

INTRODUCTION TO ACRYLIC PAINTS

Basics and techniques for beginners!

WHAT IS ACRYLIC PAINT?

Acrylic paint is mixture of pigment and binder

Pigment gives paint its color

Binder gives paint its consistency and helps it stay on surfaces

Higher quality acrylic paints contain higher levels of pigment

ACCRYLIC PAINTS...

- are water-based, non-toxic, and can be cleaned with water
- are made with synthetic polymer binders, that become like plastic when dried
- dry quickly
- are very versatile-can achieve a variety of different effects and styles and can be painted on a variety of different surfaces
- will remain permanent when dried. Will ruin clothing and brushes if not cleaned properly and thoroughly!!!

HOW TO BUILD UP YOUR
ACRYLIC PAINTS
TO CREATE A FINISHED

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



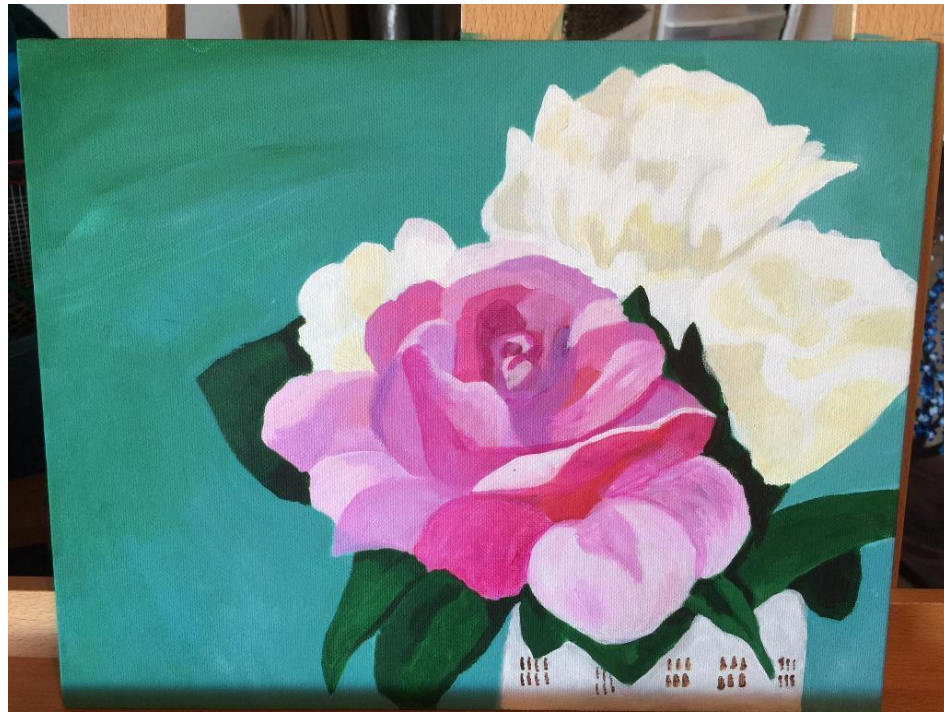
By incorporating matte **medium** into your paint, you can create luminous scenes. The technique, which is detailed in [this tutorial](#), is simple: Mix acrylic paint with a small amount of matte medium and apply the paint in thin layers, building the color until it creates a rich, complex color.

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. The technique is detailed in this post about [how to paint a self portrait](#), but the method could be applied to paint other subject matter.

