

Watercolor Foundations

January 21, 2020

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Week 2 Recap

Good work, everyone, with all your practice! I hope by now you know you can learn how to handle and master watercolor. Just takes interest and determination. It's wonderful to hear your oohs and aahs during class when you're applying paint and water to paper. You're enjoying the paint. The pleasure can be that simple!

So... *Watercolor isn't just another pretty color. Each pigment has a unique character.*

I want to emphasize.... Water is your pigment vehicle. Essentially, you're painting with water!

Use more of it. Get that brush loaded. Get that bead bigger. Let your brush swim. Don't be afraid of drips and runs or losing control. You can always pull back.

Some of you are hesitant and afraid of wasting paint. You must fight that urge.

TIP: Let the mixed paints on your palette dry and use them again. If you're mixing a quantity of paint, mix it in a covered and/or airtight container. **FYI,** some artists use all their mixes eventually and never clean their palettes.

In relation to water, I want to talk about brushes... Synthetic brushes hold less water than natural hair and NH mix brushes. If your brushes are pure synthetic, you'll want to get it loaded to its max with water and pigment.

If your tendency is towards not using enough water, try using brushes that have a large capacity to hold water. Princeton Neptune (Pure synthetic), Silver Black Velvet (Mix) and natural hair such as squirrel and sable will do the trick. If your tendency is to use too much water, use pure synthetics. Princeton Elite or Cosmotop.

During class:

I demoed some graded and flat washes. A couple using two colors.

There are multitudes of ways to lay a flat and graded wash, all depending on what it is you're painting. In effect that's all we're doing when we're painting with watercolor... running washes.

One can run an even or graded wash using **wet on dry** or **wet on wet** techniques. We discovered it's probably easiest to wet the surface first.

Keep in mind when applying paint, you'll need to apply a thicker consistency of pigment because it's being diluted by the water already on your paper.

Gravity is your friend. Angle and move your paper, mounted or block, around to help the paint move where you want it.

Back-runs, blooms, blossoms and cauliflowers (various terms) form when water is dropped into a wet/almost mat wash. They also form when excess water pools along the edges of a wash or in a buckle of the paper. The paper can dry unevenly, cornering the water. The drying areas pull the water towards it. A bloom will often form if you don't pick up the bead or excess water after laying a wash.

Sandra asked what granulation is. Another term used for that property is **sedimentary**. I tried explaining and demoing. Will try to do a video focusing on it.

To reiterate from Terms and Techniques and Paint Characteristics handouts: each pigment is, or a combination of these properties:

- **Granulating or Sedimentary** - Pigments that are granular are composed of large particles. These particles settle into the paper wells making reticulating patterns and textures. Granulating pigments can be transparent. Manganese blue and Ultramarine blue are examples of heavily granulating pigments or paints. Some brands grind them finer than others, too. Some pigments granulate lightly, such as Quinacridone reds.
- **Cold press papers exhibit granulation more so than hot press.** HP papers do show some granulation. Granulating pigments are a little more difficult to work with because going back into a wash will disturb the granulation, making visible marks. One reason why fussing and noodling with a wash is not a good idea. You end up having to rewet and reactivate the wash. WC can also look "overworked."

In contrast to granulating pigments:

- **Staining** - Pigments that are so fine and dye-like that they penetrate the paper fibers, staining it. Staining colors are difficult to remove from the paper surface. Clothing too.

Other characteristics:

- **Opaque** - The pigment is dense, not allowing light to penetrate it to the surface of the paper and reflect back to your eye.
- **Semi-opaque** - Pigment is less dense allowing some light to penetrate to the paper.
- **Transparent** - The pigment particles allow light to pass through to the paper and reflect back to your eye. It's what gives watercolor its luminous quality. Transparent colors seem to glow.

I'll be uploading more demos about washes, brush-loading and wet on wet and will let you know when they're up.

Your ever-present WC teacher☺
Kris

