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How to pen and ink watercolor

One of my favorite art classes in high school involved learning how to do pen and ink drawings. There was something so satisfying about the way it required precision and care to get the rendering just right, yet at the same time, allowed for a kind of loose mark making with hatching, crosshatching, and pointillism. Sign up for the ArtistsNetwork newsletter and get a free, instant download on how to draw! [fw-capture-inline campaign="RCLP-confirmation-step-by-step-drawings" thanks="Thanks for downloading!" interest="Art" offer="🎨] Mad Hatter's Tea Party Illustration by Sir John Tenniel, 1866. That type of drawing always reminded me of some of my favorite illustrated books as a kid, as though I was looking through a portal into another world – probably influenced by the fact that Alice in Wonderland was one of my favorites. It wasn't just that the characters were talking cats, rabbits in waistcoats and holding watches, it was the landscapes and backgrounds that made the world so fascinating, with dark woods full of twisted trees, towering mushrooms, and all the details that made the world so fascinating to read about, hinted at in black and white lines. I loved the pen and ink, so I was blown away when my teacher showed us how to add watercolor (or colored ink) washes. Such a simple technique, but it transformed them, making what was a pen and ink drawing into a watercolor painting with a completely different mood. And it fits, really, that something that can be so easily transformed by a layer of color should act as a portal to another world, in which things are really quite strange and upside down. The art is not so much a looking glass as a kind of distorted reflection you'd get from a window pane. Mediums Made for Movement A landscape painting taken from life feels the same to me, when it's done by someone like Margaret Evans. Whether the painting is of people walking in a village or a Venice Canal, there's a sense of capturing people on the move from one place to another, off on an adventure evoked by the loose, fast feeling of these landscapes. The art is not so much a realistic rendering as an impression, establishing mood and movement, color and depth. These are not photo-realistic images, and they're not meant to be. The details are carefully chosen, yet rendered in a way that feels vibrant, placed quickly before they disappeared. In her watercolor paintings, she captures the impression of a second in time, the stillness between one step and another. The true beauty is that Margaret makes it possible for anyone interested in the medium to capture their own fleeting moments of adventure, even if the whimsical landscape is your own backyard or neighborhood. Who knows what lurks under that blade of grass or around the corner? In The Pen & Wash Course with Margaret Evans, Part 1, get several art lessons in one by combining pen and ink drawing with watercolor washes. You'll begin by learning how to use pen & ink in your sketches and watercolor paintings, so that you get a feel for the characteristics and applications of pen and ink. Then, follow Margaret through three full-length landscape demonstrations, combining ink with watercolor painting techniques to create a wonderful variety of scenes that include people, water and buildings. You'll love seeing how Margaret makes it easy to learn how to draw and paint landscapes, capturing depth and tonal shades in water-soluble pen, fixing it with a wash, and then adding color and details. Of course, once the watercolor is dry, you can go back in ink to add finishing touches for a great watercolor landscape painting that will transport you and your viewers to another time and place. Preview The Pen & Wash Course with Margaret Evans, Part 1 now to learn how to get depth and shading from a pen and add finishing touches to your landscape art. Then, head over to ArtistsNetwork.tv for the materials list and the full video. More free lessons on watercolor painting techniques! In this mixed media lesson, we'll take a look at combining pen and ink applications with watercolor washes to create a fun and playful drawing of an octopus. We exploit the best characteristics of each of the mediums to develop the value, texture, and color. The pen and ink applications are used to define the shape of the octopus before developing the texture and shading with loose, textural marks. Watercolor washes of simple colors are added after the ink applications have dried completely. Materials For Line and Wash Drawings Mixing pen and ink applications with watercolor washes doesn't require a major investment in materials. The materials required are often inexpensive and readily available at every art store. The materials are also portable and easy to clean up. Create a Graphite Drawing We'll begin with a loose and light graphite drawing of the octopus on hot press watercolor paper. This initial drawing is created mostly to define the shape of the subject. Details are purposely left out since these will be developed with the pen and ink. Pen and Ink Applications Once the basic shape of the octopus is laid out with the graphite drawing, we can begin developing the value and texture with pen and ink applications. We'll approach this drawing by tackling each section of the octopus before moving on to the next. This approach will allow us to ensure some consistency in our applications