

# Painting a Flat watercolor wash

**OBJECT:** Learn to lay an even-toned flat watercolor wash.

## In the beginning...

**Draw a square or rectangle** on your paper, or visualize the boundaries of such as you go. (wing it)

**Select a darker hue for your wash** (it's easier to see) and mix a liberal amount of medium intensity (30-50% value) paint on your palette. I'm using a 1 ½" (381mm) Winsor & Newton Series 965 flat wash brush and Holbein Sap Green watercolor paint for this lesson. The paper is Arches #140 CP.

**Charge your brush with paint**, and starting in the upper left corner touch your brush to the paper and gently pull a straight line of paint to the upper right corner.

**NOTE:** If left handed work right to left!



## Make your second stroke

Return to your palette and refill your brush.

**Start the next stroke at the bottom of the first stroke, being sure to overlap the bead of paint now formed at the bottom of the first stroke.**

**TIP 1:** If the flood of the first stroke doesn't fully flow into the new stroke, increase the angle of your board to aid the flow of the wash.

**TIP 2:** Increasing the angle of your work also increases the chances of drips running wild down your paper. If they annoy you, work faster or keep a tissue or damp sponge in your free hand to quickly blot them away.

### **Repeat as necessary...**

**Refill brush and continue** overlapping strokes, riding the flow of the paint and keeping an even tone as you go.

**TIP 3:** You can use the flat edge of a wash brush to "cut" the starting edge.

**TIP 4:** If you want to square up the final edge of the stroke—slow down, pull the brush up, and use the sharp flat edge again. Pull it up to your line and "cut" the final edge with a downward pull.

**TIP 5:** If your stroke breaks up, load your brush and repeat the stroke IMMEDIATELY. See (Tip 7) below!



### **Almost there, keep going!**

**Repeat steps making stroke after stroke to the bottom.** Try to keep an even tone as you go.

**TIP 6:** You would not believe how much variety there is in the behavior of different brands and grades of paints and papers. The more expensive well-known brands usually make your work easier by offering consistent high quality.

**TIP 7:** If your strokes break up and your brush is fully charged, you are either using a rough textured paper or the paper could be heavily sized. If you find heavily sized paper like this, spray the paper, sponge it off with a clean damp sponge and let it dry before use. The surface will now be more receptive to your paint.

I've painted something!

---

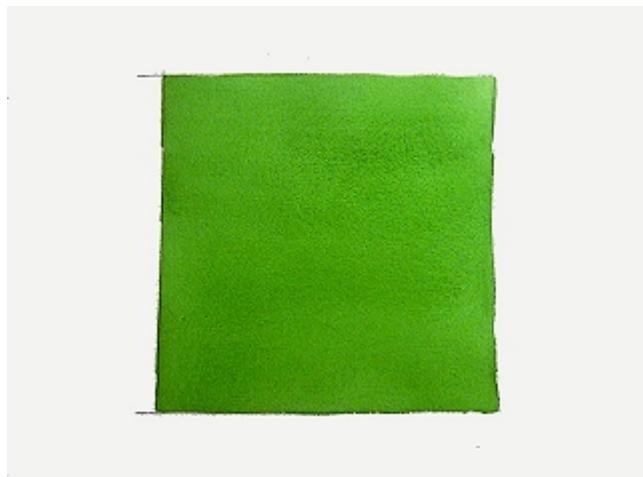
**Rinse your brush out in clean water and blot or squeeze out the excess the water.**

Carefully pick up the bead of paint that runs across the bottom of the wash using the wick action of your brush. If you draw up too much paint you will lift the color off the paper.

**Let the wash dry.** If you've ended up with an even-toned square of color, congratulations! If not, try it again. I did. And do.

**TIP 8:** Try practicing your flat washes with different colors and intensities. Each color has its own physical properties that affect how they feel and flow in washes.

**TIP 9:** For a pronounced texture in your wash let it dry at an angle. The pigment will settle out in the texture of the paper.



## Painting a Graded watercolor wash

**OBJECT:** Learn to lay an graded-toned watercolor wash.

---

### Preparing to wash

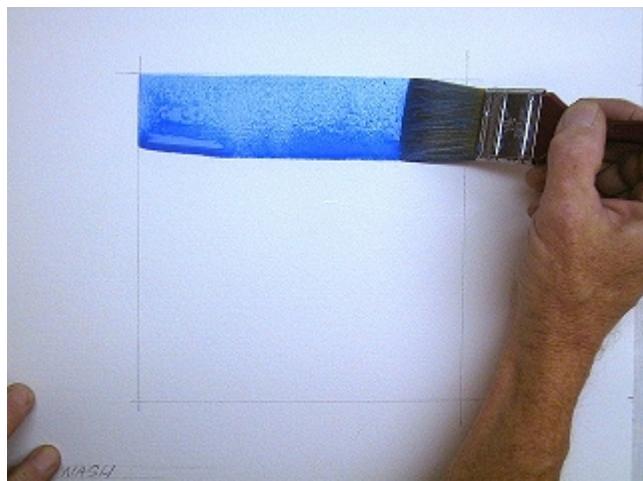
---

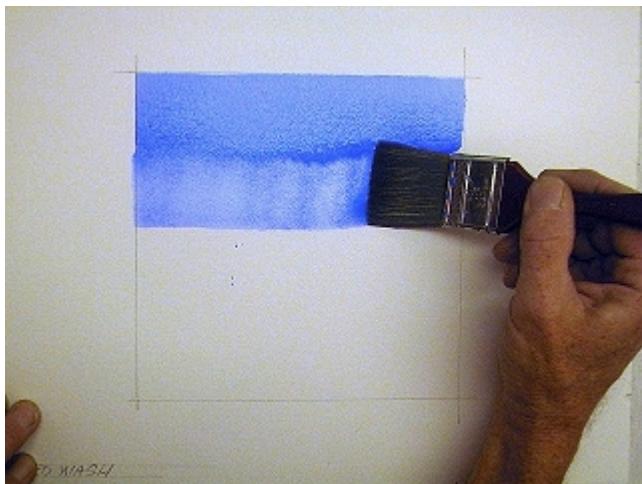
**Draw a square or rectangle on your paper.**

**Select a darker hue for your wash** (it's easier to see) and mix a liberal amount of medium intensity (30-50% value) paint your brush. In a clean part of your palette mix *another* puddle at about half the intensity of the original mixture.

**MATERIALS USED:** I'm using a 1 ½" (381mm) Winsor & Newton Series 965 flat wash brush and Winsor & Newton Cobalt Blue watercolor paint for this lesson. The paper is Arches #140 CP.

**Charge your brush with paint** from the darker mix, and starting in the upper left corner touch your brush to the paper and gently pull a straight line of paint to the upper right corner.





### Light

**Dab your brush on a sponge or paper towel and refill your brush with the lighter mixture.**

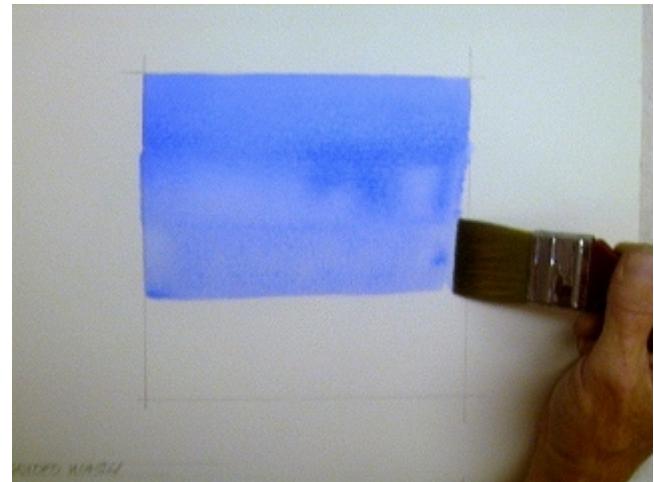
**Start your second stroke overlapping the bottom of the previous stroke.**

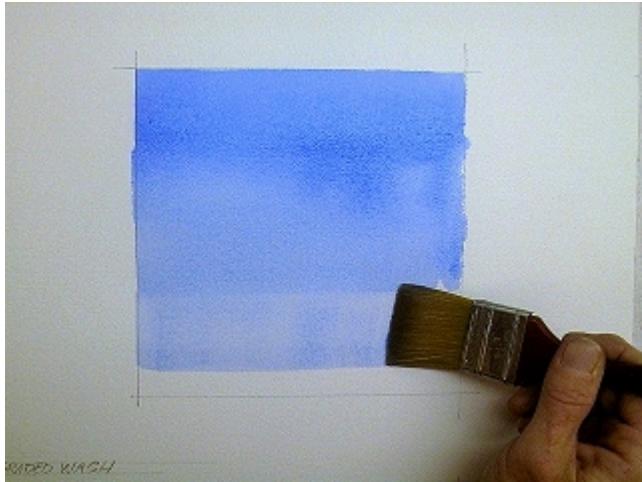
**Notice that the left side of the stroke has already flowed together with the top stroke. Let gravity do it's work.**

### Lighter

**Rinse your brush and blot it** on a towel or damp sponge, refill from the lighter mixture.

**Make your next overlapping stroke.**





### Lightest

**Rinse clean and dip your wet brush into the lighter mixture,** further lightening the wash.

**Lay your next overlapping stroke.**

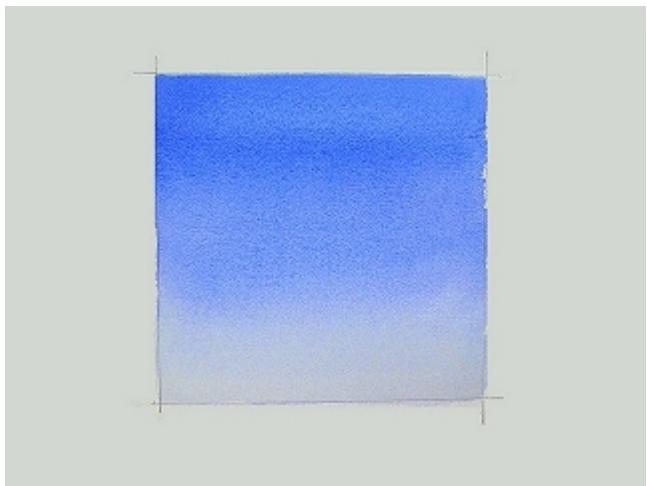
**TIP 1:** If your stroke doesn't flow evenly or breaks up, charge your brush and repeat the stroke IMMEDIATELY.

### A clear finish

**Rinse your brush well and using clear water** start your last overlapping stroke.

**Squeeze the water out of your brush** and pick up the bead of paint at the bottom of the wash.





#### All Done.

**Ask the paint settles and flows**, minor imperfections in tone will usually smooth themselves out before they dry.

**This example shows some graining** in the final wash. Cobalt Blue is a coarser and heavier pigment that settles into the texture of the paper.

**TIP 2:** Try practicing your graded washes with different colors and intensities. Each color has its own physical properties that affect how they feel and flow in washes.

**TIP 3:** Practice transitioning one color into another for interesting multi-color effects.

**Perfecting a graded wash** may take a little more practice than a flat wash, but any time painting is time well spent.

## Glazed Wash watercolor tutorial

**OBJECT:** Learn transparent watercolor glazing effects.

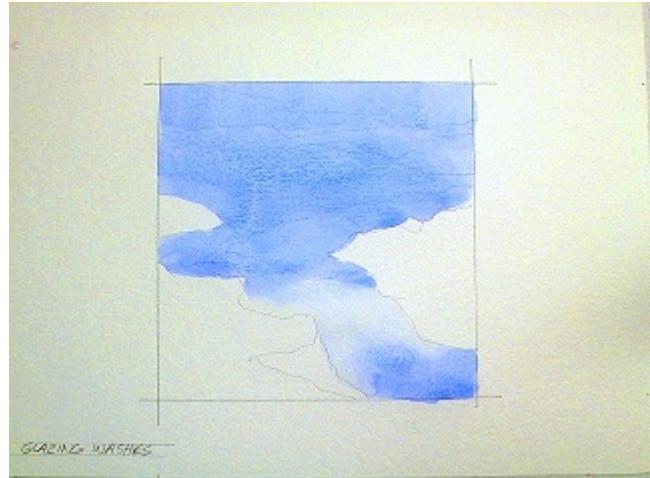
#### A little information

I will improvised a landscape on the fly to show the principles of glazing watercolor washes.

