



ACRYLIC PAINTING TECHNIQUES FOR BEGINNERS



Dry Brush

When paint is applied to canvas or work surface using a dry brush and paint undiluted by water, you'll create a strong current of color on the page. Your lines will be uneven, as they won't have water to soften the edges, but this can be a purposeful painterly effect. **Dry brush** application lends texture and movement to lines.



Washing

You can treat acrylic somewhat like watercolor when you dilute the paint with enough water. You can use the watered down paint to apply translucent washes on your surface. However, unlike watercolor, the acrylic paint will set permanently. Mixing wash and dry brush methods can be very effective in creating a variety of textures in a single piece.



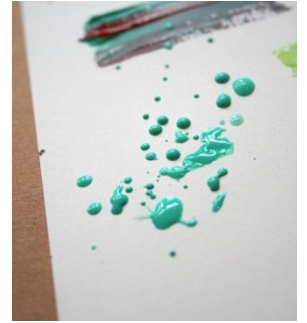
Stippling

This is a method used in drawing which can also be used with paint (Georges Seurat's work is a fine and famous example). Creating an assemblage of tiny dots to create imagery can be an effective way to show texture and to create a compelling scene with subtle variations in color.



Flicking

Using a fairly wet brush, you can flick paint onto a work surface for an uneven splatter effect. It's fantastic for creating an abstract landscape or a starry night or for just adding texture to a piece.



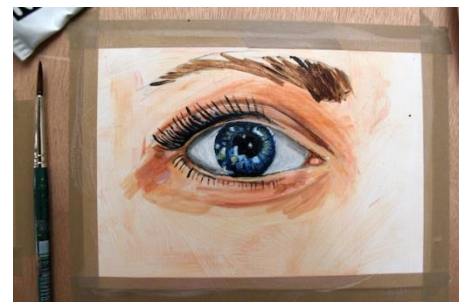
Dabbing

Using a corner of a sponge or even a piece of paper towel, you can dab on accents of color. Think of it like very artistic sponge painting. Dabbing adds a lot of texture and movement to a piece. For instance, on the painting above, dabbing with a sponge perfectly captured the texture and movement of trees swaying in a light breeze.



Detailing

A small, fine brush can be used to apply details, such as the whites of eyes or the glisten on the wing of a bird. In our tutorial on [how to draw eyes](#), you'll get a fantastic primer on detail work in acrylic, which can carry over to different subject matters.



Palette knife

Applying paint with a palette knife is an instant way to make your painting "artsy." It might seem intimidating or advanced, but it's a technique accessible even to beginners. Simply use the palette knife to scrape up a bit of paint and apply it to your work surface. Pretend that you're artfully spreading buttercream on a cake or even butter on bread, and you'll get the idea pretty quickly.



Underpainting



Start your painting by creating a “sketch” of the image in paint. Often this is done in a color that contrasts with the palette you have in mind for the finished piece. You can paint over the underpainting entirely using opaque acrylic to cover any evidence of the paint below, or you can let parts of it shine through for a dimensional effect.



Glazing

By incorporating matte [medium](#) into your paint, you can create luminous scenes. The technique, which is detailed in [this tutorial](#), is simple: Mix acrylic paint with a small amount of matte medium and apply the paint in thin layers, building the color until it creates a rich, complex color.



Layering: Layering, which can be combined with either of the two above methods, is simply to paint in layers. This means that you’ll build the painting from the bottom up. You’ll start by painting big blocks of color, often as washes, and then adding more and more refinement as you add layers.



Block in Colors: This is a fantastic method for beginners. Trace your image, separating each color or tone into separate shapes. Create a palette, and then paint in the shapes as if it were your own DIY paint by numbers piece.