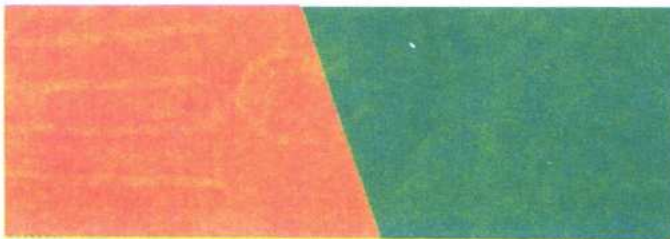
If you mix a Primary colour with its adjacent Secondary colour, this gives a Tertiary colour and classed as third in order.

The cool colours reside on the blue-green side of the wheel. These colours appear to move away making areas seem more spacious. Less so however with the darker shades.

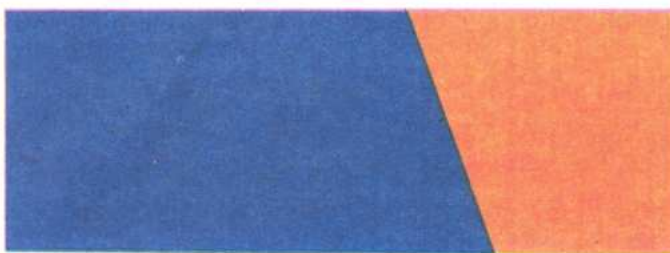
The warm colours on the red, orange and yellow side advance towards us making an area seem more intimate but smaller. They are the attention getters, great for attracting the eye.

The colours close together on the wheel will always compliment, making subtle schemes either soft in pastels or more austere in the dark shades.

The colours opposite each other on the wheel are the contrasting colours and they are always dramatic and bold.



Red and green are equal in intensity and light, so they should occupy equally proportioned areas of a painting.



Two-thirds blue and one-third orange together give the correct balance, as orange is more vibrant and intense.



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Fig. 3.7

3.6 WATER COLOURS

Painting in watercolours requires a high degree of mastery over this medium. It calls for a combination of skill, knowledge, patience, and even courage.

Watercolours can be easily obtained from the Art Material shops. These pigments are available in tubes, cakes or jars. The cakes and tubes are the traditionally used forms that provide the typical translucent watercolour effect; the jars, better known as poster colours, are thicker and need more addition of water. They are used mostly to produce the opaque effect. Other colours are pastel, or acrylic & fabric colours.

One need not buy all the available shades of watercolours in the market. A few well-selected colours on your palette can provide you with a vast range of colours. The following colours are suggested to begin with:

Two yellows	-	Ochre and Chrome
Two reds	-	Crimson and Vermillion
Two blues	-	Cobalt and Ultramarine
One brown	-	Burnt Umber
One green	-	Viridian and sap-green
Lamp black	-	Lamp black

The correct selection of colours for one's palette is something learned only through experience - by trial and error.

There are two types of quality available in watercolours - 'Students and Artists'. 'Students watercolours are less expensive but also lack in quality. When you buy your paints try if possible to purchase Artists' quality, the extra money spent will be worth it.

The same applies to brushes. You need at least three basic brushes: No. 3, 7 and 12. Buy good quality brushes, these last longer and also give you better results. Sponges also can be used when applying water colour paint to large areas, and are always a good option to keep on your list.

A palette is another important tool for an artist. A lot of plastic palettes are available with Art Material shops. These are cheap, durable and handy. Though people sometimes use cups and saucers in absence of a palette, no serious artist can do without one. A cup doesn't allow you to give different strengths to one pigment, while a saucer doesn't serve to keep different pigments separated.

The other requirement is a container for water. A plastic mug with a wide neck will do. The container should have a large neck as this lets you wash quite a number of brushes at a time. And it is essential that the brush should be washed very thoroughly after each application of colour, any remnant of previous pigment can spoil your painting.

A good wooden board is also required. This too is readily available from an Art Material shop.

It is also very important to take good care of your art material. Always insure that your colours tightly capped as they may dry out otherwise. Also use up colours soon..... keeping them too long can make the pigments loose their strength and tone.

Brushes should not be left in water as this will spoil their bristles. Clean and dry them properly. After each use, insure that their bristles are together and tips pointed when drying. Store them in a clean box when not in use.

Before starting work with watercolours one more precaution should be taken. It is about preparing the paper to receive watercolours. As you know, when water is dropped on paper the paper tends wrinkle unless it is very thick. This is to be avoided. To overcome this difficulty we stretch and secure the paper to the board in the following manner:

- Step 1** - Sponge the paper on both sides so that it is uniformly wet.
- Step 2** - Place this wet paper on the centre of your board as flat as possible. Sponge-off any surplus water.
- Step 3** - Use a strip of gummed tape along the long edge of the paper to stick it down to the board. Keep half the width of the gummed tape on the board and other half on the paper.
- Step 4** - Smoothen the paper again and stick down the other long edge. Next stick the sides of the paper on the board.

Only if the paper is very thick and heavy it can be safely used for water colouring without stretching.

