
Color In and Out of the Garden with Lorene Edwards Forkner

Chapter 1 - Color In and Out of the Garden

Overview

(gentle music) - Several years ago, I went through kind of a challenging time, there was a lot of loss and grief as we all have been through, and I wanted a project I could pick up and do with my hands, something that would distract me from what was going on in the rest of my life. I'm a gardener, I see the world through that lens, so I decided that for several days, 100 days in a row I would pick a piece of my garden and try and capture the colors that I saw in it on a little watercolor study. That became almost a meditative release, it certainly became a place I could go for refuge. And it became so important to the rest of my life that I've never stopped. I wrote a book called, "Color In and Out of the Garden" which is sort of a memoir in paints and color of my story and how I came to this daily practice. My name is Lorene Edwards Forkner I'm a writer, I'm an author and a painter of sorts. Over the course of this month, I'm going to share with you how I go about capturing color that I see in the garden. I'm going to show you how to mix colors, how to get closer to a more natural palette than the paint box colors that come in our watercolor sets, I'm going to encourage you to look in as well as looking out at the world. We're going to talk about a vocabulary of colors, being able to name more colors actually expands our ability to see in the world. Classes called, Color In And Out Of The Garden. (upbeat music) As we're observing colors in the natural world, I encourage you to look closely with great heart.

Day 1 - Materials and set-up

- The beauty of watercolor is it's so easy to clean up. You can kind of walk away one day, come back, use the same paints. It's water based so it doesn't make a big mess. And the way I set up to kind of lower the barriers to making it something every single day is to kind of have a making station that's already ready for me. I don't have to get everything out. If you are in a place where maybe you are working at the kitchen table, maybe put things into a kit that you can just easily come and put your materials out. But I find that if I can just show up, sit down, do my thing and walk away, it kind of scratches that itch of a daily practice. But it also lowers my, any resistance I might have, because there will be resistance. The materials we're going to need are some watercolors. Watercolor comes in a million different sizes and forms and ways. I encourage if you have something already, oftentimes kids have a set, a Crayola set. Go ahead and do that. I have become very familiar with and comfortable with this palette of watercolors. I've kind of Frankensteined several different ones together. We'll talk about more that, but these are not terribly special. They're just easy. They're just accessible, which is again, that low barrier to getting started. In addition to watercolor you're going to need paper and I have always kind of given myself a framework to work within and that is cutting my paper to a particular size. My paper is a 140 pound cold press watercolor paper. Cold press means it has a little bit more of a tooth, which I feel has an organic feel. I cut it to a four by four inch size. I also cut some two by four inch pieces of paper that I will be testing on. And you'll see that I am always, always, always testing and mixing colors. The paper comes in these blocks and I cut it down. I also have a sketchbook that I take with me if I'm traveling or if I'm just on the fly or something. This isn't even particularly watercolor paper. I often tell people I am not a watercolor artist, what I am as an attention artist. So I think of these as tools, and I think of this as a process. It's not a finished art. Of course, you're going to need a brush. I have used this

gnarly, little flat tip brush every day for five years. And what I like about it is the brush, the head of the brush makes the mark for me. I'm just focusing on color. Couple of round brushes allow you to make a little bit looser of a line, which I've been experimenting with and I encourage you to find your own mark. Water of course, watercolor is best when it's juicy, so plain water is great. I also like using a white, watercolor bowl. People talk about dirty water. It's, it's not dirty. That's that's pigment in there. And a white bowl will show you most easily what is the color of that. A palette for the same reason. I use a white, porcelain palette. You could use a dinner plate you could use anything but the white, I really work with having the white come back through the paints as I'm mixing them. And of course, my favorite part of the materials and the reason that I'm really doing this every day is the botanicals or the found objects. A lot of my material comes right out of my garden or from a walk. And because I have the small size paper, I'm limited to what size I can put put on that paper. So I think of it as something you could fit in the palm of your hand, like this gorgeous anemone, or this oyster shell, California poppy, anything that is of your place. Because this is a lesson in learning to pay attention to the world around you. Of course, you might not have a garden right outside your door, or maybe it's the middle of winter and nothing is going on in that garden. So you can always go to the grocery store, go to your local nursery and pick up some store bought flowers.

Day 2 - Mixing nature's colors

- It's important that you get to know your paints. This is going to be your vocabulary. This is going to be how you express what it is you're seeing in the various botanicals. So paint is very different in the palette or swatched out than it is on the paper. So this is the playful part. So I'm going to put together a kind of a quasi color wheel on my palette first just to get to know what the reds look like. Then I'm going to mix some yellow, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. But the main thing I notice about these colors when I'm putting them right from the paint box onto my palette is how unnatural they are. They really don't look like most plants that we find out in nature. So this is a way to kind of point that out to yourself. It's like, yeah, well, that's a green but that's not the green or this is my favorite one when I do the green that comes in my paint box is the green of the hoses in the garden, which is not a green found in nature but this is your building blocks of all the other colors that you'll be making or using to mix to create your color studies. Okay, so there we basically have our... Essentially the elements of a color wheel. And I, rather than think about a color wheel as like an academic diagram, I think of it as an abstract construction that tells you the relationships of colors to each other. So something like red and green are opposite one another, therefore they're complementary. Doesn't really matter to me that they're complementary but what does matter to me is how I can use red to shift green in more natural directions. Now we're going to take our rainbow paint box colors, those that don't appear very natural and use them by mixing various combinations to approximate those colors far more closely seen in nature. By randomly mixing colors, I'm exploring the shades that come up between the colors as it were. You know, this green is way more of a natural green than this green right out of the paint box, and you wouldn't necessarily know that unless you just experimented with it. Now, that's, some people might say a very drab brown and yet that's going to be a color that you're going to see in nature quite a bit. There's a more muted lemon yellow, pure red is often very unseen in the garden or put it this way, if it is seen, it's all you see. So I'm just mixing all the various shades, taking one and I'm just using the colors that were already on my palette. So I'm of the not clean palette club. I rarely clean off my palette to a complete white between painting sessions because I can use all that. I can take those very same paints and activate them to make colors for the next day or the following day. So see, that's way

