

Materials and Tips for Painting Thistles Loosely in Watercolors

For painting Thistles loosely in watercolors I wanted to make it as simple as possible for you. I strongly recommend that you try out the techniques I demonstrate on a piece of watercolor paper before committing your brush strokes to the painting - especially once you have started the process. Just cut up a watercolor sheet into pieces large enough to try out the techniques I demonstrate, even the splashing of paint in the first two demonstrations. It's good to get the hang of it before committing to your painting.

TIPS:

- It's important to choose good quality watercolor paper and artist's watercolor paints.
- Remember we paint from light to dark in watercolors.
- Watercolors dry at least 20% lighter.
- Paintings should have an unequal percentage of light, medium and dark values to make a good and interesting composition.
- **Materials**
 - A large watercolor brush (I am using #30) Use the largest size you have.
 - A one inch filbert brush or any large round brush you have (synthetic is fine).
 - Hogs hair brush – ½”
 - Good quality 140lb or 300lb watercolor paper - hot or cold pressed.
 - A spray bottle that gives a mist spray - available at any drug store.
 - Tape or clamps to hold down your paper.
 - Cling wrap.
 - Palette knife or vegetable knife with sharp point.
 - Palette or plate for mixing paints.
 - Two water containers - one for cleaning your brushes and one for mixing paints.

Watercolor Paints

I use a Daniel Smith paints but you can use any good quality watercolors - not student watercolors which have more filler in them.

- Prussian Green
- Quinacridone Magenta
- Quinacridone Gold

Lecture 1

- Decide more or less where you will place the flower heads and how many you will paint.
Pencil in where you are going to place your flower heads.
- Wet the paper randomly all over. Not too wet.
- Mix quinacridone gold with plenty of water to get a very pale background. Add this color to the paper going around the flower heads.
- Mix a thickish mixture of the quinacridone magenta with your filbert brush and paint in your flower heads. Use your smaller #10 brush dipped in water and tease the edges of the flowerheads to make them bleed slightly into the background.
- Now mix a thickish mixture of the Prussian green and start filling in the lower two thirds of the sheet in a random fashion. Lay down quite a bit of paint but be careful to let some of the paper shine through in areas and leave some white of paper in lower half.
- Take a sheet of cling film about six inches long and lay it on the green paint and pull at each end in the direction of where stalks would naturally be. Let the painting dry completely.

Lecture 2

We are going to fill in some minor details to finish off the painting.

- Take your hogs-hair brush and dip it lightly in the thickened quinacridone magenta. Use the brush to add a few bristle strokes on the flower heads. DON'T overdo it. You only want a hint or suggestion of the flower heads. Practice on a sheet of paper first so that you don't ruin your painting.
- For the spikiness on the leaves you can use your hogs-hair brush and lightly paint in some spiky leaves with Prussian green. Take a vegetable knife or the back of your brush to make markings on the stalks. You can also dip a stick in the paint and use it to paint the spike sections of the leaves. Experiment on a piece of paper first.
- You can also dip your brush in the green paint and splash a couple of dots onto the white area.
- You can also dip your brush in the green and yellow paint and splash a couple of dots onto the white area. Spritz with your spray bottle to let these droplets diffuse a little
- Let your painting dry.
- When you are happy with the results, sign your painting.

For the second painting follow the same techniques as above except for leaving white space at the bottom of the painting. In this section we also use salt for different type textures.

Happy Painting!

If you have any question or would like a critique of your painting, please send me a photo and your questions on the message board.

I hope you enjoyed this lesson. If you learned something I would appreciate your leaving a review on my page.

Hope to see you again in future watercolor classes on Udemy.