BLOCK IN COLORS



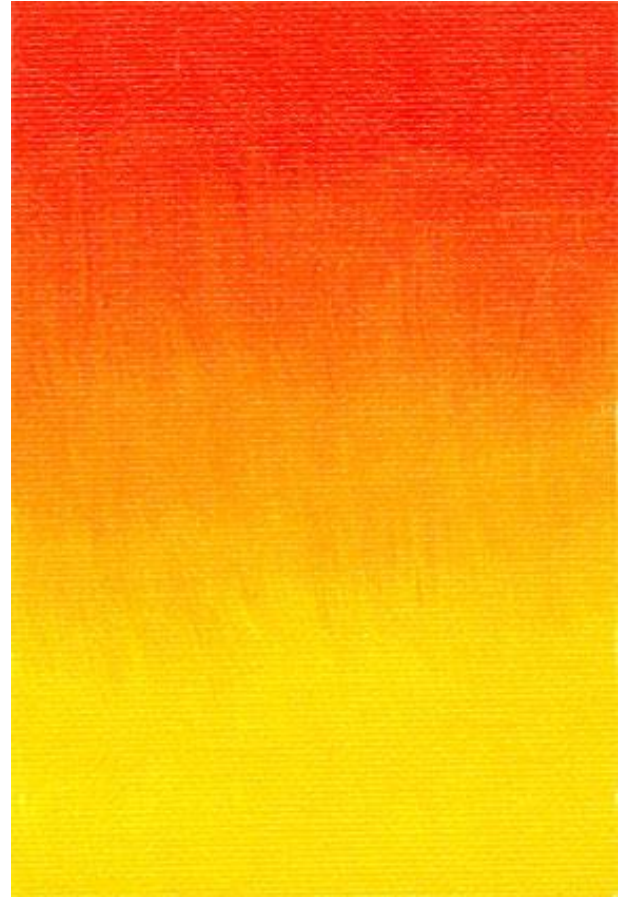
This is a fantastic method for beginners. Trace your image, separating each color or tone into separate shapes. Create a palette, and then paint in the shapes as if it were your own DIY paint by numbers piece. This is an easy method with monochromatic palettes or can be employed with a variety of colors, too

4 BASIC
BRUSH TECHNIQUES

THESE TECHNIQUES PROVIDE A GREAT FOUNDATION TO
HAVE IN YOUR REPERTOIRE OF PAINTING SKILLS!
AS YOU MOVE ALONG IN YOUR PAINTING EXPERIENCE,
YOU WILL DISCOVER YOUR OWN VARIATIONS OF THESE

GRADIENT BLENDING

Blending two colors creating a gradient transition from one to another. This can be done with any brush, however a Fan bristle brush is best and is made for painting skis and these types of transition. The trick is to control what is called the curve, the center of the transition so that it is 50% Red and 50% yellow and each blended out to the pure 100% color.



WET IN WET

Start by painting a solid field of yellow, while the field is still wet, paint strokes of red on top. Use the same size brush spaced out to create a gradient effect. Have the stronger red at the top with more and overlapping paint strokes and stronger yellow at the bottom by using less brush strokes and spacing them further apart. The stroke directions should appear random and not regimented or lined up in a formal pattern for this technique. A Round bristle brush was used for this example.





Example of artist *Richard Diebenkorn* using a Wet-Into-Wet technique.

SCUMBLING

In this lesson you can dip your brush into the paint push it straight into the canvas so that the bristles splay out, then the brush is rotated slightly creating a mottled effect. This is simply repeated keeping more red paint at the top and yellow at the bottom. You will need to experiment to see how the paint blends as you create the transition from red to yellow. Keep in mind that this is a mottled effect and not a smooth transition. A Flat bristle brush was used for this example, however you should experiment with various types of brushes.