**MATERIALS:** Arches #140 CP watercolor paper, Grumbacher 1" flat red sable, Kalish Kolinsky Red Sable #8 round, Kolonok #4 flat Kolinsky red sable, Winsor & Newton Series 820 #8 Round, and a Kolonok #4 round Kolinsky red sable brush. A blow-dryer.

**COLORS (various manufacture):** Cadmium Yellow Light, Cadmium Yellow Medium, Cadmium Orange, Cadmium Red Medium, Permanent Rose, Dioxazine Purple, Cobalt Blue, Ultramarine Blue and Sap Green. Colors chosen are transparent and semi-transparent.

**Using my 1" flat red sable brush** I used a Cobalt Blue wash to block in the sky, mountains, and river area. I broke up the wash and added some clear water to soften the area that would be a waterfall.





### A mountain and red clouds

**This lesson is designed to be** as obvious as possible. Using bright transparent colors allows you to see how each subsequent wash is affected by those washes lying under it. Plus it allowed me to play with a new style of painting.

**Using the same 1" brush** I mixed a transparent wash of Permanent Rose and painted a band of red clouds across the sky area.

**Rinsing my brush I mixed up** a light wash of Cadmium Yellow Light and started painted the mountain area. I continued to the foreground and layed in a large yellow underwash.

### I got the blues

**Staying with the 1" flat red sable** I then used a light Ultramarine Blue and Cobalt Blue mix to block in a mountain horizon and negatively define the background smaller yellow hill.

**For some reason, after I undercut** the background yellow hill with blue, I then pulled a blue stroke straight down and cut the left corner in and lifted off with a flip.

**TIP 1:** Allow each wash time to dry before overlaying the next color. You can use a **blow dryer** to effectively and safely dry your painting: Low setting, at least 10" away from surface, keep it moving, NO STEAM!





### More color!

**Same brush, different color.** Needing to detract and balance the blue I had just finished, and making some interesting colors along the way, I mixed a straight wash of cadmium orange. I made orange banks in the foreground and then laid the orange over the rose and blue in the sky.

**You'll notice the jewel-like qualities** of working with pure colors in a transparent manner. The glazed wash could just as easily be a faint muted gray on a solitary rock in a large, photorealistic landscape painting.

### Hey! A different brush

**Switching to my #8 round red sable** I mixed up a very strong Cobalt Blue wash and strengthened the line of mountains at the horizon, varying the width by twisting and changing pressure on the brush as I went.





### Creating on the fly

**Using the same #8 red sable** and Cobalt Blue wash I started playing in the waterfall after stopping on a far bank. Sometimes visual clichés are your friends, a few blue circles at the bottom of an apparent blue hill can become the bottom of a waterfall.

**Rinsing well, I made a puddle** of Cadmium Yellow Medium and used that to paint some areas on the banks and some repetitive circles inside the blue on the bottom left.

### A few more bubbles

**After the previous washes dried** I used varying values of Dioxazine Purple to add color variety to the foreground waterfall bubbles.





#### A consideration and a deep breath

I wanted some major elements to start pulling this thing together so of course I thought: trees. I rummaged around my studio and found items I could trace circles off of—I found three different sizes.

Using the #8 round red sable I mixed up some bright, transparent Sap Green and painted three circles.

#### Flora and lumberjacks

Staying with the same brush, I mixed a light wash of Cadmium Red Medium and layed the lumber under the lovely green foliage.

Rinsing and picking up some Cobalt Blue, I added some minor accents on the water near the background and foreground banks as well as a shape in the sky. A small orange rectangular area was added to the left foreground.

I then alternately used Cobalt Blue, Permanent Rose, and Sap Green washes to paint some icons of grass randomly around the foreground.





SPLIT WASHES

## Wet-in-Wet watercolor tutorial

**OBJECT:** Learn wet-in-wet style watercolor technique.

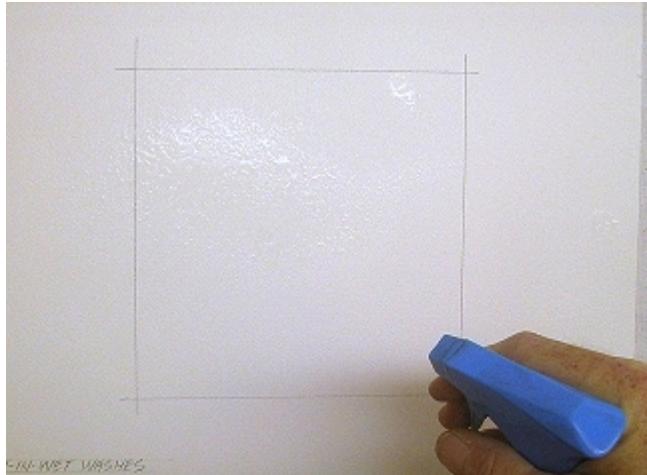
---

### Set-up and start...

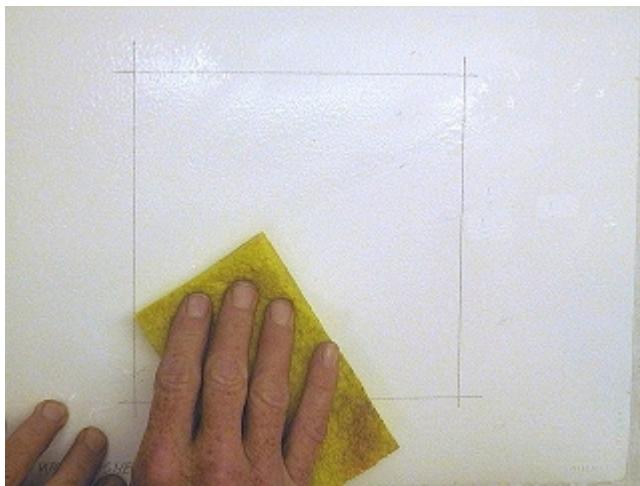
**MATERIALS USED:** Spray bottle of water, a clean sponge, Arches #140 CP watercolor paper, Grumbacher 1" flat red sable, and my trusty Kalish #8 Round Kolinsky Red Sable brush.

**COLORS USED (various manufacture):** Cadmium Yellow Medium, Alizarin Crimson, Cerulean Blue, Burnt Sienna, Phthalocyanine Green, Hooker's Green Dark, Sap Green, Lamp Black.

**I start by spraying my mounted paper** with water to saturate the surface.



SPLIT WASHES



### Even out the moisture

**Using a CLEAN damp sponge** lightly smooth your paper and sponge off any excess water.

**Repeat until paper is evenly saturated**, it with a dull satin finish.

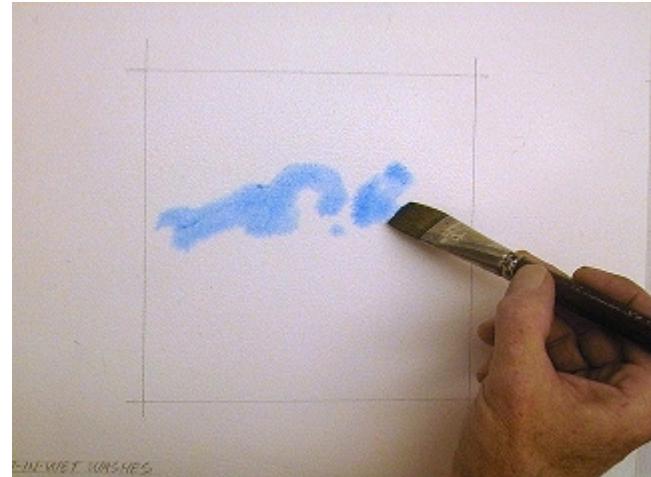
**If your paper is shiny** after soaking in the water, the paper is too wet. Wring out your clean sponge and smooth off excess water.

### Where to start?

**Creating a landscape "on the fly"** I decide to start with the sky.

**I mixed up some Cerulean blue and used my 1" flat red sable to form the clouds.** In a full wet-in-wet painting it is easier to work from the background forward.

**Using a twisting motion I start applying the sky washes** in a calligraphic fashion trying for some interesting shapes.





### S'cuse me, while I kiss the sky

I continue the sky area with the blue wash, making it look nice.

The initial strokes you lay down in a wet-in-wet painting diffuse and disperse widely in and on the moist paper. Watch your strokes spread as you paint.

### Well grounded foreground

I wanted the foreground fairly diffuse so I quickly mixed up some Sap Green and a bit of Cadmium Yellow Medium and formed an interesting spread of wide strokes which I finally decided looked like brush and bushes with some gaps for rocks.

The foreground paint was a thicker wash than the first blue washes and spread a little less initially.

As the paper continues to dry the painted strokes spread less and less.





### Adding a little form

I went to the palette and mixed some Phthalocyanine Green and Alizarin Crimson to get a grayish cool green.

I started implying some pine trees across the horizon using my #8 round red sable .

### Intensifying the structure

Having added the trees across the horizon, varying the intensity a bit as I went, I decided to use some darker accents to start pulling the design together.

Using a straight heavy mixture of Hooker's Green Dark and my round brush I picked out details and shapes to finish the tree line.





### A Rock and a hard place...

To imply some rocks and such, I used a mixture of Lamp Black and a bit Burnt Sienna to create a light warm gray.

I pulled the wash across the existing foreground wash with some white paper showing through. The warmer color helps to pull the foreground together and forward.

### Making a major point

I liked the overall look but it needed some jarring accents to pull it off as an actual "painting."

Using a thick mixture of Alizarin Crimson with a touch of Phthalocyanine Green to darken it. I started from the left adding some "florals" in the foreground area.

Even as the red dots spread out I could tell they would over power the rest of the painting.

I let the red spread a bit and then, using a clean, rinsed and blotted #8 red sable brush I lifted some light centers out of the red dots.





#### The final product

I then dripped a few drops of clean water in the center of a couple of the "florals" to let them spread and mingle with the surrounding colors.

One of the hardest parts in working *exclusively* in this technique is knowing when to stop. You cannot get fine details initially and as you keep working the previous washes you've layed in continue to spread, mix, and mingle which may muddy some colors if you are not careful.

**Wet-in-wet watercolor technique** is at times frustrating, but always exciting. There is host of hypnotic possibilities as the paint spreads and mingles on your wet paper.

## Dry Brush watercolor tutorial

**OBJECT:** Learn dry brush watercolor painting techniques.

#### The parched painter

**MATERIALS USED:** Arches #140 CP watercolor paper, Grumbacher 1" flat red sable, and Kolonok's #4 flat and #8 round Kolinsky red sable brushes.

**COLORS USED (various manufacture):** Cadmium Yellow Medium, Cadmium Orange, Cadmium Red Medium, Alizarin Crimson, Cerulean Blue, Cobalt Blue, Ultramarine Blue, Hooker's Green Dark, Burnt Sienna, and Burnt Umber.

**First off, I lightly sketched a random landscape design** on the watercolor paper using a #1 pencil.

**With a light wash of Cerulean Blue** I scumbled a rough sky in, dragging and pushing my 1" flat red sable to create texture.





### Laying some foundation washes

I wanted some underlying tones to dry brush the subsequent strokes over.

I made a light wash of Hooker's Green Dark grayed with a touch of Alizarin Crimson and I painted the background tree line around what is now determined to be a lake using the #8 round red sable .

Using a wash of Dioxazine purple I painted the shadow areas of the tree, keeping the edges rough with broken washes.

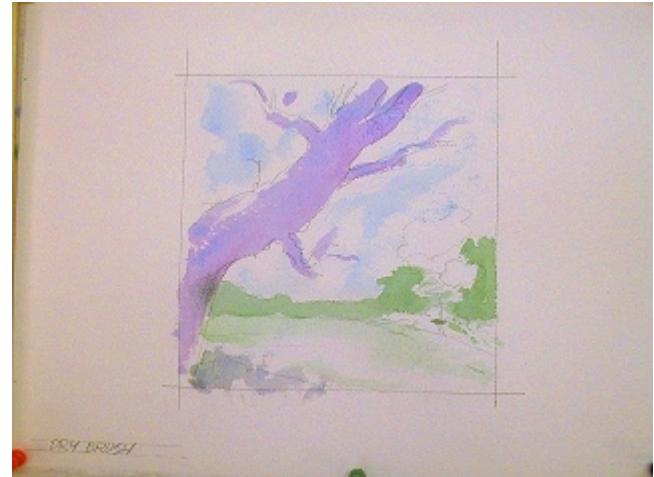
While this was still wet I added some blue accents with a mix of Cobalt blue.