and lead to a level of harmony and unity in the work. We'll create the illusion of texture as we develop the range of value. Small, irregular marks are made with the pen to create the impression of the texture of the octopus. By placing these marks closer together, we can make the value darker. By allowing more space between these marks, we can make the values slightly lighter. Keep in mind that while the pen and ink applications will define the texture and value for the most part, our subsequent watercolor washes will affect this as well. Since line is such an important factor with pen and ink drawing, we'll need to ensure that we use it to its fullest potential. By varying the thickness of the line, we can create the impression of form and even the illusion of a light source. For this reason, we'll make the line around the outer contours of the octopus a little thicker, especially underneath since our light source originates from above. Once we have the majority of the octopus drawn with pen and ink, we can turn our attention to the head. The patterns here are slightly different than those found on the body, so the directional strokes used here are slightly different as well. Longer elliptical shapes are used that flow in the same direction as the form of the head. Underneath, we can concentrate these marks to create the impression of shadow before going back over the outer contour to enhance the line quality. With our pen and ink drawing complete, we can begin adding watercolor washes to add a bit of color. Before doing so, we'll gently erase any remaining pencil marks with a kneaded eraser. Watercolor is meant to be applied in layered washes. Each wash intensifies the color and may affect the value. We'll start with light washes and layer our applications to slowly build up the intensity and complexity of the color. Since the line drawing is fairly complex, we'll simplify the colors that we use. We'll start with a light wash of purple, mixed by combining Alizarin Crimson and Ultramarine. We'll compliment this color with bits of orange, made by combining Cadmium Red Pale Hue with Cadmium Yellow. We can continue to layer these colors to gradually build up the intensity and the contrast. A bit of Prussian Blue is also used in shadowed areas. This "blue" shadow helps to contrast the oranges. By starting with light washes of color, we have complete control over the color intensity and the value of the drawing. It may take several applications of color to build up the complexity and intensity of color that is required. When complete, our pen and ink drawing is nicely complimented by the looser watercolor washes leaving us with a playful line and wash drawing of an octopus. 1 Choose your paper weight. When creating an artwork with both ink and watercolor, you'll need to use a heavier, more absorptive paper than if you were just using pen and ink. The weight of art paper is measured in grams per square meter (gsm), with higher numbers indicating a denser paper. For an ink and watercolor project, try using a paper with a weight around 180 gsm. 2 Select a paper texture. Watercolor paper comes in a variety of textures, including Rough, Medium (cold pressed), and Smooth (hot pressed). If you're a beginning watercolor artist, you can choose simply based on aesthetics, or select whichever option is cheapest.[2] Advertisement 3 Pencil in the subject of your drawing. Before applying either ink or watercolor, start out with pencil. Lightly sketch in the shape of whatever subject you've chosen to draw. Keep your pencil strokes short and light, so that they won't be visible as part of the final product.[3] Later, after you've applied the watercolor, you'll return to trace over these light pencil lines with ink. 4 Apply liquid mask over your pencil lines. Apply a delicate line of liquid mask over all of the pencil lines you have already sketched. This will preserve your drawing and allow you to trace over it with ink later. Let the liquid mask dry fully before you start painting over it. It should dry in about 30 minutes.[4] Liquid mask is a thin, putty-like substance that dries quickly and will protect your pencil lines from being smudged or washed away by the watercolor paints. The fine line applicator comprises a small plastic bottle (which can be filled with any liquid) and a fine-tipped, needle like point that you'll use to apply the liquid mask precisely over your pencil lines. Both of these supplies will be available at any art-supply store. You can also purchase liquid mask and empty fine line applicator bottles online. Advertisement 1 Mix your paints with water on a watercolor palette. Take the brush that you plan to begin painting with, and smear it in the color you want to use. Then dip the brush in water, and rub the brush on a palate until the color has mixed into the water. Add more water until the paint is loose and runny. Repeat this process with each of the paint colors that you plan to use, being careful to keep each color separate from the others. Thoroughly rinse your paintbrush off between colors. Otherwise you'll end up ruining one paint color by smearing another in it. A watercolor palette contains multiple shallow-bowl like indentations. This allows you to mix multiple colors without letting them run together. As a rule, watercolors look better when the colors are mixed generously with water. This will increase the transparency of the wash and allow for more expressive final results. Mix only the colors that you'll need for your painting. For example, if you're painting a mountainous landscape, you'll need to mix a few different shades of gray, white, blue, green, and probably black. 