more of a grape, a purple grape than this purple right out of the paint box. So here's a sample that I did previously showing all the different colors that I can come up with from just starting out with those paint box colors. Obviously, in this one, I added in an opera rose pink, which is a fun color to find in nature. And it's just by exploring all of those colors. I don't record what the mixes are, I don't keep track. It's just a very intuitive mixing and I will often time keep mixing and test something. If I'm trying to come up with a color, I will see if I'm getting close and if maybe it needs something else on it. And so I will keep testing it. So this is a great way to get to know your paints and push them to modify each other and push them towards a more natural expression like what we see out in nature.

Day 3 - Color layering

- Layering watercolor is another way that you can shift your colors and mix them towards more naturalized expressions. People think of watercolor as kind of, once it's on the paper you can't do anything with it. And it's true, if you keep going back over, you can very quickly get to a muddy mix. The trick to layering watercolors and not coming up with a muddy mix is to use a light touch and just kind of a single stroke on top of the previous layer down. And that's how you can explore what's possible. I'll begin by just laying down some circles of a single color. And we're gonna let those dry. So I'm using plenty of water. You can also explore (brush tapping) like how to make it more pale, more water. (brush tapping) (water lapping) So then once these dry, I'll be able to go back in and go over the top of them with another color, layering one color on top of the other. We'll see what that looks like, how that differs from actually mixing the paint together on the palette. (brush tapping) (brush softly scratching) (water lapping) (glass ringing) (brush softly scratching) Ooh, that's a good one. That's a really good one. (brush softly scratching) I tend to like these muddier colors. They're not really muddy. They're just more nuanced. That may end up being a great color that you use to express a shadow that you're seeing. (brush softly scratching) (water lapping) Which is what makes it seem, I guess, more real. Nature is nothing, if not very real. (brush tapping) (water lapping) So now we can take, again, a juicy mix 'cause you want these to be fairly transparent, and go back over the first circles we laid down, and hoping they've dried. And you'll see how that's the pure color. That's the mix. (water lapping) And somehow, layers look different than a solid mix, and that's another tool that you can use to play with. (brush tapping) (water lapping) (brush tapping) Put this, it's like sunshine over a cloudy day. That's a good one. (brush tapping) And you can see they sort of, depending on the paints and how they behave together, you'll get different effects. Some of these aren't completely dry. So then, you get this kind of wet on wet action going in there, too, which then, the paint moves around. It becomes, it gets a life of its own. You can see here where that kind of a smoky blue on top of that goldenrod color. And it's mixing in, you know, it's kind of bleeding into a green in between. That's, that's the exciting part. (brush tapping) So this is another experiment, or exercise, playful exercise that you could just do to your heart's content. This is a little more formalized one that I allowed the circles to dry in between, and even went so far as to add additional colors over the top. So again, if the lower layer is dry, then you can continue to add colors. And there's more depth to it, quite literally.

Day 4 - First flower: chrysanthemum

- Let's start with a flower. When you're looking at the colors in the plant, I encourage you to look at the stems, look at the leaves, look at the center of the flower, look at all the colors that are there and try and replicate those in your grid. I began by testing my colors, like I had mentioned, I wanna

see how close I can get and you can even, you can get quite literal and hold it up to it. That seems pretty good. And once I have a color that I think is pretty good, then I go ahead and just lay down a swatch and you can see how the brush makes the mark. I'm not having to concentrate too much on it. And then you go and make another one. Maybe this one has a little bit more shadow to it. You can add a little more nuance to it. Then what are those stems like? Let's see that. That green, I would say needs some blue in it. Greens in nature are challenging and of course, there are millions of them. And that's where it comes down to just keep practicing, keep mixing. Some days it'll work, other days maybe not so much, but it's the doing of it, it's the concentration, and just paying attention. So here's an instance where I can go over and get some layers going on in that. To replicate the pale edges of the flower, I'm going to add more water to the mix, that even if you might say, this is a purple flower, it's not, it's a bunch of different purples, and it's got gradations, and it's got nuance, and that's what makes it appear more natural. I like it sometimes when the edges touch and they're still wet and you get kind of this bleeding from one color into another. So you can see I actually go back over and layer colors on the paper quite a bit. I'm shifting them to see how much closer I can get to what I see on the plant. That's a good kind of muddy purple. That at first doesn't seem like it would be a very pretty part of the plant, very pretty color, but it's very much there. I also encourage you to push things, try different ways, try colors, but if it doesn't work, if it's not going the way you want it to, walk away. So here you can see if I set that up against it, you can kind of see how close you're getting, and do I need to move this one a little more blue? Maybe I'm going to layer that on with some blue. With greens, I often find out they're a lot darker than I first expect them to be, whereas the petals are generally a lot less saturated than I expect them to be. At the end of my color study, I put the botanical on the grid to see how close I've come, and then that's it, I stop for the day. And I might put a little label on it, a tag sometimes that has to do with, what is this flower? What is something about today? I'm going to label this color study Creativebug and that will remind me that this is where we started.