### Letting the underpainting dry

I tried to keep the underpainting as dry and broken looking as possible, except for the lake area which needed some suggestions of the reflections and flow of the water.

Using a gray made of Burnt Sienna, Cobalt blue and Hooker's Green Dark I scruffed in a foreground bank area.

I let the underpainting dry.





#### A tree emerges

I mixed up a strong blue wash from Cobalt and Ultramarine Blue using a #4 flat red sable.

Holding my brush at a rather severe angle I let it lay on the paper with varying pressure as I dragged strokes to create the shadows and texture on the tree trunk.

#### It's Fall!

After finishing the large tree trunk I decided it was fall (which it was at the time) and using all the Cadmium colors; yellow medium, orange, and red medium, I roughed in fall foliage with some rather garish colors.

I used the Kolonok #4 flat red sable for these washes.





### A change in plans

As I finished the riot of color on the far banks I added a light wash of orange as a reflection in the lake of the large background tree followed by a run of pure Cadmium yellow medium down the bank under the far tree. I mixed a dark bluish gray from some Cobalt blue and Burnt umber and quickly drew in some dark accents strokes on the large tree trunk.

At this point I considered the flaming trees and thought of the dark maroon maple trees across the street. Using the underpainting as a base I scrubbed in the main tree shape with a mixture of Alizarin crimson and Phthalocyanine green which gave an adequate maroon color.

As I worked on the big maroon tree in I relied on the natural spread of the #8 round red sable brush to help create convincing foliage textures.

### The classic water effect

I decided the water in lake would be a greenish brown. I used Hooker's Green Dark and Burnt Umber to get a satisfactory color.

I start dragging texture parallel with the horizon line, across the lake using the not-too-wet #4 flat red sable.





#### A lake appears before me

**As I pulled each stroke across the lake** I varied pressure on the brush to create the "sparkly" water areas.

**TIP:** If your brush is too wet, you'll lay a flat wash. Blot your brush on a flat damp sponge or paper towel to adjust the amount of paint in the brush.

#### A little detail and punch up

**Using Hooker's Green Dark** I made a medium toned puddle of paint. I used my #4 flat red sable brush, charged, and blotted. I tweaked it between my thumb and finger to spread the hairs a bit.

**Using an upward "flicking" motion** I added some grasses under the tree. I used some of the same color on the far bank.





**Just a minute, almost done...**

I decided the lake had some swampy areas near the shore and I added some calligraphic indication of cattails.

By now, the blue in the sky was looking a little too light. I mixed up some more Cerulean Blue, a little darker this time, and scumbled the sky areas again.

Using the same blue and a #8 round red sable brush I added the sky color to the lake reflections.

**Finished!** Click image to enlarge.

## Lifting wet watercolor paint

**OBJECT:** Learn watercolor color-lifting techniques for wet paint.

### Facial Tissues

**Wad up some facial tissues** and use them as a negative painting tool.

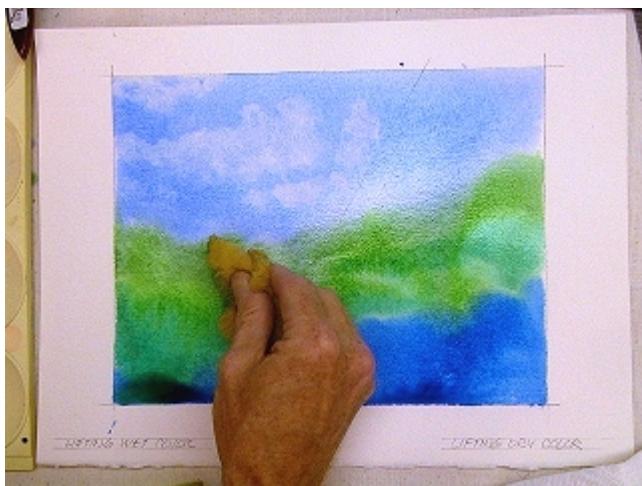
**Facial tissues are absorbent** and leave a softer-edged impression. Use gentle pressing and twisting, or a dabbing motion.

**If you try to scrub** with a facial tissue, most will fall apart and soil your washes.

**Excellent for clouds**, soft lighting effects, and puddle control as you paint.

**You can use TP** but that's gross and most brands fall to pieces or leave lint all over your painting. Good for blotting brushes (Zoltan Szabo), leave it on the roll though.





### "It's a sponge, Bob."

**In the band of green** in the middle-ground I used a wrung out natural sea-sponge.

**Natural sponges will lighten** a watercolor wash in a little more dispersed and textured manner.

**Light texture will be more pronounced** if color is lifted as the wash is getting drier.

**You CAN scrub your paper** with a natural sponge, just watch out for paper damage.

**Synthetic cellulose sponges** abound in my studio. They can blot large areas (and your brushes) quickly and can be cut into any shape you need.



### Paper Towels

**Here, I blot some simple shapes** with a folded paper towel to lighten the foreground.

**Paper towels can impart** an more angular and mechanical texture as you blot a wash.

**Paper towels can suck up** a lot of paint VERY quickly.

**A large fresh wash of non-staining color** can be completely removed at times. If you lay a glaze over another wash and it was a mistake, quickly lay a flat section of paper towel down and blot the entire wash up before it has time to affect the underlying wash.



### Negative brush work

**The brushes you put the paint down with** can also pick the paint up.

**Rinse clean and squeeze** out excess water. Your brush will wick up the wet paint.

**Using a damp 1½" wash brush**, I blotted the brush to keep its edge.

**Sweeping back and forth** I pick up the color with the edge of the brush, blot the brush dry, and pick up some more. I "drew" in a line of fence things.

### The finished lifts

Click the photo to enlarge and see the results of the wet lifting techniques described above.

Other techniques for lifting wet color I've used:

1. Spraying water to wash away areas of color.
2. Using various absorbent fabrics and towels.
3. My hands or parts thereof. Your skin can pick up color like a stamp pad. You'll leave personal textures. **DON'T PICK UP TOXIC COLORS IN THIS MANNER! (and don't use your tongue either, duh...)**
4. Several cats in my lifetime have lifted paw prints out of a wet wash.
5. **Sgraffito techniques** will scrape away color but bruise the paper in the process.



## Lifting dry watercolor paint

**OBJECT:** Learn watercolor color-lifting techniques for dry paint.

### Watercolor Brushes

**Any of your regular watercolor** brushes can be used to lift dry watercolor paint. Use clear water with a gentle scrubbing motion, blotting carefully with a drier brush or tissue as you go.

**Using red sable or other soft hair** brushes creates a softer edge but is less effective at loosening the dried paint from the paper.

**This method offers greater control** in the areas you are lightening.

**Using your good painting brushes** for lifting paint can wear down the fine tips over time. If you've invested money in high quality brushes spend a few more bucks and keep some synthetic watercolor brushes handy for your dry color lifting needs.





### Acrylic or Oil painting brushes

**The tough and resilient synthetic and natural bristle brushes** used in acrylic and oil painting are the more traditional choice for "scrubbing" lights into watercolor paint.

**The stiffer hairs can quickly** scrub an area covered in paint down to the paper surface.

**Control is rather coarse** using bristle brushes. The soft hair lift (see "watercolor brushes" above) "teases" the paint from the paper. This "scrubbing" method is more aggressive and can harm the paper if used with too much enthusiasm.

### Spray and Blot

**Spraying clear water on** an area of your painting and blotting it with a paper towel can lighten large areas of a painting by degrees.

**Using the force of the spray** in a "sandblast" manner to force pigment loose and off the paper is effective also.

**Across the blue wash on the bottom** I proceed to blast and blot some white holes in the painting.





### Sandpaper

**Sandpaper is rarely used** because of its destructive nature. Tiny sharp shards of sand or other abrasives rip layer after layer of paint and paper away with each stroke.

**Sandpaper, when it IS used,** is best used as a final touch for subtle textured highlighting.

**If you try to paint over a sanded area, your paint will suck into the holes of raw paper fiber like a blotter.**

### Razor blades, pen knives and X-actos

**Sharp things! Be careful.** Take a digit count. You need to have the same amount going out as you do coming in to this section.

**Single-edged razor blades** can pick out individual highlights and scrape rough lines.

**Sharp pen knives** offer a safer alternative to razor blades. The handle offers a better grip for control but make sure you don't accidentally fold the knife blade into your fingers while using. It hurts.

**X-acto® blades** can produce finer linear highlights. Take time to find out which blade angle works best for what effect you need.

**All of these methods are destructive** in nature and somewhat risky due to the sharp tools used.





### Sponges again, Bob

**Use only natural sea** sponges or cellulose (o'cello style) sponges in natural or neutral colors. They are stronger and hold more water than lightweight foam sponges.

**Simplest to use, use a clean damp sponge** with a gentle wiping motion. Lift color from the paper, rotate to clean area on the sponge, wipe again. Repeat as needed.

**Here I carefully rub a large swath** of color off the bottom middle section of the painting.

**New sponge?** Rinse out new sponges thoroughly using clean water. Most are lightly sized to hold their shape before sale. Make sure your tools are clean.

### Finished

**Click picture to enlarge** for a more detailed look at each technique's unique properties.

**As you can see,** many techniques for removing dry paint can result in damage to your paper surface. When scraping, scrubbing, or picking out highlights with sharp or rough tools it can be easy to make a mistake that won't be easily corrected.



# ADVANCE SKILLS

## Splatter and Spray watercolor techniques

OBJECT: Learn splatter and spray watercolor techniques.

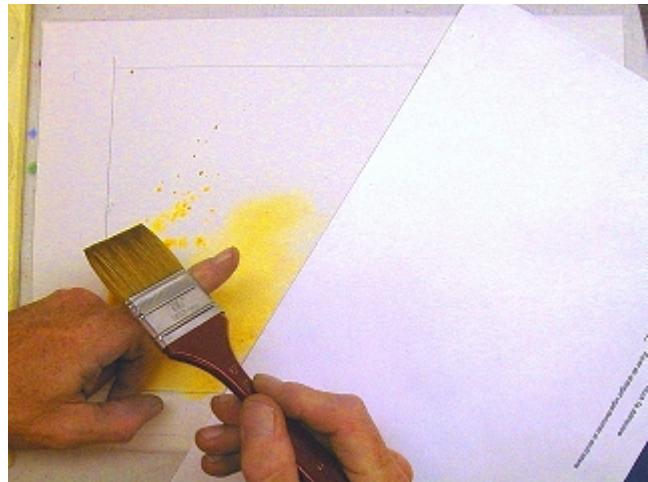
---

### Flinging paint is fun

I moistened the lower half of the paper to see what happens wet-in-wet as well as dry.

**Exciting effects require** some exciting motions. Starting with some Cadmium Yellow Medium a 1½" wide wash brush, I stabbed some color into the lower wash rather sloppily.

**Grabbing some Yellow Ochre**, with a quick mix I started rapping the edge of the brush against my finger. The paint appears to fly off chaotically.



### Throwing paint willy-nilly

**Switching from a #8 and #4 red sable** I ran through Ultramarine Blue, Sap Green, and Alizarin Crimson as I had a rather good time.

**If your brush is sopping** wet you can't control much when you throw it. Big Splats. Shake a few drops out before you start for an illusion of control.

**I usually use my fingers** when I rap the ferrule of the brush to release the paint for more of a tactile control. (If this technique hurts whatever part of your hands you are hitting, try rapping on a pen than has a padded rubberized grip.)

**I squeezed several drops** of Cadmium Yellow Medium out of my round sable from a height of 3' to make big splats (see finished example at bottom)

## Spray it, don't say it

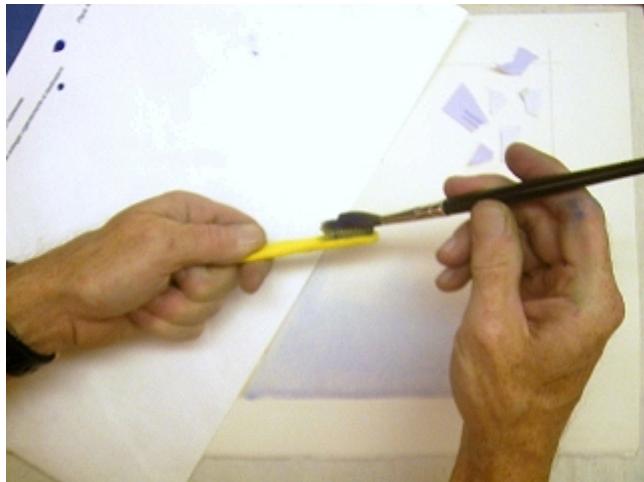
---

**Before I started the spray** example I tore up some small bits of paper and scattered them randomly in the upper corner.

