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Acrylics: mastering water and drying time

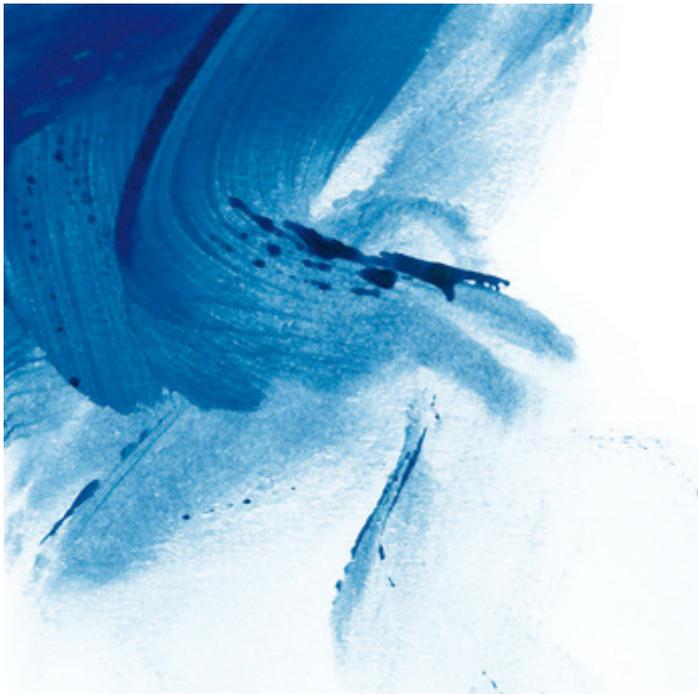


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Acrylic painting, a water-based technique, is easy to do and very versatile. Your main challenge will be how to master dilution and the ultra quick drying time

1 Color intensity: the right amount of water

To lighten your colors, just add a little water to the paint: the more you dilute it, the lighter your shades will be. For darker colors, add paint. Note: without water, the color will be more

opaque and cover the previous layer of paint.

- Note that colors will darken as they dry, particularly if they are diluted with a lot of water.
- Do not lighten colors with white: it dulls the shade.

2. Mixing colors: superimposing transparent layers

The more acrylics are diluted with water, the more transparent they become, so underlying layers show through. By overlaying a new layer of translucent paint, you can change the tone and color of the previous layer.

- By painting from lightest to darkest, you can save on paint and time because it takes a lot more light paint to change a dark color.
- Acrylics are no longer water soluble once they are dry: this means they will remain clear no matter how many layers of color you add.

Practical advice: overlay various color

To master transparency and shade combinations, practice overlaying washes in different colors.

Example: cover a yellow wash with a red wash.



Prepare the yellow color with

more or less water, depending on the intensity you want it to have, but enough for it to be transparent.

- Apply a few wide strips of yellow color, lightly overlaying the strokes each time you go over it, to obtain a more uniform color. work with the medium slightly tipped, so the paint slides and accumulates at the base of each stroke.
- Wait a few minutes for the layer to dry, then apply the red color the same way.

- This will give you a very vivid orange color.

Do a test by mixing the same colors on your palette. Apply the mixture to the medium beside the superimposed washes and notice the results: the colors are not as rich or intense.

3. Drying the layers: working against the clock, without mistake

The very short drying time for acrylics is a two-edged sword: you have to apply colors quickly and right away, because it is harder to make corrections. In fact, colors can no longer be changed by adding water (unlike watercolors) or by scraping (unlike oils), because the paint is indelible once dry.

Trick of the trade: To make corrections, use opaque paint, which will cover a feature or a color.

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