Day 5 - Look closer: chrysanthemum

- I encourage you to look really, really closely at the botanical or the flower, whatever it is you're painting, and try and discover or find those hidden hues, things that may not be originally apparent. It's like, we have purple flower, but you look at the center and you'll find it's actually kind of a golden brown, and there's a little touch of lime green in the middle. So I'm going to do a study today that looks more closely. We're going to see if we can't get nine more colors out of a closeup of this blossom. Think of it as the blossom is like a still life. You're trying to capture all the colors that you see on that one little piece. So I encourage, always keep testing. You can see kind of how you're approaching it, you need a little more blue, a little more purple? And then I like to add a lot of water. And get kind of a variety of colors all there at the same time. This one with a little more pink. That's a lot more pink. But that actually is there. It's more like the shadows of the petals have that little color in. I like to look at the bottoms of the petals where they touch and that's generally got something else going on. I think these sorts of details are what shift the color swatches from just being squares of paint to more closely replicating a piece of nature. Nature is never a flat color. And you'll see I've been using some of my more muddy browns. There's a lot of shadow in those petals. They're really jammed in there. So that's kind of getting some depth to it as well. That middle, that kind of golden brown that I was talking about, let's see if we can't get that, that's probably gonna take some layers. That starts to get there. And of course the green, green, green, green, it's always challenging to get that green. So I think this is a pretty natural colored green. And yet the stem of

this chrysanthemum has a lot more blue in it. So if I want it to more closely replicate that I'm gonna have to shift that color far more blue. I'll also point out that the stem right here is a lighter color. Down here you can see the highlight of it. And then darker the leaves. So that, that starts to get there a little bit more. Maybe more like the color of the stem. And you can see my paint water is getting progressively more and more colored with paint. It's like, those are all the colors that I'm using in my palette here. So I oftentimes will use that as a way to shift. That's a nice gray that kind of is toning this green that isn't, so maybe I'll do an underpainting of that. Yep, see, that needs more blue. You just wouldn't think. I'll often go back and add an additional layer to some of those early swatches, because I want a little more saturation and depth. Team Messy Palette goes all the way towards getting those more natural colors. Every single little part of the paint that I have here on the palette is a possibility for adding into the mixes. And I'm just not sure I'm gonna get to that, which I'm very familiar with that feeling. Let's add another layer of glazing to that golden brown here in the middle 'cause it's obviously a lot darker than what it looks like. I will often mix the colors that I'm using, like the green if I'm trying to tone the color of the petal, and see if I can't get those more natural colors. My continual quest for natural color. So that starts to inform, you know, you can literally set it on top of it and see how you're doing. Preferably after your paint is dried. And sometimes I'll go back in and add just a touch. I'm just introducing a darker color or an accent color or something to the mix. You do it when the paint is still wet, then you'll get the paint to kind of mix up and take on its own personality. Like that little touch of green that we did to show the very bottoms of those petals. And I'm not going to keep fighting my green. It's not fighting, it's dancing. I'm dancing with the green. And so far the green is leading and I am not getting there. But I think that's as close as I'm going to get today. Some days the greens are great and some days not so much. So I think I'm gonna label this one today, all the greens.

Day 6 - Pink flower: rose

- I like to say that color, while there are no rules about color, there is a nature of color. And one of the aspects of color that I use quite a bit, especially in gardening as well as doing the painting swatches, is warm and cool tones. And pink is a great example of expressing that. So a warm color, obviously it's not the literal temperature, but I tend to think of it as anything that has a touch of yellow. Think of it as the warmth is shifting towards the sun, whereas a cool color is going to lean maybe a little bit of a cast of blue. So think of that as like the chill of the night. And oftentimes, it can be hard to tell if a color is warm or cool. So sometimes if you just hold it up next to something else, and it'll kind of, the difference will reveal itself. Pink flowers have a lot of nuance to them. You'll have warm colors and warm shades, and cool shades in the same plant, shadows, all of that. So watch for those details. So today, I'm going to paint this beautiful little somewhat past its prime mutabilis rose. Like I said, it's a little bit past. It might not show up on your dinner table, but that's still a beautiful study, because you've got the dark of the petals, you've got the fading around the edges. You've got that kind of murky green stem. So let's see what we can come up with that. I probably have more pinks in my palette than any other color. You can't really get there to start with a warm red, you're not gonna add enough to it. So I think of pink as being a color you wanna pick out. If your palette doesn't come with a pink, get a pink. I'm always testing to see, so see that, that I'm getting there. I'm gonna use a lot of water in this to start out with, because I want those layers. I want the, kind of the wiltedness almost to show through. See why I use the square-headed brush? It just does the work for me. Can also see in this petal right here, that down towards the bottom, it has a real flush of peachy color. So to get that, to express that, I'm going to mix up a more orangey