**I also moistend** the lower half of the example with clear water, and threw a light Dioxazine Purple wash into it.

**Look for a old toothbrush** and clean and rinse the bristles thoroughly, removing any old residue.

**Prepare for a mess.**



>

## It's like toothpaste for your muse

---

**There are a couple ways** to charge up a toothbrush. You can dip it directly in a paint puddle, but it is hard to fill the bristles evenly with paint.

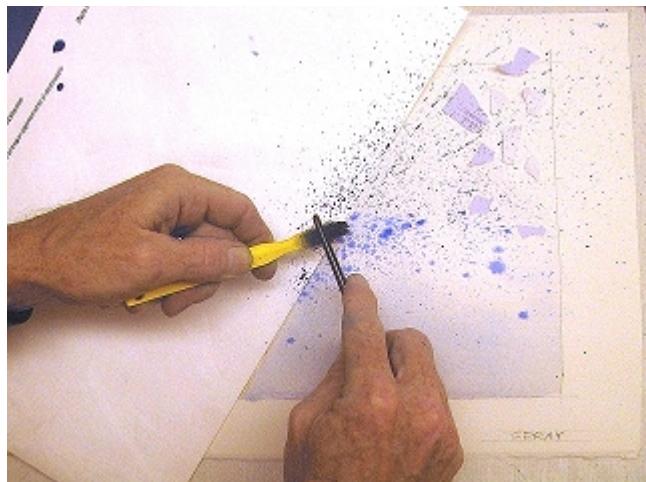
**Here I charge the toothbrush** from my #8 round brush. The advantage of doing it this way is that you can add as much paint as you need easily and in a controlled manner.

**You don't want** the paint dripping from the toothbrush.

### A simulated aerosol attack!

If you want to get "into the process" you can grip the toothbrush close to the head and drag your thumbnail back across the bristles. It does alter the effect in a unique way, but extra clean up is needed.

Using the handle of a #5 round I started quickly raking across the bristles, releasing the paint in a spray. Pull straight back in a quick motion. Alter the speed of release and distance from the painting for variation.



### Spraying mayhem continues - video at 11

I continue covering the example with all the same colors i used with the spalatter technique above. I thoroughly rinse the toothbrush and dry it on a towel before refilling with a new color.

A modicum of control can be gained if you practice. Sometimes a modicum is all you need.

## Evidence of effort

---

Click image to enlarge for details.

**Some watercolor purists consider** these techniques gimmicks and believe only the brushstroke is suitable for traditional watercolor painting.

**They are wrong of course.** Use whatever device, technique, tool or aesthetic you want as long as it helps you attain your own artistic vision.



## Sgraffito and Stamped watercolor textures

OBJECT: Learn sgraffito and texture stamping watercolor techniques.

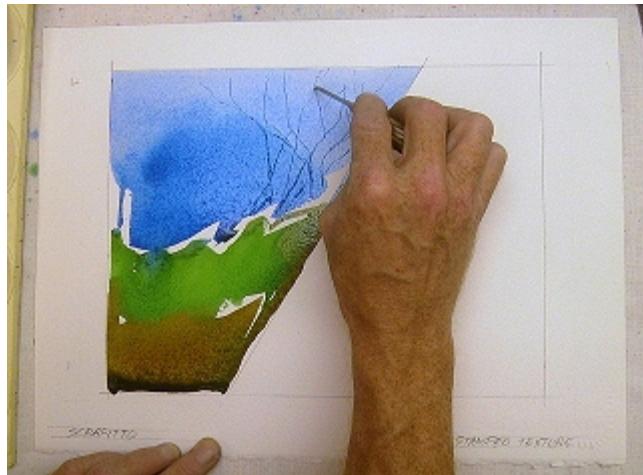
---

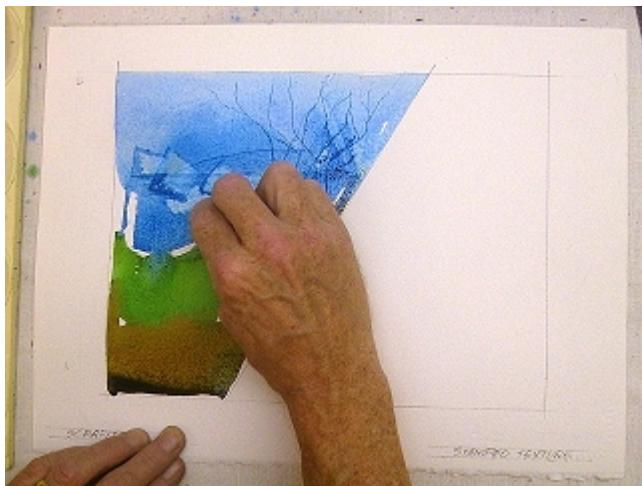
### Etching dark lines

**Sgraffito** is an Italian term for scratching techniques usually associated with scratching through layered ceramic glazes to expose the underlying glazes. Do you recall those rainbow colors covered in black crayon you would scratch pretty pictures into as a child? Same concept. Still fun.

**Shown in this example** is a variation scratching a line with a fine sharp point, in this case a pen knife. **The wet paint is sucked into the bruised paper fibers as you scratch across the wash, creating dark lines.**

**Used judiciously**, this technique is excellent for adding details to landscape paintings in the form of naked trees and branches, and other flora.





### Broadside scrapes on credit

I often use old credit cards, cut to shape, to scrape larger areas of paint around.

The smooth flat edge will act as a squeegee and push the paint off the area you are scraping.

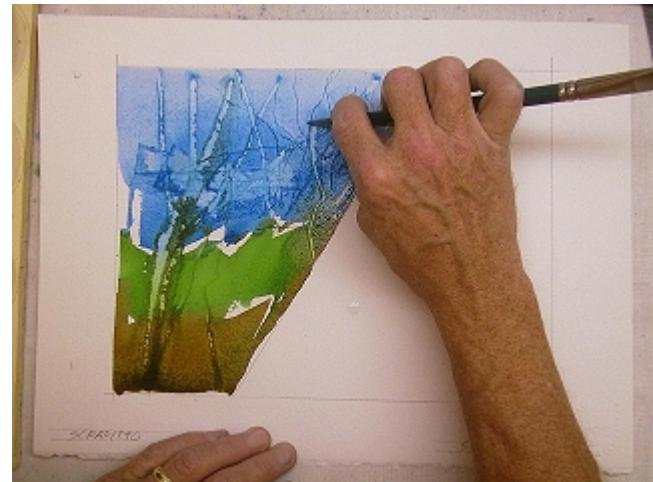
### It's on the brush!

Many brushes come equipped with angled scrapers built into their handles. I have several sizes of synthetic brushes I've purchased just for their handles.

I use the scraper end of my old Grumbacher 1" flat red sable and proceed to push some light color tree trunks up and into the "sky" area. Notice the dark edges that automatically form where you scrape away the paint.

Had I waited another minute the scraped areas would not have as much back fill (fuzzy edges).

Timing is very important. Scrape too soon, you'll get backfill. Scrape too late and it won't work at all. You'll burnish a smear through your paint.





### Feats of stamping

**Stamping is putting paint** on something and pressing that something onto your painting. The stamping material you choose could be anything organic or synthetic. Try the classic potato, pencil eraser, or leather, lace, burlap, leaves, grasses or your fingers. Use your imagination, possibilities abound.

**Using some facial tissues** I waded up, I dipped into green and crimson washes I had prepared on my palettes and stamped some texture in the upper section.

### Sponges!

I used a rather stiff slice of a sea sponge and dipped into some Sap Green and stamped the middle section.

The range of size, texture, density, and other variations in natural sponges is wide.

This sponge gave an excellent rough organic texture when stamped. I'll have to remember that.





This could go on forever...

---

A **finer small soft sponge**, a cellulose sponge, and some rather tribal use of various hand parts take place...

(A flurry of activity and a couple of blurry photographic sequences forced this montage, sorry —ed.)

Oooo, that was fun... where's the soap?

---

Click image to enlarge.

As lame as some of the technical execution was in parts of this particular sequence, I found myself thinking of this tutorial as a piece of art and continued trying to "pull it together."

I nested colors in colors using thumb and fingertips and signed it with a big red hand print. A tip of the hat to the Lascaux artistians.



## Back Washes as Texture

OBJECT: Learn to use clear water for interesting back wash effects.

---

### **Before the flood**

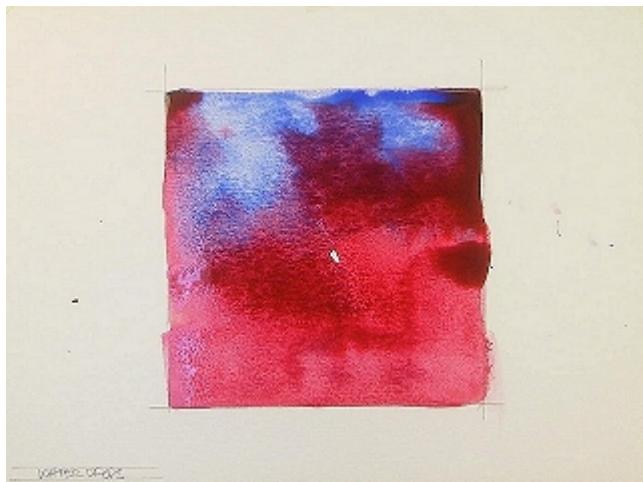
---

**MATERIALS USED:** Arches CP #140 watercolor paper, a 1½" Winsor & Newton Series 965 wash brush, #8 round red sable.

**COLORS USED:** Permanent Rose, Cobalt Blue.

**I start by mixing a large wash** of Cobalt Blue and laying in a large loose wash from the upper left corner on across the top of the paper.

**I used my 1 ½" wash brush** for the color washes



### **A colorful mix**

---

**Mixing a strong tint of Permanent Rose** I quickly covered the rest of the square with color.

**As I painted I tried for** an interesting mix of colors as they flowed together.

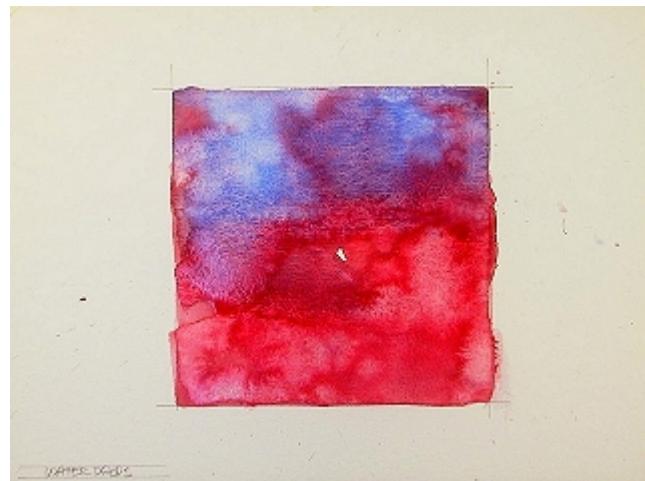
**This is the wash before** any clear water has hit it.

### Flicks of the wrist

---

I took my #8 round red sable, rinsed it in clear water and left it full.

With a few flicks of the wrist I started throwing some water on the wet wash.



### Spreading the effect

---

As the washes continued to dry I dropped clear water on different areas.

The degree of dryness of the underlying wash determined how much the clear water affected the area.

**Click image to enlarge.** Notice the lighter areas within the Cobalt Blue areas and the Permanent Rose areas. Graining is becoming more pronounced in some areas.

