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# Transparent and opaque techniques with acrylics



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What is acrylic paint's greatest virtue? Its exceptional versatility! You can work with an infinite number of textures: opaque and thick like the oil painting, or delicately transparent and close to watercolor results.

## What you need to know

- When diluted with water like watercolors, acrylic paint has the same fast drying properties. But by adding a retarder medium, you can stretch painting time: This is a definite advantage if you like to take your time!
- When used like oils, acrylic paint results are just as spectacular. Additional advantages: odorless, with a shorter drying time!



## 1. Creating a "watercolor-like" acrylic painting (transparent technique)

- Use watercolor paper (300 g or more).
- Mix your colors with a lot of water to create washes in various shades.
- Start by applying the lightest washes
- Use the darkest shades to create contrasts in shades and volume, and represent the shadows or details.

**Keep in mind:** Your gesture should be especially self-confident, because mistakes cannot be corrected. So here is some advice: practice, practice, practice?



## 2. Creating an "oil-like" acrylic painting (opaque technique)

- Use a canvas-covered medium.
- Dilute your colors just slightly with water, or use them straight out of the tube.
- Start by applying color to the largest areas, then add the various motifs of your composition.
- Refine your motifs with finer brush strokes.
- Last step: use white acrylic to add highlights.

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### See also

#### Acrylic: Working with three-dimensional lines



Adding three-dimensional lines is a totally original technique, consisting of squeezing color onto the painting surface with an applicator tip. However, you need good control because it is not easy to correct mistakes.

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