coral color in here. And of course, those stamens in the very middle. Don't have to do a whole square. Sometimes you could, you know, almost do your color samples as proportionate to the amount that it shows up on your plant. And again, always testing, mixing with all the colors you've got already on your palette, which you will very quickly see starts to become way more functional in matching. Let's get more of a saturated pink in there. Kind of the shadow of its former self. Introduce water to kind of push the paint around, which oftentimes comes pretty close to replicating how the pigment works in the actual plant. So down in here, I see some shadows. I see, you know, where the petal is literally bruised or it's just aging. So you can see, it's definitely not a formula. It's sort of hunting and pecking. I call it, I'm foraging for the right color. And oftentimes that just comes down to lots of testing, lots of layers. So that's starting to get all the different colors on that. Oh, I like how that paint isn't distributed on the brush exactly. You know, it's not as thorough of a mix. So you get kind of some striping in that, but that's kind of how the stamens there are expressing themselves. And the answer is yes. I often leave greens to the last, for no other reason other than it's challenging. But while this is a pink flower, it comes on a green stem or a formally green stem. So green is going to be your constant companion in a garden-based color study. Okay. I think that's probably where we're gonna stop for that, maybe a little bit more of that kind of plummy color in there. So here's my elegant, if slightly faded rose. I'm gonna write elegant.

Day 7 - Rocks

- I have this thing for rocks. Especially a rock that has a ring around it. When I was a child, I was told that was a wish. So of course, I'm gonna gather all the wishes that I can. I happen to love painting the rocks because it allows me to explore a lot of murky kind of in between colors and then also in looking at the rocks that closely, all of a sudden you start to notice that they have a variety of colors in there as well. So, how do you mix gray? How do you mix blue gray? How do you mix kind of this warm, rusty gray? You do it by just kind of mixing all the other colors on your palette together. No, it needs a little more. That's pretty good. Sometimes the most unlikely... I mean, who would think that you'd have an orange in your gray. That's not gray. Let's put in kind of an orangey red. That's kind of a warm gray. So, as you can see, I'm kind of mixing up a bunch of different base colors as it were on my palette. And then I can go in and decide which ones most closely express what I'm seeing. And see where my paint laden water is coming in handy. I like how the texture of the cold press paper also, kind of picks up on a pebbly surface of a rock. It's another kinda layer of realness in the color study. Let's try and get these a little more rusty. There we go. And of course, I wanna express that ring, so I will add some water to this and see if I can't get that to act like a ring. Even if only to me. These studies are for me. It's about the process. It's about paying attention. It's about making time in my day to sit here and mix colors. This is not a finished work of art. It's a body of work. See if I can get that darker. I live in the Pacific Northwest. Rather close to the beach. Which is why I collect rocks and everything, but these are actually the colors of our skies many months of the year. To me, these rocks for all that they're not the most colorful are very atmospheric. I kind of have the color, but I don't have the depth, so I can just glaze back over with another. And the color I'm glazing is by no means the same color that was underneath, but just like those color studies that we did by layering, you can build up to get the color your after. And it's also a reflection of how, as I'm working on a color study, I'm seeing more as I go along. Yeah, that's a good, nice dark. That's a pretty good rust. We've got some rust in this. How do we express that? Maybe like that. And it's always good to know when to stop. I think that's pretty good. I'm going to label these... Make A Wish.

Day 8 - Color vocabulary

- I collect color names or the names of colors like some people collect teacups and trinkets. I really find that by using language, I can see more nuanced colors. I am a writer, so I obviously work in words all the time. So let's do an exercise where we think of a color, red, for instance, and then try and think of all different sorts of different names of the color red. When we think of the color red, is probably more closely related to this like a red stop sign, but what we're trying to think of is all the other nuances so maybe poppy, or rose, or burgundy. Of course now I'm gonna forget all of them. Garnet. Ruby. You can see how one word kind of suggests the next one. Yellow. Daffodil. The daffodils are blooming. Gold is an expression. Banana. It's almost like a little kid, when you're walking around the world, you just start naming things and the fact that you're naming it, means you are seeing, in your head, a different expression of that color. Let's try blue 'cause that's kind of a little more difficult, because there aren't a lot of blue flowers in nature, but there's blue sky, there's night sky, there's lapis, a beautiful stone. There's ocean, river, lake. See where I'm going with this? Midnight is kind of a very dark blue. Greens. Teal. The color of so many cool carnation plants. Garden hose. I just can't get away from the fact that most of the greens you find in palettes are garden hose. Olive. Turquoise. Basically, if it helps, you can have a reference of something to refer to and you're basically just telling yourself, well, this color blue is different than that color blue. So how do I identify the difference between them? These beautiful kind of plum colors in there are kind of stonelike. So maybe one would be concrete and one is sandstone. Here's a nice olivey green stem green, might even be the way you talk about it, because so many of these colors, the words are based in nature or food. So you might even wanna just go through the grocery store and look, you know, kind of like a scavenger hunt for the different colors. Obviously, there's no right or wrong to this and how you look at color, how you perceive color, how you express color, is very personal. So I might add to the red, bubblegum, and you might go more towards rose. Oh, I guess I already had rose on there. Plant world is filled with different iterations of red. A lot of them lean towards pink. It's a playful thing. It's supposed to have fun, and I find I refer back to these word lists all the time, that by naming it and writing it down, I'm kind of cementing it in place. It becomes a part of my collection.