### Inducing backwashes and hard edges

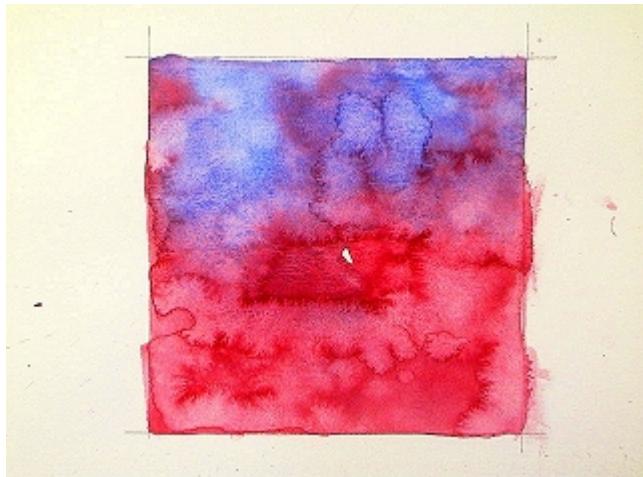
---

As the example continued to dry I worked the surface with clear water.

**Backwashes are usually accidental** in nature. When you lay two different washes close together and one happens to touch the other, the wetter of the two will flow into other.

**These accidents can be** of the "happy" kind or the "oh, @#!%#!" kind.

After reinforcing the "forced" backwashes on the bottom edges, I dropped a little more clear water on the close-to-dry washes.



### Water drops and backwashes

---

[Click image to enlarge.](#)

**Notice the degrees of difference in the upper Cobalt Blue wash.** When the clear water was dropped on a very wet wash (left side) the effect is soft and subtle. When water is dropped just before a wash is dry the effect is harsh and creates hard edges. The drier wash is less likely to flow back into the water to soften the edge.

**The bottom backwash areas were** achieved by touching the very edge of the rose wash with a brush loaded with clear water. You can see the interesting shapes formed as the Permanent Rose pigment was pushed away and concentrated.

## Alcohol watercolor textures

**OBJECT:** Learn the affect of alcohol on watercolor washes.

---

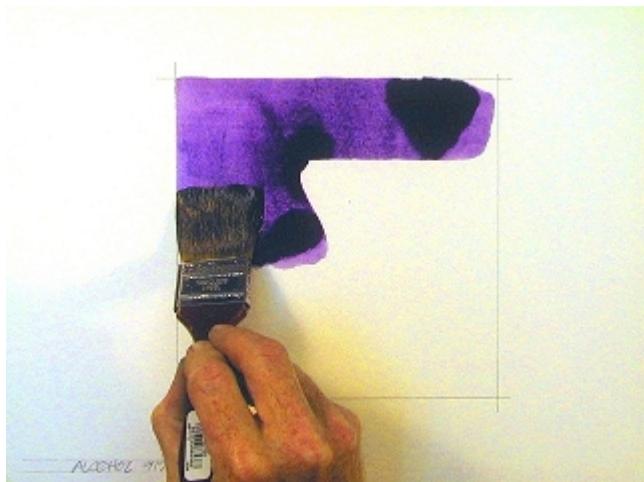
## **Materials and set up**

---

**I drew a square and found** some Q-tips and 91% Isopropyl Alcohol.

**MATERIALS USED:** Arches CP #140 watercolor paper, a 1½" wash brush, the above mentioned items.

**COLORS USED:** Dioxazine Purple, Ultramarine Blue, Cobalt Blue.



## **Laying the field of attack**

---

**I mixed a large amount** of Dioxazine Purple and started blocking in a large wash on the paper.

### The "before" picture

I continued painting in the rest of the loose wash with a Cobalt Blue and layed in some Ultramarine Blue in the upper left corner.

Prepare to Drip.



### The first wave not as effective...

Dipping a Q-tip into the alcohol I proceed to tap and drip alcohol directly into the washes.

As the alcohol hit the wash it repelled the paint, pushing it away while leaving a lighter tint of the wash exposed.

Because the wash was so wet, I had to repeatedly drop alcohol onto the open areas to keep the flowing paint at bay.

### Getting interesting now

---

**As the watercolor washes** continue to dry I try some smaller splatters of alcohol throughout the area.

**During evaporation there passed** a peak time for the effect to work best...although everything look interesting so far.

**You will notice a "fish eye" effect** in the middle of most the lighter areas where the color slightly darkens.



### Finished example: alcohol and watercolor

---

I finished playing around and set the painting aside to dry.

[Click photo to enlarge.](#)

**Alcohol and watercolor don't mix well.** The results of their fight on the paper is strangely organic in nature and not achievable using any other technique.

The "fish eyes" are a signature of this technique, so it's obvious to other painters what you are up to.

## Salt watercolor texture effects

**OBJECT:** Using table salt for unique watercolor texture effects.

---

## Materials and objective

---

**MATERIALS:** Arches #140 CP watercolor paper, Iodized Table Salt, Grumbacher 1" flat red sable. A small square of dry cellulose sponge.

**COLORS (various manufacture):** Alizarin Crimson, Cobalt Blue, Sap Green



## Start out with a painting

---

**Using a 1" flat red sable** I use washes of Cobalt Blue to paint a sky area. I graded the sky using lighter bands of Cobalt Blue closer to the horizon.

**Using straight Sap Green** I blocked in the right hill element.

### The hills ran crimson

---

I washed in the Alizarin Crimson hill on the left and pulled a stroke up the top edge of the Sap Green hill a bit.

I let the Sap Green and Alizarin Crimson battle it out where they met in the middle.



### When it rains...

---

Holding my new tool, a canister of salt, I slipped open the metal spout and tried a few light dustings of salt crystals and watched.

Hmm... there's salt sitting in puddles of paint. Looking like...salt sitting in puddles of paint.

As the minutes passed, I decided to add a bit more salt to the heavier areas of wash on the bottom.

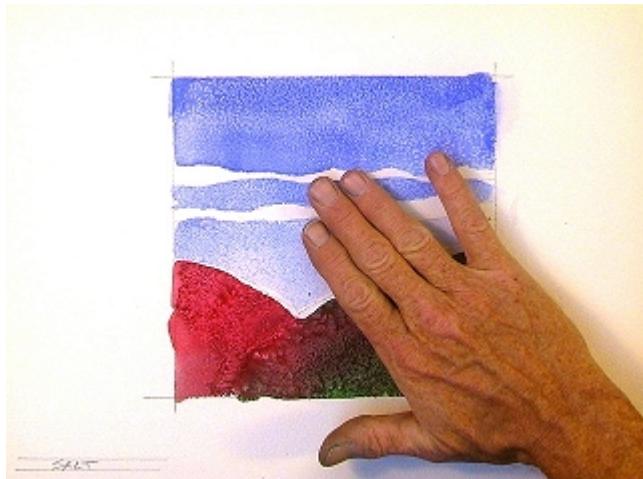
**Wow, I'm impressed!**

---

**There's not much happening** at this stage. So now I watch the drying to see what happens.

**There were a few areas** I'd left to drop the salt on when almost dry. I dropped a bit of salt in those areas.

I set it aside to dry thoroughly.



**Pass the salt please**

---

**As the painting dried**, the salt's effect on the watercolor washes became visible.

**But there was salt stuck** all over my painting!

**Using a clean dry hand** I gentle started brushing away the salt from the sky area.

**As I got to the hill sections** heaviest with salt it felt like I was sanding my skin off! There was more available binder (gum arabic) in the more intense washes which held the salt tight.

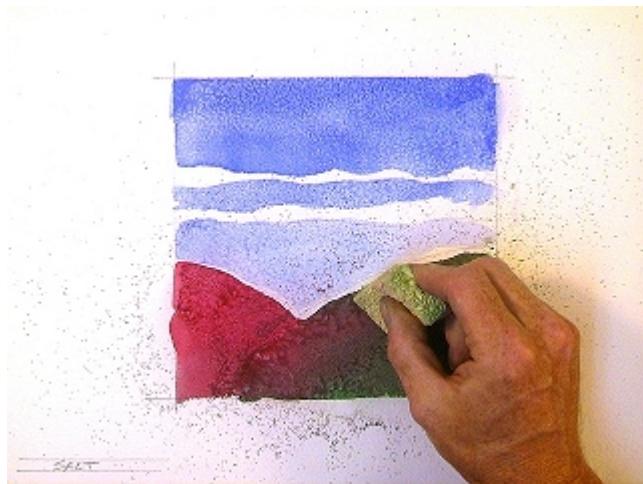
**Change of plans.**

### The proper tool for the job

---

I cut a dry cellulose sponge into a small square to uses as a surrogate for my skin.

This enabled me to quickly and gently rub and wisk away the remaining salt. When removing any abrasive from your paint (salt, sand, etc.) take care not to scratch the paintings surface.



### The salt watercolor texture effect

---

[Click image to enlarge.](#)

As the washes dry the salt crystals suck up pigment gradually, creating a myriad of light star-like shapes. This is most noticeable in the sky areas and was less effective, and different, in the darker areas.

**Experiment with various types of salt:** table salt (iodized and non-iodized), sea salt, rock salt, kosher salt, etc. Larger grained salt will produce a larger, more pronounced stalling effect.

I have no idea how salt affects the longevity of your art. Considering salt's corrosive nature I would think over time it may interact with pigments and natural paper fibers in an unintended way.

## Tissue Paper watercolor textures

**OBJECT:** Learn to create unique watercolor texture with tissue paper.

---

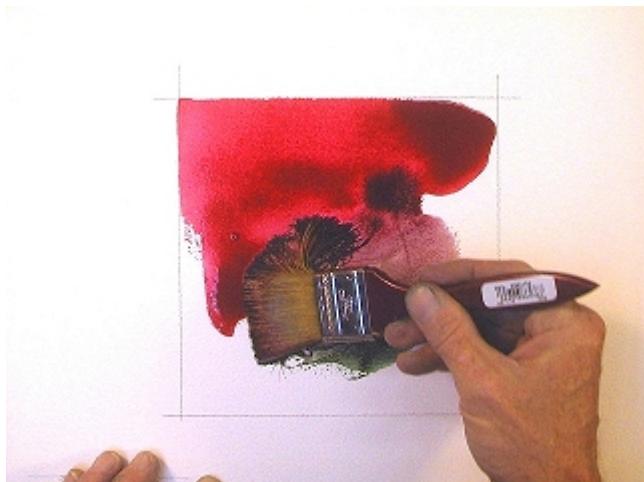
## Materials and intentions

**MATERIALS USED:** Arches CP #140 watercolor paper, a 1½" Winsor & Newton Series 965 wash brush, a crumpled piece of white gift wrap tissue paper.

**COLORS USED:** Permanent Rose, Alizarin Crimson, Sap Green.

**I started by wadding up** a single sheet of tissue paper and preparing washes of Sap Green, and a wash of Permanent Rose and Alizarin Crimson.

**I contemplated their fate.**



## Making a field of color

**Using my 1½" wash brush** I loaded it up with the previously mixed Permanent Rose and Alizarin Crimson.

**I proceed to lay washes** and cut in the edges in with red.

**I dipped the corner of my** (red) brush into some Sap Green and stabbed and mixed these two colors on the paper.

### **Before the big cover-up**

---

**I continued to scruff in** the middle a bit and then thoroughly rinsed my brush.

**I finished painting the rest** of the surface with a strong Sap Green wash intermixed with the reds from before.

**The surface is wet and saturated** with watercolor paint in strong colors.



### **Clean that mess up!**

---

**I spread the tissue out** and shaped it into the approximate size I needed.

**Being careful to cover the** entire area, I positioned the tissue over the wash and gentle pressed down with my palms.

**I did not press the tissue** entirely flat, allowing the crinkles and creases to do their job.

**I set the example aside** to dry, almost.

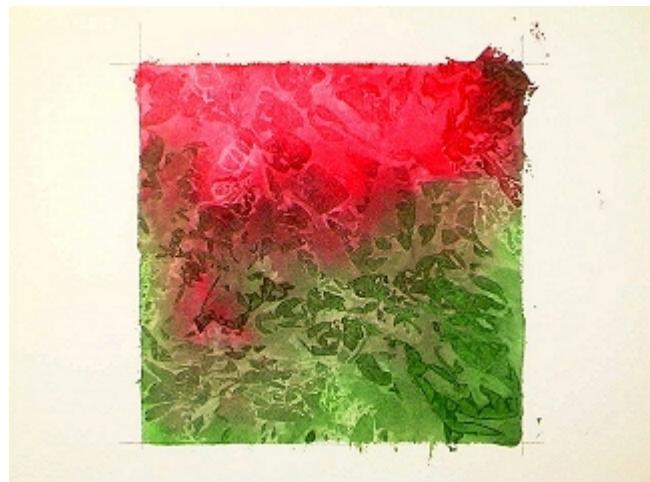
## Tissue paper watercolor textures

---

I knew that a couple of the pigments I used have high binder levels (see the salt tutorial) and the tissue paper could be glued to the painting if I let it dry completely.

