

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Beginners Painting Course. I have been teaching drawing, painting and illustration for many years and am pleased to share my knowledge with you and guide you through the beginnings of colour. This course will introduce you to the joys of working in colour through paint. It is important that you understand that this is a journey, and once you begin, you will be traveling on this journey for all the rest of your creative life. In other words, there is so much to unravel and discover about painting, things you will only learn once you stop reading about it and get going - the gaining of knowledge, appreciation and skills is more wonderful than it seems until you start, and all great painters will tell you that they are still learning until they die. How wonderful that is.

Also, please accept now that your painting skills will always be compromised if you don't improve your drawing abilities at the same time. There is no such thing as drawing OR painting. Painting IS drawing - it's drawing with a brush. Drawing is painting, with a stick. Both are vehicles, and without good drawing, your paintings will not go as far forward as you would like. So this course is designed for those who have some drawing knowledge and are looking for help in getting going with paints.

For the moment, please let go of the notion of Finished Paintings. For now, your aim is to get to grips with what the paint can do, how to handle it, how to experiment with it and how to make it do what you want. Once you can do THOSE things, you will be able to paint a Finished Painting. Rather like learning the piano - until we know how to make our fingers move freely, do some scales and lots of simple tunes, we cannot begin to tackle a concerto, for we wouldn't be ready and we would fail. I am not interested in you failing; I am interested in you succeeding.

Your assignments (these are **red**) are split into exercises covering three paint mediums, water colour, acrylics and gouache. I will keep the materials and the palette to a minimum so you are able to try all three, without a huge outlay. The differences between the paints are fascinating, and it is rewarding to try them all at this stage.

Finally, when you send your artwork for critique, in that little time window of waiting to hear back, please keep on painting and drawing - don't stop. Repeat the exercises, alter them a bit or change the subject, but keep painting, as it is the constant practicing, playing, experimenting and trial and error which helps you improve and helps you more quickly begin to really understand what you are doing. Please ask as many questions as you need to and let me know how you got on with each exercise.

So, let's begin!

PREPARATION

Many watercolour artists paint straight onto the paper. You may want to do so later on, but in the beginning, you will probably want to outline your drawing in pencil. Keep it as simple as possible.

LAYING OUT A WASH

The 'wash' is the mixture of colour and water that you use to paint your picture. The less water you use the darker will be your picture. So begin with a light wash, say a light blue wash for sky areas. When that is dry you can add darker tones and finally the details with a second and third wash. Each wash is darker than the one before. We will show this in the step-by-step painting exercise that follows.

Here is how to practise applying a wash. Dip your brush into the water and apply a little colour to the point. Pass the brush from left to right at the top of the paper. Then go slightly down the paper and do the same again, always from left to right (of course if you are left handed you will probably find it easier to go from right to left).

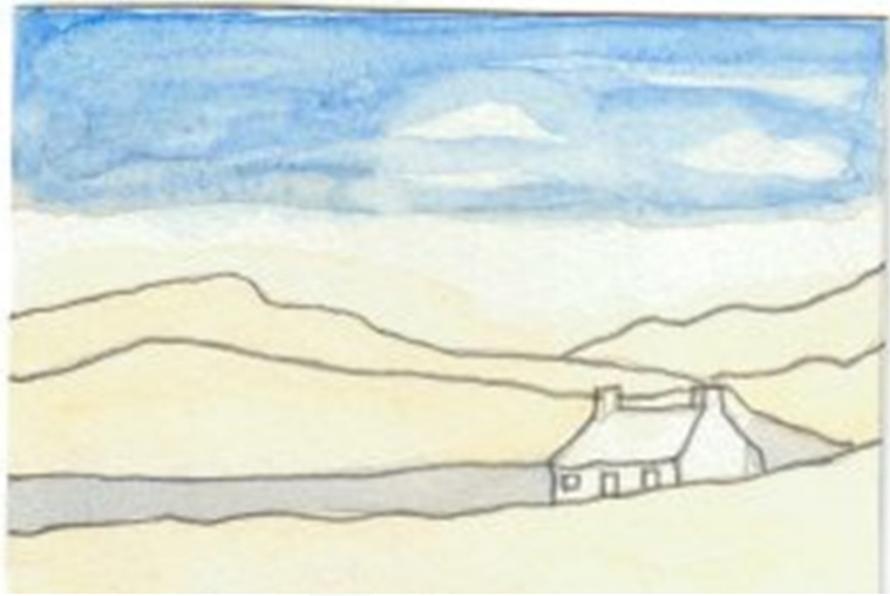
Try this out on a clean piece of paper, lightening the wash as you go down the page by adding more water. You will find this a useful technique for painting the sky.

LAYERING

The lovely thing about water colour is its transparency, and this is most apparent when we paint in layers - each layer painted onto dry paper (or onto a dry layer of paint) is called a glaze. You can see in this diagram that laying colours over another allows some of the underneath colour to show through, enriching your painting, and allowing you to add warmth etc. in more layers. Only if you over-mix the number of colours will your painting look over-worked or become muddy looking. Use a small water colour pad to practice this layering; it is the most effective way of building your painting.



Stage 1



Stage 2



Stage 3



EFFECTS

SPATTERING

It is a very fun technique to have a great effect. It is brilliant on landscape and textured drawings or even abstract or on flat washes. It is created by taking your brush and put paint on it then transferring on your finger and spattering with the brush from your finger to the painting. Move and position your brush depending which direction you want the spatter to go.