Day 9 - Red camellia

- Let's go through the rainbow color by color. Today we're going to work with red, and this is a camellia I picked up on my walk this morning. Obviously, a great big camellia would be a lot. And so we're gonna give you permission to deconstruct. Take your pieces, your petals apart. And see what we can come up with for the reds in this color. So in looking at our reds that we're working with, that is a very warm red. It's got a lotta yellow in it. This one has more of a purpley cast to it or a blue, kind of a chilly night, so let's see how we can get closer to that. And again, I'm not really planning too much out. I'm just sort of messing around and playing. So that's getting pretty close. What I like about this deconstructing this camellia is you can see all the different colors of red in each of those petals. So there's some very, very faded bruised parts. Camellias always drop right out onto the sidewalk when they're done, and then you have to clean them up. A little more pink. It's so funny, it's like it's a dance, a little more pink, little more orange, little more... just kinda goes back and forth. That's the foraging part. So you can see on these petals, at the bottom, they fade to white. So, we can approximate that by just adding a little bit of water into it, and then it will just push the paint away and create its own little story there. I like how this one almost looks like a little heart. So all of these different associations that we attach to red. Let's look at some of the darker

sides of red. Maybe it's a broken heart. The shadows of the different petals as they either fade or fold in on themselves. And there's also that very, very pale in the center. So maybe I just lay down some water that obviously has a little bit of pink pigment in it. And that gives me something to play with. Some of these colors are very, very, very subtle. And again, it's the process. It's what you're seeing. It's not that I'm painting a camellia. It's that I'm painting what I'm looking at, the colors of what I'm looking at. So let's try and capture some of that really dark there at the tip of the petals, where they've faded. I like it that so often when colors fade, new colors emerge. It's like the colors that were there all along. This one even has an even darker dark. That's kinda that almost candy pink down there on the end, although I think it needs a little bit of warmth to it. And so I'll go back in and pick up color. You can dry off your brush and go back in and remove, lay down, remove, put more. See if we can get these to touch and kind of create their own fading story. And I'll finish it off with some of this warm pink down below. Make it a little bit more dark. This color right here looks a little flat to me, so I'm going to add in some more warm and another layer. The colors change a lot as they dry. They often dry out more flat. I always say that the living tissue of the petals is best of all. We're just trying to come as close as we can. There we go. Just going back in and glazing with a little more of that pinky color with the warmth underneath. Kinda feels like that's more true to what I'm seeing. Last thing I'm gonna add in is kind of these yellow of the pollen. Because the flower's faded, it's kind of a faded pollen. We'll finish up trying to get this kind of browned part there at the very bottom of the petal. So as you're finishing up your color swatch for today of your red flower, try and build that vocabulary. Try and add some colors, some personalities of red to your list. Might be this really blushy pink up here on the left. What does this color say to you? What does it look like? I kinda see it as a faded camellia petal, as it were. So let's name this found.

Day 10 - Orange calendula

- Our next color on the rainbow is orange, and I've got this calendula flower, which is the very embodiment of orange. But you can see it's also got some yellow in there. And let's see what it's going to take to get to this kind of a saturated orange. I'll also say that you'll see I often put my botanical here on another paper that's very similar to what I'm painting on, and that just helps me kind of mentally divide up. It's a little easier to work within that framework. It's just something I've started to do over the years, but I find it helps. This is a good example of a time that I might go in and clean off a space on my palette. I mean, I love the colors that I've got working here and I could definitely use them, but those colors are not in this deep orange. So I'll go in here and just kind of clean off a space, saving that nice plum for later and then start seeing where I get to this deep clear orange that almost doesn't look natural until you actually see it in a plant. So I start with what I think I might start at, and then I can see right away I needed a lot more yellow than this. Add a little more water to get some transparency. That's starting to get a little better. Yeah. So then I'll lay down that swatch and it almost just by the way the brush goes, you can see it going to that more golden color at the base. Maybe I'll want to paint a swatch that just is that yellow color, because that'll draw attention to it. It's an orange calendula, but it's got this beautiful gold in it as well. A lot of these color studies, you're just basically pointing out. It's like, "This is what I see, hey, look." Let's see if we can get more with a little deeper red. It's an illusion, but where the pedals overlap each other, you can see there's a little bit of a dark edge. Because again, we're not painting just the calendula, we're painting what we see. So let's put in some dark edges. (brush stroking) You see, just even a little tiny bit of a more dull color really brings that orange down in tone. (brush stroking) It's almost like you're just pushing through. It's like, how much more can I see? How much more? (brush stroking)

Now see, that's too red. I'm gonna go back in and add some of this kind of goldenrod color 'cause I'm trying to keep it. It's still too. Test, test, test. (brush stroking) Orange is a color that always makes me hungry. I think it's because so many delicious fruits are orange. (glass ping) So this one is just really various subtle changes, but the changes are what add a lot of dimensionality to it. It's not just a flat orange flower. This is a pretty good expression of the orange of this calendula. I might pick a different calendula in the very same garden and it would be a completely different color study. That's kind of the fascination of constantly redoing the same plant. But I think this really can only be called, even though it's calendula, I'm gonna call it orange. So again, keep up with your naming conventions. Try to think of what these different colors say to you. You might forever more think of orange as a calendula color, so you're adding to your color vocabulary.