I lifted a corner to see if the design was set and gently pulled the tissue paper off to reveal the effect you see.

[Click image to enlarge.](#)



## Plastic wrap watercolor texture

**OBJECT:** Learn how to create unique watercolor textures with plastic wrap.

---

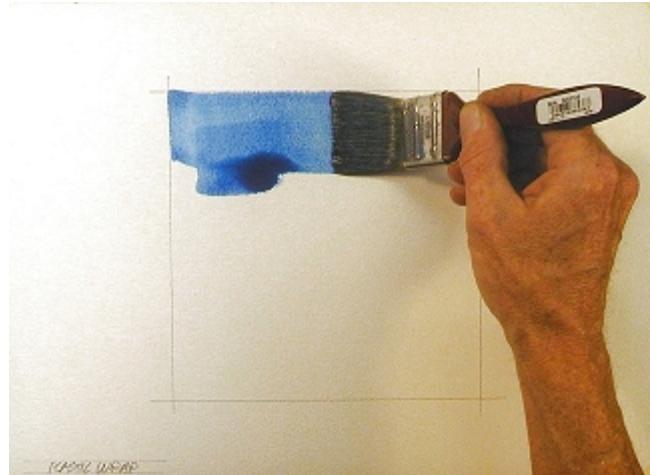
### Before the flood

**MATERIALS USED:** Arches CP #140 watercolor paper, a 1½" Winsor & Newton Series 965 wash brush, plastic food wrap.

**COLORS USED:** Phthalocyanine Blue, Sap Green.

I start by mixing a large wash of Cobalt Blue and laying in a large loose wash from the upper left corner on across the top of the paper.

I used my 1 ½" wash brush for the color washes





### The underpainting completed

I finished the underpainting with Sap Green, spreading things around in interesting shapes.

I measured off a piece of plastic wrap by sight, ripped it off the roll, and spent a minute trying to un-cling it from itself.

### Laying down the plastic

I roughly shaped the sheet with my hands and pressed it into the wet washes.

I pulled the plastic sheet out a bit to cover the whole wash.





#### Pretend to know what you're doing

---

I spent a few seconds playing with the shapes. Making some raised, flat, and stretched areas in the plastic.

You do have some control over the final outcome at this point, so take your time.

I set it aside to dry flat and undisturbed.

#### Plastic wrap watercolor texture

---

I had a teacher who used this technique as a starting point for large acrylic paintings. I now understand his enthusiasm for it at the time. The effect always gives surprises and is startlingly beautiful to look at.

[Click image to enlarge.](#)



## Masking (Frisket) watercolor tutorial

OBJECT: Learn watercolor masking techniques.

---

## Materials and a little drawing

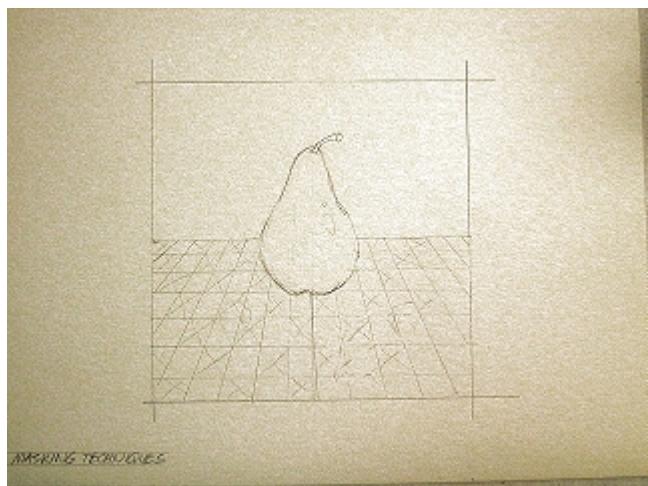
This tutorial shows the use of liquid frisket to create light objects on a dark backgrounds and repetitive patterns.

**MATERIALS:** Arches #140 CP watercolor paper, Incredible White Mask Liquid Frisket, masking tape, a #6 Liquitex synthetic Basic round (for frisket use only), Grumbacher 1" flat red sable, Kalish Kolinsky Red Sable #8 round, and a Kolonok #4 round Kolinsky red sable brush. ...and a blow-dryer and a scrap of paper.

**COLORS (various manufacture):** Cadmium Yellow Light, Cadmium Yellow Medium, Alizarin Crimson, Dioxazine Purple, Cobalt Blue, Phthalocyanine Blue, Phthalocyanine Green, Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna. Colors chosen are transparent and semi-transparent.

**A stark yellow pear** on a dark background and checkered tablecloth became the subject matter.

I drew a simple in-your-face composition in #2 pencil.



## Protecting your lights

**I started by stirring** the liquid frisket. The solids tend to settle out if not used often enough.

**Dipping my already damp #6** synthetic round into the frisket I used the scrap paper as a palette and smoothed my brush to a point.

**I then painted a layer** of liquid frisket over the entire pear, stem and all.

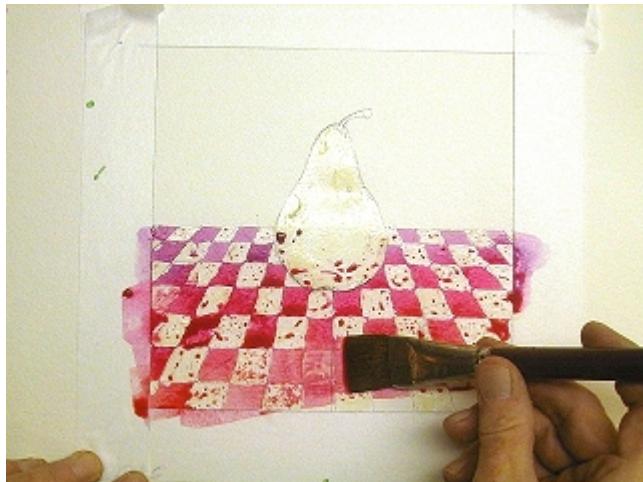
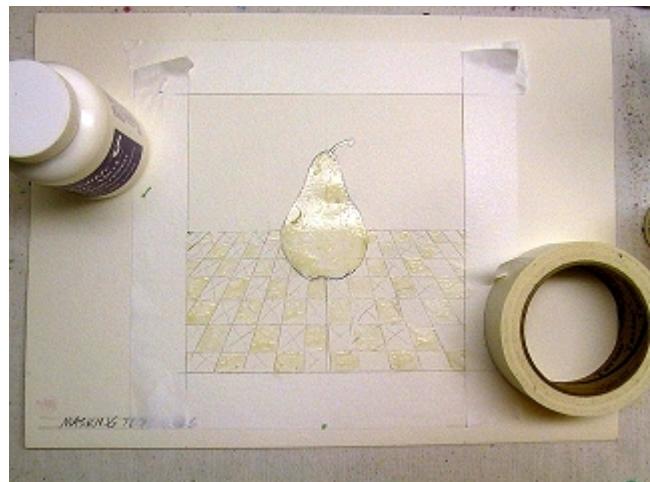
**Do not use your sable brushes** for frisket. It will ruin them by getting embedded in the hairs.

**Use a synthetic hair brush**, moisten it before use. For even easier cleaning, use mildly soapy water for wetting and rinsing your frisket brush.

### **Masking the details**

**After the pear was masked** I decided which squares in the tablecloth pattern were white and proceeded to mask them all with frisket. Notice the "X" marks the spot in the squares to be dark.

**I taped off the edges** of the entire painting with masking tape, gently smoothed the inside edges down and allowed the frisket time to dry.



### **It's quicker than you think..**

**Using washes of Alizarin Crimson, and Dioxazine Purple** I laid in the red squares of the table cloth.

**I varied the color towards purple as** the wash receded behind the pear, and graded the main red wash to a lighter red towards the foreground.

### Dry it up... Lay in background

---

**After letting the first wash dry,** I lightly mixed Phthalocyanine Green and Alizarin Crimson to form a dark murky bluegreen color. With no background detail we'll rely on color and value instead.

**I washed in a dark angled green** area and adding a touch of Phthalocyanine Blue graded the wash to a lighter bluish green trying to be as "painterly" as possible. I carefully cut in the line of the edge of the tablecloth.



### Underpainting complete... drying time

---

**I finished off the background** by mixing Alizarin into the Phthalocyanine Green to make a deep dark Maroon and blended into a shadowy upper left corner.

**At this point take a moist** brush or tissue and carefully dab up any puddles of paint resting on the frisket.

**Allow painting time** to completely dry.

### **Removing the mask...**

**To remove dried liquid frisket** you need a Natural Rubber Pickup. They come in little squares in paper sleeves. They are made of a crepe, a crude rubber used for the soles of shoes. It has a high tack.

**Gently stroke the dried liquid frisket** from the edge of the painted area into the masked area. I work in short strokes from top to bottom or left to right, pulling with an even light pressure.

**The rubber pickup will roll** and pull up the dry liquid frisket. Do this carefully and remove all traces of frisket.

**If your paper is not** totally dry, you can accidentally pull some paper fibers up with the frisket.



### **Adding an illusion of depth**

**I wanted the covered tabletop** to have a sense of depth and worked on the areas in shadow.

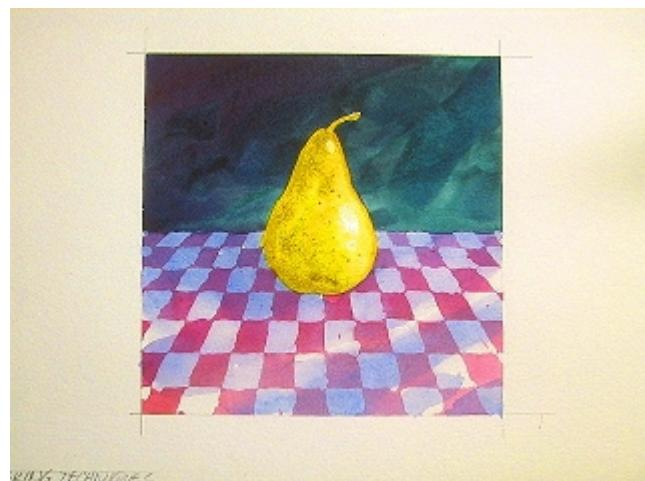
**Using my #8 red sable round** brush I loosely mixed Cobalt Blue, Phthalocyanine Blue, and Dioxazine purple in a couple areas of my palette.

**Varying the colors as I went**, I graded the shadow areas from cooler richer blues to warmer lighter blues in the foreground.

### Points of light

After letting the last areas dry, I wanted to keep some highlights open on the pear before I continued.

Using the #6 synthetic round brush, I covered a couple highlight areas on the right side of the pear and let it dry.



### A singular pear

I started working on the pear by laying a light glaze of Cadmium Yellow Light (and Medium) over the entire pear shape.

Adding tiny amounts of Raw Umber, Pthalocyanine Green, and Burnt Sienna I started modeling the form of the pear. I dropped dark "pin pricks" of the pear surface detail in with the tip of a #4 round red sable brush.

## Final strokes and clean up

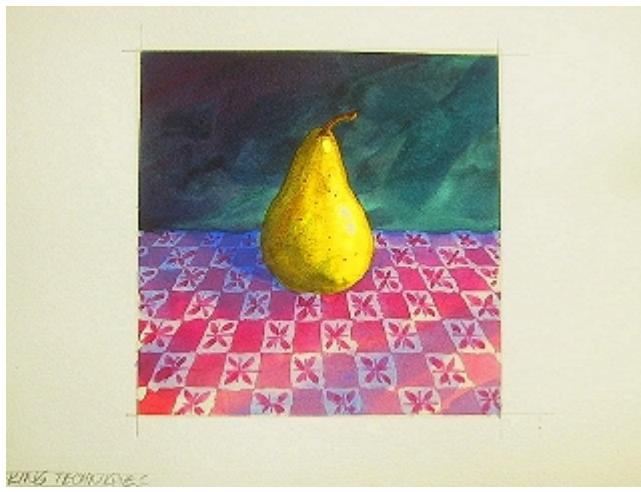
---

I let the work on the pear dry and then continued modeling the shading on the pear.