2 Paint background sections of the canvas using large brushes. Begin painting by applying the watercolor with a 2- or 3-inch brush (5-7.5 cm) to provide background color for entire sections of your painting. This is known as "toning" a watercolor painting. Don't worry about being too exact when applying paint at this point; watercolor paintings are deliberately imprecise.[5] In the mountain landscape example, start out by using half a dozen large brushstrokes to paint the sky deep blue, the mountains gray, and the lower plains green. You don't need to let this paint dry before moving on. It will quickly be absorbed into the paper, and shouldn't smear as you continue painting. 3 Apply detailed paint using smaller brushes. Once you've toned the paper, use smaller watercolor brushes to fill in visual detail. You can use a variety of brush sizes to increase your precision (but remember that the most precise details will be added by ink). You do not need to wait for a color to dry before you add the next color of paint. It's fine if colors bleed together; this happens commonly in watercolors.[6] For example, you could apply small amounts of very light gray to mountain peaks to indicate snow, or add small streaks of darker green or blue in the plains to show different grasses. Advertisement 1 Strip off the liquid mask. By this point, the liquid mask will have hardened and will have roughly the same texture as rubber cement. Wait for the paint to dry, and then remove the liquid mask. Strip it off of the paper by rolling your palm or fingers over the top of the dried liquid mask until it rolls off of the paper.[7] Use your hand to brush off any lingering small pieces of liquid mask. You want the material completely gone from your paper so that you can ink smoothly. 2 Draw with ink over the pencil lines. Once the liquid mask is off of your paper, it's time to add the ink. Carefully apply ink over the pencil lines to draw the picture. However, there's no need to perfectly trace every line that you initially drew with the pencil. Take some liberties: altering the position of lines or leaving some areas un-inked.[8] Use a fine pen for this work. Try a 00 or .30 size pen. Use a high-quality art pen, like the ones made by Rapidograph. 3 Use different weights of pen for various styles. If you're interested in creating multiple visual effects with ink, you can incorporate differing types and thicknesses of pen. Try using a Brush pen (such as the ones made by Patel) for a thick, almost paint-like texture. For detail work, use a very fine-point pen like the Sharpie Pen or the Pigma Microns.[9] Your local art store will sell a large variety of high-quality artist's pens. Check there first when looking for new art supplies. 4 Try various inking styles. As you add lines and ink details over the pencil lines, you can experiment with different styles of drawing. You don't need to only draw straight lines; try crosshatching, repeating patterns, or adding scribbles for shading. A variety of ink patterns will add variety to the work's visual texture.[10] In our example, you could add crosshatching near mountain peaks to indicate shade, and fill the sides of lakes or streams with a half-circle pattern to indicate moving water. Advertisement Add New Question Question What does it mean to ink your drawing? Kelly Medford Professional Artist Kelly Medford is an American painter based in Rome, Italy. She studied classical painting, drawing and printmaking both in the U.S. and in Italy. She works primarily en plein air on the streets of Rome, and also travels for private international collectors on commission. She founded Sketching Rome Tours in 2012 where she teaches sketchbook journaling to visitors of Rome. Kelly is a graduate of the Florence Academy of Art. Support wikiHow by unlocking this expert answer. Inking a drawing is the process of applying ink over a pencil sketch. A lot of illustrators and architects do this, but it's a great option if you want an accurate drawing! Keep in mind, if you're right-handed, you must work from the left side of the drawing to the right side so that your hand doesn't smear the ink while you're drawing. If you're left-handed, work in the opposite direction. Ask a Question Advertisement Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Advertisement Absorptive watercolor paper Pencil Liquid mask Fine line applicator Watercolor paints Palette (or a kitchen plate) Large and small brushes 00 or .30 size pen Brush pen and fine-point pen (optional) This article was co-authored by Kelly Medford. Kelly Medford is an American painter based in Rome, Italy. She studied classical painting, drawing and printmaking both in the U.S. and in Italy. She works primarily en plein air on the streets of Rome, and also travels for private international collectors on commission. She founded Sketching Rome Tours in 2012 where she teaches sketchbook journaling to visitors of Rome. Kelly is a graduate of the Florence Academy of Art. This article has been viewed 43,705 times. Co-authors: 4 Updated: August 12, 2020 Views: 43,705 Categories: Watercolors Print Send fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 43,705 times.

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