Day 11 - Yellow daffodil

- We're up to yellow in the rainbow and yellow has a few of its own rules. It's very easy to contaminate yellow. Once you have a contaminated yellow, you'll never get to a true yellow. So not only is it important to start with clean water, but you're definitely gonna wanna clear a clean spot on your palette. So we can try and get a non-contaminated yellow. And even on your paint, you're gonna want to make sure that you clean your paint. I was using this yellow to mix a lot of orange and so it's kind of orange. So once you clean off that and start. So I can tell right away that this lemon yellow doesn't have the warmth that this daffodil flower does. So I can just barely add a little tiny bit of that orange color to it. You can see that's a lot more accurate to what the petals are. I also use lots of water with yellow because you can build up in layers. This daffodil is also a good example of how a color, even a yellow daffodil is not just yellow. It's got a little bit of that orange in it in the center cup, which is so sweet. So I'm gonna try and figure out how I can express that. It's more of a golden. But you see, as soon as I put a little bit of orange back in there, my yellow becomes a very different yellow. You know, that's a good one. That's kind of the golden, but not. It stays yellow. It doesn't become orange. See if we can maybe find that yellow or the orange of the cup right beneath that. They can relate to each other. Edges are just a little tiny bit darker. I try and keep my yellow water as clean as possible. Unique to yellow in there. But of course, there's also this bud, and then there's a stem, and there's even this sheath, which is anything but yellow. So let's mix that bud, which is a wonderful kind of a limey green color. Yeah. So there's kind of the petiole of the flower. Let's get to that dark green base, that kind of a little bulb at the bottom. That's pretty close. That green that's there at the base of the flower, the stem of the flower is really a green that's not on any of the other places. So it's kind of fun to be able to call out something, even if it only appears in that one tiny little place. And I always love to find those secondary colors, the ones that nobody sees unless you point them out. And I would say that this sheath is probably a pretty good example of that. Kind of a old lace and a little more orange. A little more orange. Yeah, that's pretty good. That grassy green stem. This one. Feel like they need to go darker. It's much easier to add a layer than it is to try and go in and lift a color back off. This is where I just start going to all the other little pieces and patches of paint on the palette, using it all to kind of modify. Last thing I'm going to add is a little tiny bit of yellow, kind of almost a golden yellow. Way too golden. But you can see it at the top of this stem there. Sometimes it's no more than just touching a little dot. All right, if I hold this up, what I see is I think I need a little more green on this one. The blue really came through as it dried, which all your pigments are gonna act a little bit differently. And then this, this just needs more of the same, which of course, wonder what that was. Okay, so you can see the importance of having those white places on your palette, on your water and on the paint to keep that color as

non-contaminated as possible. So let's call this, of course, daffodil.

Day 12 - Green variegated leaf

- Today's subject is a simple green leaf. It's said that humans can see more colors of green than any other color in the spectrum, because our lives once hinged on green. Green environment way back to our ancestors indicated a nourishing environment with grass and water. Green is everywhere in the natural world, and that's why it, possibly why it's the most challenging. I'm going to start by trying to come up with a green that is sort of this leaf green, for lack of another word, and see where I can go from there. So it's a little bit more blue. And when you're mixing your paint, especially when we're doing these kind of monochromatic studies, where lots of different variations of the same color, go ahead and give yourself a nice big puddle of paint to work with, because we're gonna work on pushing that in different directions to create these different expressions. So, let's get that one, which I feel needs more blue. So the dance begins blue, back, green, yellow. Sometimes it's just a very, very simple shift, or incremental shift, I guess. That's pretty, oh, one more blue. All right. This all looks the same in the pallet, and I wouldn't know the differences if I didn't test. So that's, that's why I test. So here we go. And this leaf is variegated, it has kind of different shades of itself, all the way through it, which I find very satisfying to do, because you're basically just doing different values. You add more water to something and you'll get a lighter, a lighter color. So you can see that kind of a, in the mean, those those medium greens that are in there. But this, if you look really closely, this golden variegation almost has a tiny touch of peach to it. So we'll see how we get that one. I'm gonna go up here and I'm going to, I think if I add a little tiny bit of pink, I can get to that. (glass tinkling) Nope. (glass tinkling) (water sloshing) Sometimes these light colors are difficult to get to, because, well, on one hand I'm trying to get enough saturation. On the other hand, when I'm only wanting a hint of a color, it's easy to overdo it from the beginning. So in this instance, I've laid down a couple of squares of just water. So I'm using water as very much an element to get, hopefully, to hopefully get to where I wanna be with this peachy, golden. (brush scraping) (brush scraping) I so want it to be more peachy. Don't know if I to talked myself into seeing it. (brush scraping) 69 00:04:18,967 --> 00:04:21,717 (brush scraping) (brush scraping) (glass tinkling) Sometimes when I'm trying to find a color, I'll overshoot it and then see if I can't add. Overshoot it meaning I'll make it more intense than I really need it, and then see if I can't back up on it. I feel like I'm sneaking up on some of these colors sometimes, which is pretty funny because it's really doesn't matter to anybody but me. But I find this, this chasing color around, you know, some days I do get frustrated, but other days I, it's like the chase is my favorite part, is just kind of seeing what I can mix to, how close I'm seeing that day. What is the color of the light that day? Am I bored by what I'm doing? You know, you do something every single day, you become very aware of your own cycles of attention. And I think that's one of the most important things that you can bring to a daily practice is, is getting to know your colors, but you're getting to know yourself a little bit better too. Oh, that's a good kind of medium green. I feel like it needs that peach color in there. For all the green is one of the most common colors in the natural world, it's very difficult, not difficult, but more challenging to match to a botanical, because somehow I feel like my pigments don't align with what I'm seeing here in the natural world. And so, one of the benefits, or one of the crutches that I use when I'm working with green on my palette in my color studies is to kind of reference back to that color wheel, and use a little bit of its complimentary color, which in this instance is red, to nudge it more in a natural direction. So a green that was very bluish and unnatural, if you add a little bit, and by red it could be a pink or it could be an orange, something that has red in it. Just get you