Using cool gray washes (Burnt Sienna and Phthalocyanine Blue) I further modeled the shadow side and other areas of the pear.

The tablecloth needed to be more fully realized so I devised a simple floral design over the "X" squares to pull it together. Using a #4 round red sable and Alizarin Crimson in varying values I systematically painted the pattern on the cloth.

After painting was complete, I let the painting dry again and removed the last of the frisket using the natural rubber pickup.



## Final example painting

---

To clean up the finished painting I used a kneaded eraser to remove most traces of the pencil drawing in the painting itself.

[Click photo to enlarge.](#)

Here we have a 7" square watercolor painting of a yellow pear on a red-checkered tablecloth painted using the Liquid Frisket and Masking Tape techniques.

This tutorial uses a representational approach to the subject matter, pre-planning was needed to protect areas needed for later stages of the painting. More spontaneous approaches to masking are also viable alternatives.

You can use liquid frisket on areas already painted for some amazing multi-layered effects. This works with varying degrees of success depending on the underlying pigments.

# Wax Resist watercolor tutorial

**OBJECT:** Learn to use wax-based media for watercolor 'resist' technique.

---

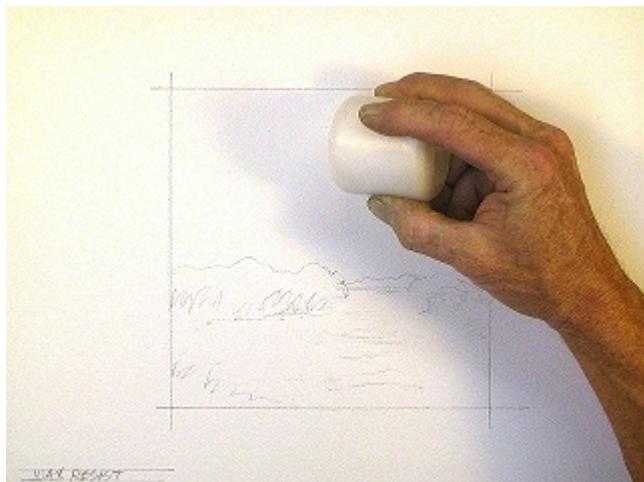
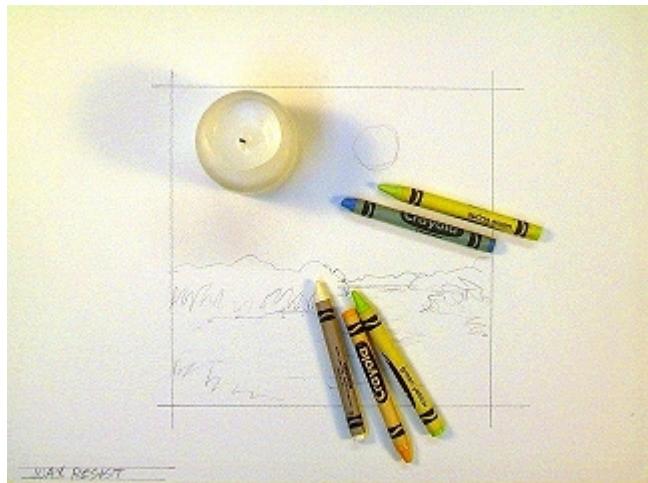
## Materials and drawing

---

**MATERIALS USED:** Arches CP #140 watercolor paper, a 1" red sable Grumbacher wash brush. A candle and a number of light colored crayons from an old pack of 64.

**COLORS USED:** Permanent Rose, Ultramarine Blue, Dioxazine Purple, Phthalocyanine Blue, Burnt Umber.

**I gathered the materials** and roughed in a quick landscape in pencil.



## Is that a moon?

---

**I started by drawing** the moon in with the edge of a candle.

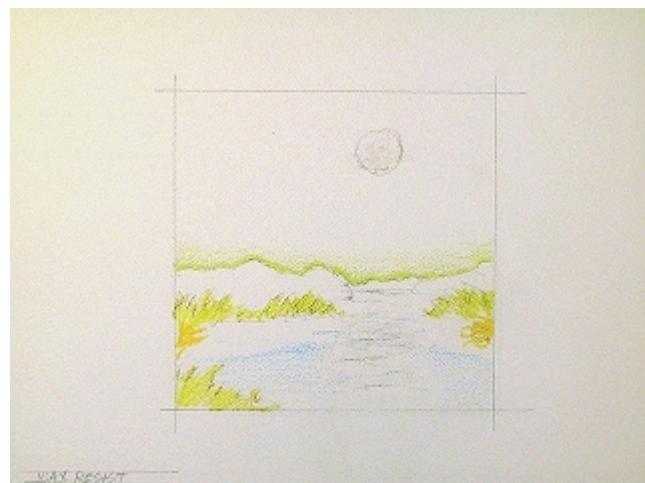
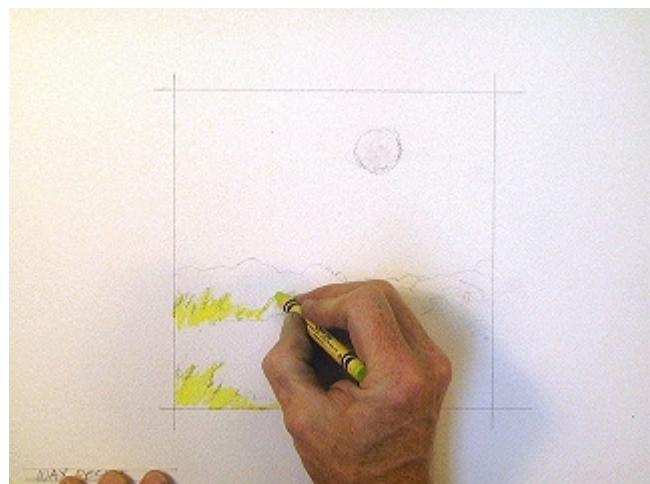
**I couldn't see the wax** on the paper so I continued to throw in some cloud forms that I couldn't see.

**I then rough in some** reflections below the moon, in the soon-to-be dark lake.

### Picking out some grassy areas

---

**Using a yellow-green crayon** I drew in some grassy reed areas around the edges of the lake area.



### It is futile to resist

---

**Using a yellow crayon** I added more details to the grassy areas.

**With the yellow-green crayon** I put a light tone along the edge of the horizon.

**I finished by dotting** a few stars in the sky with a white crayon and using a light periwinkle blue to try and catch some highlights in the lake area.

### **Are the stars out tonight?**

---

I mixed a intense Ultramarine Blue wash and started laying in the night sky.

The areas covered with wax resist the paint, and stay white. Not quite what I had visualized, but I digress and continue.



### **Maybe a little more color**

---

As I washed in the rest of the sky area I added some Permanent Rose and a touch of Dioxazine purple towards the horizon line to liven things up.

I mixed some Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Umber into a medium gray and started to cut in the background hills over the resist areas.

## Shifting colors and water tones

---

The gray didn't work out too well so I layed a wash of pure Ultramarine over top of the background hills to pop up the color.

I then mixed some Phthalocyanine Green with a bit of the previous gray wash and pulled the green wash over the surface of the lake, revealing more resist detail.



## It's easy to resist

---

I continued with the grayed-green wash, leaving a bit of white paper and drybrush toward the far shore to accentuate the reflections on the water. Some backwash came down from the blue hills so I worked the blue into the lake.

[Click image to enlarge.](#)

The wax resist technique requires some thought and preplanning if you are doing representational work.

## Reference tools: Glazed color grid

OBJECT: See how your colors interact with one another as glazes.

---

## Something for your reference wall

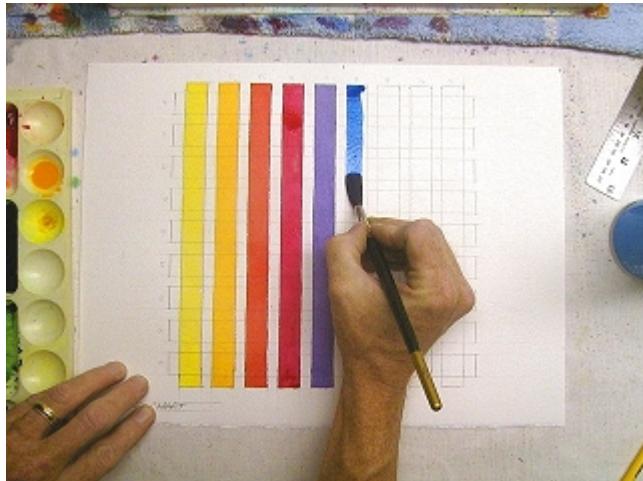
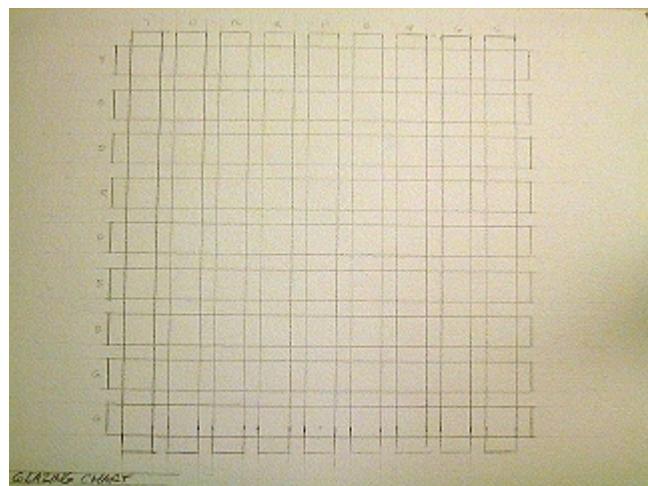
---

**Creating a glaze grid** will allow you to see how the colors you have interact with each other.

**I decided to use 9 bright colors:** Cadmium Yellow Light, Cadmium Orange, Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, Dioxazine Purple, Pthalocyanine Blue, Cobalt Blue, Sap Green, and Pthalocyanine Green.

**I drew a 9 x 9 grid** of 1/2" bands. (You can skip the drawing step if you can paint a straight line without a problem)

**You should use your own** palette of colors arranged correspondently.



## Laying some stripes

---

**Try to mix each color** to about 50% of its hue strength.

**Starting with my lightest yellow** I painted a full stripe of color down the paper in an even tone. I used a #10 round red sable, but you can use what works best for you.

**Following the rainbow of the palette** I chose for this grid, I painted through the reds to blues to greens, completing the first row of color bars.

**I let the piece dry** thoroughly before...

### Rinse and repeat

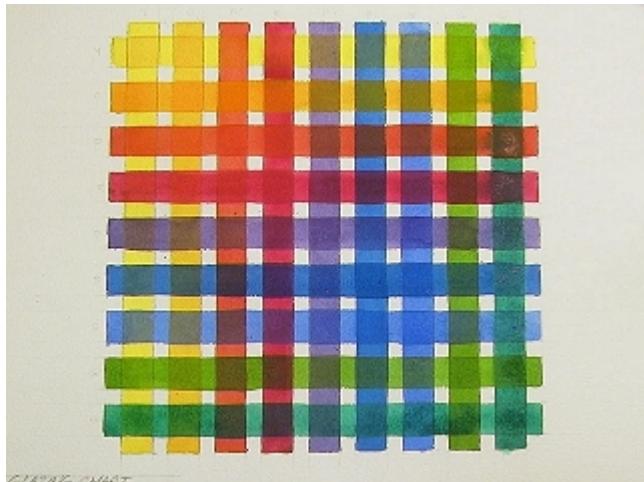
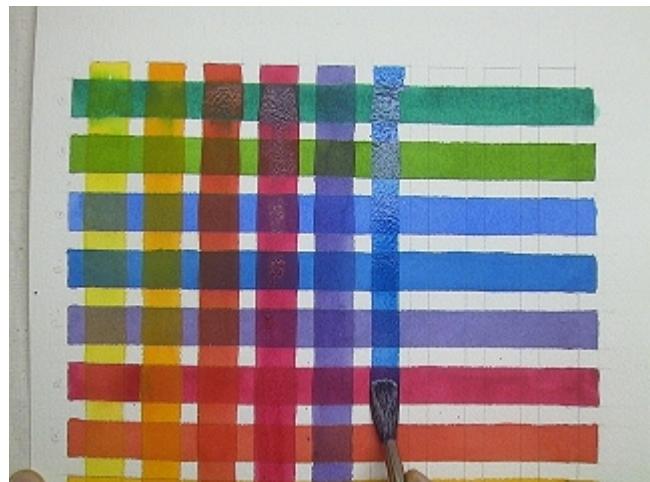
---

I flipped the grid around for easier painting.

