

# Art Post #2



## Basic Watercolor Techniques – Part 1

Now that you have experimented with paint/water/paper (**Art Post #1**), and have learned about sticky paint, creamy paint, and thin paint, here are a few more techniques. Have fun and experiment with your paints. Don't worry about creating a finished painting. We will explore that in another post.

### USING WET & DRY AREAS

One of the easiest ways to control your watercolor paints is to control where you put your water. I have seen beginning students take a spray bottle and wet their whole paper. And then they find that their paint does what it wants, not what they want. The solution is to carefully wet *ONLY* the section that you want to paint. The paint will only flow where the paper is wet, but not into the dry area of the paper. This is tricky because we often want to paint



in an area that is next to a wet or still damp area. Be patient and make sure that any adjoining areas are almost dry. You can tell if they are still damp by touching the paper. If it is cold, it is still damp and paint may bleed into that part of the paper.

In the small painting at the bottom of the left column, notice how the stems, leaves, and flowers all have clean, hard edges. Before adding the color, those areas were wet with clear water. The paint only flowed into those wet areas and bleeding of the colors only occurred in the wet areas.

### Experiment:



Take a brush and using only clear water, paint an abstract shape on your paper. Make sure that you leave big dry holes in your shape and make sure that the wet areas have lots of water. Now on your palette, activate three colors with water and mix up some sticky paint, some creamy paint, and some thin paint for each color. Load your brush and drop the different paints into the very wet areas of your shape. You can tilt your paper so that your paint moves around the wet shape.

In the example shown, I put in the thin paint on the left side, then the creamy paint in the middle, and the sticky paint on the right. Notice how the wet paint bleeds more than the stickier drier paint. This is how to control your watercolors.

I used just three primary colors for this exercise:

- Cobalt Blue
- Winsor Red, Naphthol Red or Pyrrol Red
- Cadmium Yellow or Cadmium Lemon

## MIXING PAINT ON THE PALETTE VS. LETTING IT MIX ON PAPER

The true beauty of painting with watercolor is that the colors are luminous, they glow. But this happens only when you “mix” your colors on your paper, instead of on your palette. Mixing colors on the palette can result in dull, muddy colors. But if you use the same pigments and drop them into a wet area, the colors will glow. This luminosity is one of the qualities of watercolor paintings and it is incredibly difficult to achieve it in oil or acrylic.

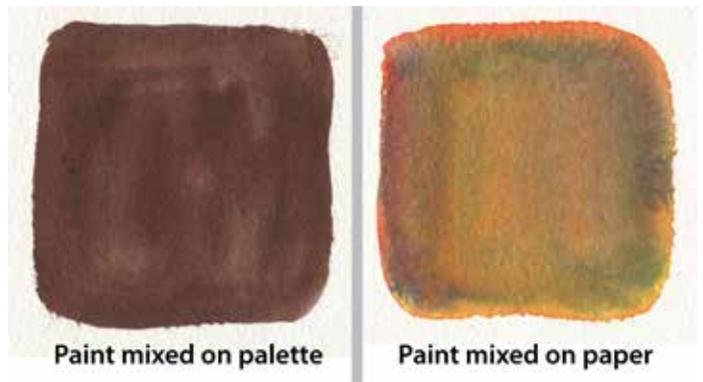
### Experiment:



On your palette, activate the three primary colors and let them flow into each other. Notice the many different colors that just happen by the paints flowing into each other. By dipping

your brush into different sections of the paint puddle you get different colors. Paint little squares of each color to see how many different colors you can get.

### Experiment:



1. Start by drawing two 2” squares. You will be comparing two color samples.
2. For your first sample, take your three colors and mix them all together on your palette until you get a brown.
3. Paint a square on your paper.
4. For your second sample, wet a square on your paper with clear water and then “mix” your three colors by dropping them into the wet area.
5. Letting the three paints mix naturally in the wet area will give you a richer color. To get a brown control how much of each color you put in. But notice how the pigments separate out and the brown square glows rather than looking muddy. Watercolor pigments create a pointillist effect.

*IN THE NEXT LESSON WE WILL EXPLORE A FEW MORE BASIC WATERCOLOR TECHNIQUES*



### **BASIC COLOR THEORY!!**

Believe it or not, for this painting, I only used three paints, the three primaries that I recommend for these exercises—yellow, red, and blue. The secondary colors—green, orange, and purple—are the mixes of the three primaries. Notice how many different colors and variations I can get with just three paints.