a little bit closer. Oh, that feels like it's a little bit closer. (brush scraping) And I use water. It's very much a part of the colors, it's very much about how they act on the page. (brush scraping) Well, I feel like I need to go over, I'm very happy with my peachy, golden yellow, which is barely visible. So do I go back and try and make it a little more so, or do I ruin the whole thing? And I feel like this needs a little bit more green to temper. If you use a light enough wash, the color that's under it is still there. So you, you're layering. That feels pretty good. So you can get kind of that medium green, with the peachy pink showing through underneath, as well as the gold one over here. So that's pretty good green day. Let's call this "Green".

Day 13 - Blue borage

- Blue is tricky. While on one level, it's everywhere in nature. The blue sky, a blue ocean, lakes, and rivers. In the plant world, blue makes up less than 10% of flowers. So it's really kind of a unicorn out there in the garden, which is fun when you do have a blue flower to capture it like this borage that we're going to do a color study of today. I'm going to start by clearing a little spot on my messy palette, because we want this blue to be pretty clear. We want it to be the most of itself. So I'm gonna start with this kind of an ultramarine. You can see right away that that is not the blue of the flowers. So what are we going to use to kind of shift that? All right, let's just start laying things down. Borage flowers are almost like a litmus paper. As they age, they kind of turn more of a purple or pinky color. Maybe it's nature's litmus. There's one that's a little more pinky. Maybe it's a little bit older than the others. Bees absolutely adore borage in the garden, so it's a great one to have in with your vegetable garden. Aye yai yai, yai yai. It's a good time to notice how some paints are far more saturated than others. Get way out ahead of yourself. But the more you use your paints, the more you know them. They become something you're familiar with, almost your vocabulary. Try and get some of that pinky, fuzzy, those buds. See if I can't, it's like how do you paint fuzz? Maybe by adding some water. So there's the day that the borage in the garden was blooming, and of course, I have to give it its own name. So this is borage. So that's an early spring day in the garden when the borage is blooming.

Day 14 - Indigo mussel shells

- People often ask me how I find something new to paint every day every day of the year for all these years and I tell them I don't. And one thing as an example is shells. I say that shells are my scales. Like when you used to practice the piano, you always had to practice your scales? So the shells are the same. I have a collection of them, sits right there on my art desk. But you know, the light might be different that day. Certainly I'm different from day to day, so painting mussel shells is one of my favorite things to do. It also happens to fill the niche of indigo because there's not a whole lot of indigo plants out there in the world. Indigo is a blue that has maybe a little bit of navy in it but it's also got some warmth. It's got some pink in it, and then the center of the shell is this beautiful kind of pearlescent color so that's a whole nother challenge to try and capture. I'm going to start by mixing up a nice big puddle of what I think is going to be a base blue that gets me, that gets me partially there, so then I can push and pull on that to see how I can get it to more closely align. Maybe some purple. Yeah, that starts to get to that kind of inky indigo color. And then I'm testing it. That's a little more pink in there. Oh, that's kind of a good one. I feel like that's starting to go in the right direction with that. You can see how it picks that up kind of down there. But the pearlescent part, the center, I usually start with just water, which obviously has a little bit of pigment in it, and then trying what is in there. What's in there is like a pink and a little bit of the blue, but

mostly lots of water. We'll see how that goes. Go back to my blues. Maybe layer that on. That's a good kind of a denim blue almost. So again, it's the language. The more I talk about different blue things, the more I kind of see, oh yeah, I need more of that denim, or I need less of that denim. There's also a definite cast of lavender in there. Sometimes I look for just a tiny little scrap of relatively clean space on my palette. I don't wanna clean all those other lovely colors off, but I don't want to- I don't want to muddy up something. Maybe do a whole line of these pearlescent ones over here on the corner. There's almost even a little bit of a golden cast. This is really a pretty simple way to challenge yourself every day. Some days it's like, oh, I don't wanna wreck it. It's like there's nothing to wreck. You're doing this to explore something. So go ahead and risk wrecking your colors and be proud of yourself that you, you tried something. Sometimes you learn as much from what didn't work as what did. Story of my life. Okay, so I feel pretty good about those pearly colors. Well, as they dry, they'll show up more. We'll see. Try and get this really, really dark, almost true indigo up there in the, the top of the shell. A little more blue. Feel like watercolor wants water. And I'll probably go over that a couple more times to get the depth of it. But it's fun in the way that the colors move around when you are putting on so much water because it kind of replicates how the shell is built up. It's something very intrinsically shell-like. There's one more up here. I want a little more of that, that blue. Well, I think I should stop rather than torture the blues. Part of the trick is knowing when to stop. That's basically, don't overwork your color. Maybe that's pushed as far as you're going to get it that day. And so I'm gonna stop right here because I do paint mussel shells so often. I will say I've had better, but I'm pretty happy with how I got my pearlescent colors over here. I'm going to label this "Mussel Memory" because I do this so often. I encourage you to find something that is your "scales", something you can go back to again and again and again.