Starting with my **lightest yellow** I proceeded to paint the same sequence of color bars across the first washes.

When you lay these **second** color bars over the first ones lay the washes as cleanly as possible.

Try not to disturb the underlying washes.



### s'pretty innit?

---

You now have a color reference chart that shows you what?

**Click image to enlarge.**

**It shows you:**

- 1) Color transparency, semi-transparency, or opacity
- 2) Colors created when your colors overlay each other
- 3) Colors that tend to bleed or stain when glazed over

**Tack it up in your studio** as a painting aid.

**Use it and others to help you** determine what your personal artistic palette of colors should be.

**Use it to identify** the troublesome pigments and their behaviors.

## Trying ideas with tracing paper - Part 1

**OBJECT:** Learning to test design ideas before you commit them to paint.

---

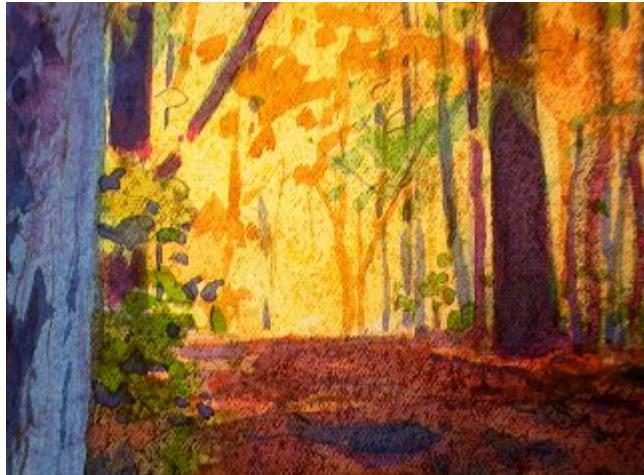
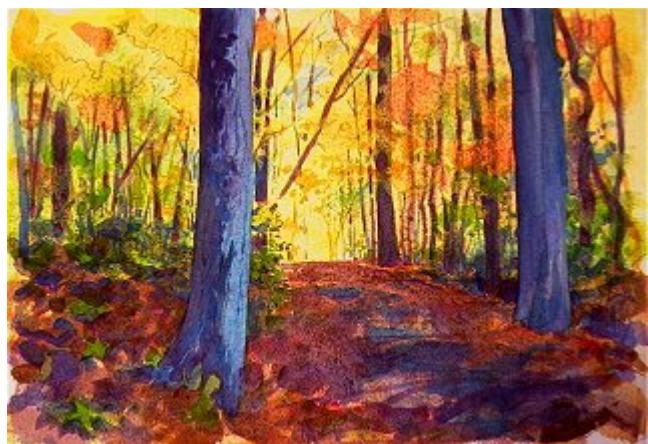
## Materials and intentions

---

- Tracing Paper
- #1 or #2 (soft) Drawing or writing pencil
- Graphite stick - 4B or softer (optional)
- Ballpoint pen - (I used red)
- Plain Facial Tissues
- Masking tape

### Requirements:

- A painting that's not quite "there" yet.
- The desire to finish the painting
- Some ideas to try



### BEFORE: Focal point without a payoff

---

This painting (see above) had laid around the studio for a few months collecting dust and cat hair. It was an O.K. painting as it was, but after living with it for a time I decided there were some simple additions I could add to "complete" this painting.

All elements in the woods scene were working to pull you straight down the muddy path to...what?

An empty spot (see left.)

And not a very interesting trip there either.

## Laying down some paper

---

**Something was missing.** The setting looked rather ominous in spite of all the bright fall colors. I felt like *anything* could come tearing over the crest of the hill at any moment.

**Giving it some thought,** I started by laying some tracing paper over the area I was going to work on.

I used some masking tape to gently tape a couple edges down to keep the tracing paper in position.





#### Can you see what you're doing?

**Your tracing paper** should be translucent enough to see the basic details of your underlying painting.

**If you have** a light box to work with, heavier papers such as layout or plain bond paper can be used in a darkened room.

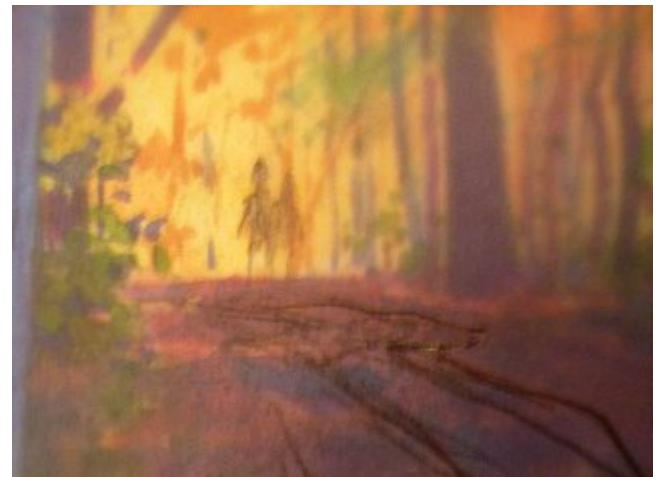
#### Elements of interest

**By this time** I had decided to add a strolling pair of figures in silhouette.

**I loosely drew** in some figures. Just some basic human forms.

**I wanted to** give the impression of the figures walking away from the viewer, but that was secondary to setting the scale of the scene by deciding on the height of the people in the distance.

**The middle and** foreground seemed fairly non-descript so...





**Maybe a little tracking...**

---

**To show evidence** of others enjoying the park I doodled in some muddy tracks.

**The figures established** that the path was just wide enough for an access road so I added some indications automotive tracks.

**I threw in** some random bicycle or motorcycle ruts because that's what I usually trip on.

**(Continued in Part 2)**

## Trying ideas with tracing paper - Part 2

**OBJECT:** Learning to test design elements before you commit them to paint.

---

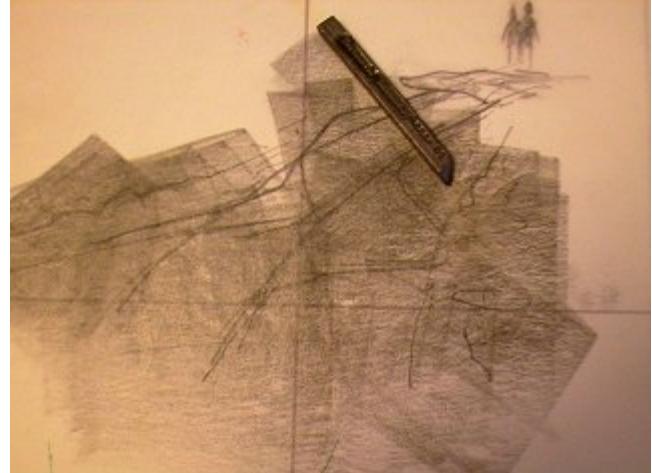
### Flipping and rubbing

**To prepare your** new design elements for transfer you need to turn your tracing paper into transfer paper.

**Any soft lead** graphite instrument will do. I use graphite sticks because you can cover large areas quickly by using the side of the stick.

**On a flat**, smooth surface such as the back of a drawing pad or scrap foam board, flip your tracing paper over and rub graphite over the areas where your lines are.

**Remember, you are** coating the BACK of the drawing with a fairly dense coat of graphite.





### Distribute evenly

**After you've coated** the paper with graphite you need to even out the graphite coating and smooth away the graphite dust.

**Take a wadded** tissue and, using a circular motion, smooth the graphite into the tooth of the tracing paper.

**Make sure all** areas to be transferred to the painting are covered.

**Shake any excess** graphite dust into the trash can.

### Getting it on the painting

**Take your "cartoon";** and position it on your painting. Tape an edge or two down, gently.

**Trace your design** using a ball point pen and a light touch. I use a red pen because it's easier for me to see.

**Use moderate pressure** when tracing.

**Too much pressure** can bruise grooves into the surface of your watercolor paper. The dents can show up as dark lines if painted over.





#### Interest added: background

**On the far** left you can see the transferred image of the figures.

**I refine the** drawing at this point by working over the transferred areas with pencil.

**On the immediate** left you have the finished figures.

**I used three** colors, raw sienna, dioxazine purple, and cadmium red to quickly paint in the figures in a loose manner. These were painted with a #4 round sable brush.

**The figures are** really nothing more than indications of people shapes. Although they are in silhouette, the colors suggest details that aren't really there.

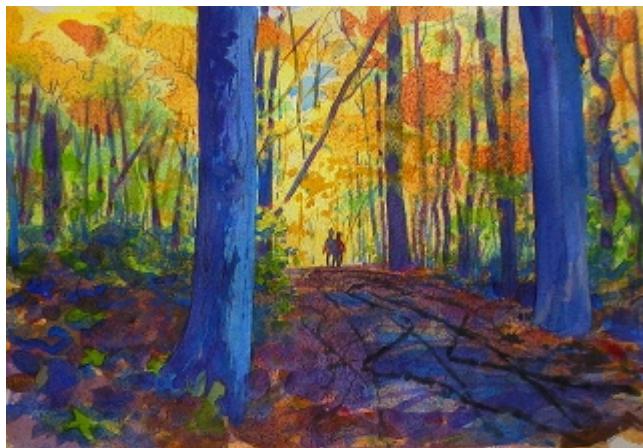
#### Interest added: foreground and middleground

**I decided to** approximate the trail tracks left by previous mechanized hikers. I've seen them before, but I've never really studied them in depth. A ruts a rut, eh?

**A fairly dark** mix of phthalocyanine green, alizarin crimson, and a little ivory black was used to get some interesting grays.

**I used a** lighter gray to rough in the lines and then intensified the darks where needed.

**After the painting** dried thoroughly I removed any excess pencil marks with a kneaded eraser.



#### AFTER: A different perspective

**The visual flow** of the original painting (click image below) reads vertically, right up the big blue tree trunk (left of center), off the page, and back down the tree on the right to the path, which leads you to the middle of the page.

**With the changes**, the visual flow starts again up the blue tree trunk, you jump immediately to the people in the distance and pan back to the foreground. Which again pulls your eye up the tree on the right and sweeps left across the canopy of color.

**Notice how the** addition of people draws your interest and implies a story in process.



BEFORE:

## Using a Blow Dryer effectively

**OBJECT:** Learn to dry your watercolor paintings quickly as you work.

---

### Warm is good, hot is bad

I've used many blow dryers over the years to speed the drying of washes between painting stages. It is a fast and efficient and there are no ill consequences if used properly.

**I ALWAYS use the "low" setting**, no matter how impatient I am. I currently use a 1600 watt blow dryer with a "cool" button that turns off the heating element to use the fan only.



### No steam allowed!

**Hold the blow dryer about 10" - 12"** from your painting and move across the surface in overlapping strokes of warm air. Pretend you are spray painting the surface.

**DO NOT hold the blowdryer** on a stubborn damp area for a prolonged period. You don't want steam, and you don't want the actual drying speed to affect how an area of the painting looks. (It can)

### **Paper is porous!**

---

**As you deposit paint on** the surface, the moisture also soaks through your paper. If you want your paper to lay flat don't forget to dry the back also.

**I point the dryer under the edge** of the painting, forcing the warm air under the paper and drying the underside. I rotate the board and do this under each edge for a few seconds each.



### **How damp is it?**

---

**Patience is a virtue.** (yeah, yeah) You can avoid the hassle of a blow dryer if you keep several paintings in process at a time. Work on one for a bit, set it aside and work on another project. It's like being an artist.

**When I'm working on a watercolor painting** I usually use a traditional approach using multi-technique underpainting and glazing. I need time between each phase of painting to gauge my next steps. A 10-15 minute break can dry the painting enough to start back to work.

**I test the dryness of an area** with the back of my hand. Don't touch! With practice you can feel the cool evaporation of an area that isn't dry yet by hovering your hand close to the surface. Really.