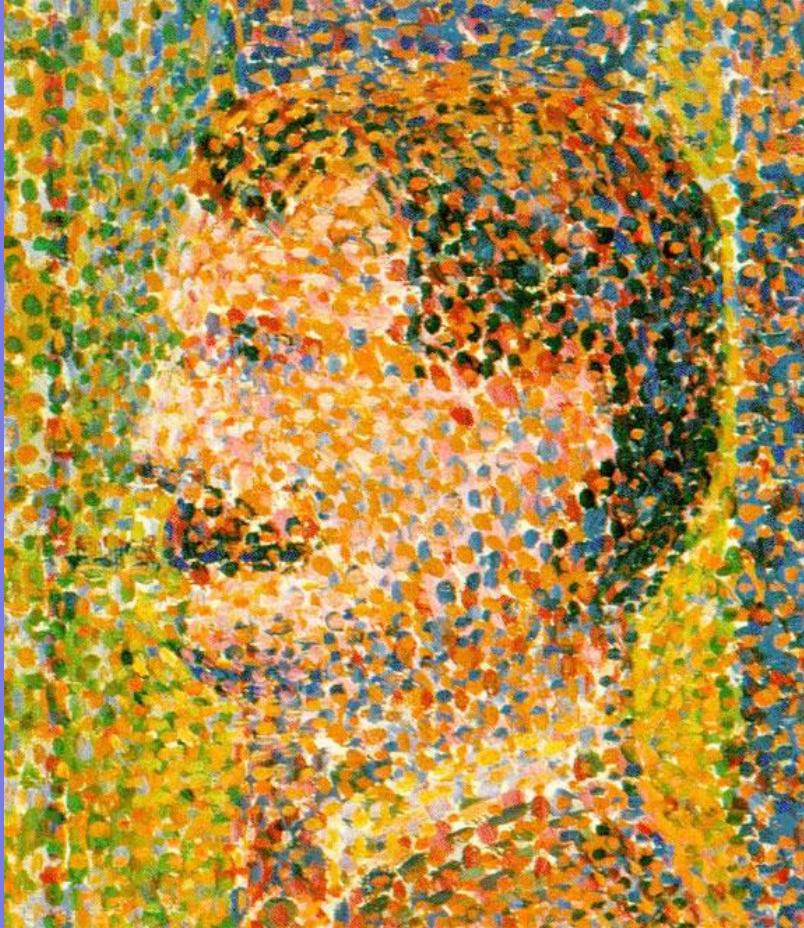


Example of artist *Joseph Mallord William Turner* use of scumbling technique

OPTICAL COLOR MIXING

Create evenly spaced strokes of pure color, randomly spaced. Start with the yellow paint and allow it to dry completely (this could take over night in the case of oils). Then with the same size brush, create the same randomly placed evenly spaced red brush strokes creating an optical mix of red and yellow that will appear orange from a distance. A round bristle brush was used in this example.





Example of artist *Georges-Pierre Seurat*
use of Optical Color Mixing technique

MORE ACRYLIC
PAINTING
TECHNIQUES...

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



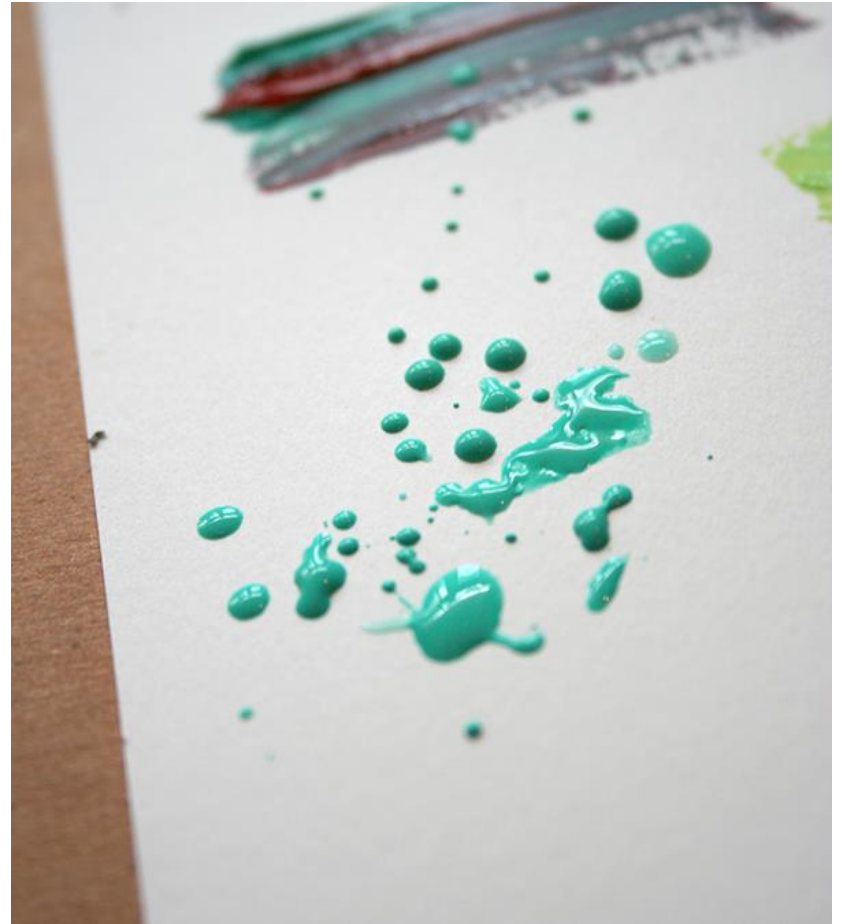
You can treat acrylic somewhat like watercolor when you dilute the paint with enough water. You can use the watered down paint to apply translucent washes on your surface. However, unlike watercolor, the acrylic paint will set permanently. Mixing wash and dry brush methods can be very effective in creating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

PALLETTE 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.