The most important quality of a water colour painting is that it must be soft and flowing-the colours must be well merged without any hard edges. A watercolour painting can be both bold and delicate, strong and gentle. Try and maintain these contrasting qualities in all your work of art. Your painting must not have stiff or hard patches of brittle and half-dry colour. It is also possible to make a perfect painting in the first go. Watercolours is about perseverance and practice. Remember, do not try to tackle too much too soon. Look for a subject you feel you can manage and be content at this stage with 'studies'

rather than paintings. A small sketch-book is very important to any aspiring artist. Use it all the time to capture interesting references and practise your sketching.

3.7 MONOCHROME PAINTING

Is a painting whose colour scheme uses only one hue and its tints and shades for a unifying effect. Basically this means working with one pigment only. Think of a black and white photograph where the only colour is black used in varying tone and you will get a clearer picture of what one means by a monochrome painting. Except that in a monochrome one need not limit oneself to just tonal variations of black, any one colour - blue, green, red, puple - will do. (Fig No 3.8)



Fig. 3.8

The paint has to be mixed and applied in varying degrees of strengths to create the different tones in such a painting. The term generally used is weak and strong colour. A weak colour is one where so much of water has been introduced to the pigment that the colour effect is highly reduced. A strong colour retains a higher quantity of pigment and the colour created is deeper and brighter.

Start a monochrome painting by choosing the subject and the one colour you wish to render it in. For example, let us imagine that the subject for the painting is the scenery of a village. Now such a subject would comprise of obvious elements such as the sky, mountains, river, huts, trees, etc. First draw simplified outlines of the various elements of the scene in light pencil. No detailing is required initially as this would be done later

when adding colour. Now get the colour ready on your palette. In case it is not a ready-made pigment, insure that you mix enough colour to finish your whole painting. It is near impossible to mix the same colour again. And slight difference in hue could spoil the whole effect.

With the colour mixed on your palette, ready to be strengthened or weakened as required, you can start painting. With a well-loaded thick brush (No. 10 or 12) of paint quickly fill in the colour in the sky area right down to the where you have drawn the outline of the mountains. Next paint the mountain in a slightly darker tone. After this, take a smaller brush to colour the trees, huts and foreground is done in a still stronger tone. Start detailing with gentle tones of the water in the river and the more lightly shaded areas on the rocks. Now fill in the broader area of stronger and deeper tones after carefully considering how wet or dry the surface should be - basically whether you need a harder or a more merged effect. lastly the more delicate details such as leaves on the trees or straw roofs of the huts can be filled in with a pointed brush like No. 2 or 3.

3.8 SUMMARY

Painting is portraying object or objects with colours or black & white. Material required for paintings are powder colour, cake, tubes, poster colours, acrylic colour in tubs and small jars, pastel colour (dry or oily) stick, oil tubes, turpentine and pure linseed oil. canvas coated with primer and oil sketch paper. For water colour soft brushes made of squirrel or sable hair or synthetic brushes No. 3, 6, 12 and a flat brush of 1/2" For oil painting hog hair brush no 3, 9, 12 are used. A view finder is very important for comparing picture. First handle the object (still life) drawing with one colour i.e., monochrome painting. After handling with monochrome colour work with limited colour and try to give the proper shape, tonal variation, highlight, shade and shadow.

INTEXT QUESTIONS

1. What tools and material are required for painting.
2. Describe the attributes for a good painting?
3. What is 'Colour wheel'? Explain it.
4. Describe the different steps of application of water colour.
5. What is monochrome painting? Describe the techniques of this Painting.

3.9 GLOSSARY

Acrylic colour:- synthetic resin used in and emulsion as the binding medium, Artist's quality water colour paints. The best quality water colour paints with high pigment loading and strong colour.

Adjacent colours:-the colours wheel but also used to describe colours which lie next to each other in a painting complimentary colours - those colours of maximum contrast opposite each other on the colour wheel. For example, the complimentary colour of a primary colour is the mixture of the other two primaries i.e. green is the complementary of red, because it is made up of the yellow, blue and purple is the complementary of yellow because it is made up of Red & Blue.

Cool Colour:-A colour such as blue is considered cool. Distant colours appear more blue due to atmospheric effect and cool colours are therefore said to appear to recede.

View finder:-A rectangular hold to the scale of the artists paper cut in a small piece of card board to act as a framing device. This is held up at arm's length and the scene to be drawn or painted is viewed through it.

Focal Point:-In a painting, the main area of interest visually.

High Light:-The lightest tone in drawing or painting. In a transparent water colour techniques on a white paper highlights are represented by the white of the paper. In a opaque painting, highlights are represented with opaque white colour,

Impasto:-A thick application of paint

Perspective:-The method of representing three dimension on a two-dimensional surface. Linear perspective makes object appear smaller as they get further away by means of a geometrics system of measurement. Aerial perspective makes a sense of depth by using cooler, paler colours in the distance and warmer brighter colours in the fore grand.

Pigment:-Solid coloured material for all types of paint.

Primary colours:-The three colours, red, blue & yellow which cannot be produced by mixing other colours and which in different combination form the basis of all other colours.

Stretching the paper:-The process by which water colour is stretched to prevent it from buckling when paint is applied, the paper is wetted by sponging buckling when paint is applied, the paper is wetted by sponging or dipping briefly in water. It is then attached to a board with gum strip and allowed to dry.

Tertiary colours:-Colours which contain all three primaries.

Tonal variation:-The degree of darkness or lightness of a colour.

Warm colour:-Generally a colour such as orange - red. Warm colour advance towards the viewer whereas cooler colours appear to recede.