Day 15 - Violet lavender

- Purple is an interesting color. I always wonder if it's a plant like lavender, violet, heliotrope, wisteria. You know, all of those are plants that are purple or violet in color. So is it a plant that thinks it's a color or is it a color that thinks it's a plant? This is some lavender that I grew in my garden last summer that I've saved. Wonderful fragrance. Sometimes you get that other hit. You get another layer of sensory input while you're painting. It's also a good example of the fact that you don't always have to have fresh flowers. Like I said, this is from my garden last summer, and it's just another way that I can keep hanging onto it. Start by mixing up our puddle of the lavender. Dried lavender is a much different color than fresh lavender, so it's also kind of recording a season as well as the color. Oh, that's pretty good. So when I have a color or a plant that looks to be all kind of the same color, that's when I really go looking for those secondary colors. And if you look really closely, you can see at the base of each of these lavender buds is a little touch of brown where the bud attached to the plant. So I'm gonna try and get that into the color study to make it more lavender-like. Oh, that's a good one 'cause it's kind of aging. So it's a very burnished lavender. It's not the fresh lavender of summer. And this is where I'll also pay attention to the color of the stems. So I'm gonna use my finer brush just because I wanna touch some of this brown in. Oh, I got water on it. Water wants to watercolor. Some of the base of the buds are a little bit more pale. So kind of a dried olivey-green for the stem. More brown than green maybe. Greenish-brown, brownish-green. To do some of the pale. As long as your base that you lay down is still wet, you can keep going in. You're basically mixing colors on the page. Once it dries, you can layer another color on the top. Maybe do one more little bit of that brown from the last summer's bud. And water, I keep saying this, but water is very much a part of watercolor. You can see here where I dropped a drop of water

onto this top square, but I really like what it's doing, how the water moves through the paint and kind of makes a pattern. So those are the happy accidents that are going to inevitably happen when you do something every single day. But it's something to tuck away. It's like, oh, next time I'm gonna use that for real, for a purpose, not just a happy accident. I'm gonna call this one "Dried Summer."

Day 16 - Color scavenger hunt

- This is an incredibly pleasing exercise and I encourage you to have fun, get loose, play. What we're gonna do is we're going to start with this wonderful kind of a jambalaya of different colors, plants, leaves, foliage, and then arrange it so that it lays out like a rainbow, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. And pay attention to how it feels as you are doing this. I mean, this is very pleasing, kind of a confetti like mix but it's different when we get in there and kind of manipulate it. We're halfway through our month of looking at color in and out of the garden, and I would expect I know as every time I go through these exercises that I begin to see more. You never stop learning to see more in the garden. We'll start with red over here in the corner and you can see this is kind of a muted red, part of this is to pick up on the nuances. What are the different various reds? And I know everyone probably doesn't have such a glorious confetti of flowers in the garden at any one time. It's a snapshot of a season. So it's fun to do this at various times of the year. I'll do it in the wintertime and do it just with leaves and obviously the colors are much different but it's still the same exercise. You're still arranging by color. I'm moving from the red, the burnished red into more clear red. Here's California poppy, so brilliantly orange calendulas. Here's another one of these, abutilons. And then we go from orange to yellow. And this is where I really don't make any distinction between leaves and flowers. It's all, it's just your color. You're just looking at the color. This is kind of an interesting one because it's much paler than we've been working with so far. So we've got red, orange, yellow, and then green which is obviously so easy to find out in the garden. But here we start with this really super limey green geranium leaf before we go to maybe a more traditional green. And then it gets to the dark green. Blue. Blue, as I said, is not an easy one to find in the garden, but certain times of the year, you'll find there are more blues than other times. Spring happens to be one of those times. Pay attention to how you feel. I find this incredibly satisfying and playful. I do this with little kids. I do this with grownups when you know we're drinking wine and we wanna have something to do. So blue, indigo. Indigo is hard because there's just not that much indigo in the garden. But you know, we now see it having done our study that it's a darker shade of blue. It's a nuanced blue. So there's our clear blue, indigo, and then violet. So here we go. There, oh, there's another red, red, red, red, red. Here's this little shiny rock that's more of an indigo. It's a sort of a plumby red. Here's this amazing purple. And what I was hoping to show when we got our colors all together lined up is, where does pink go? Pink is obviously very, very popular in the garden. You're gonna find it more often than not likely, but it doesn't really show up on the rainbow. So I tend to think of it as an adjacent color, a color that's not especially on the rainbow, but it's certainly one that you're working with in the garden. So then I tend to think of it as more by warm, by cool, like we talked about earlier. Does it have a tint of blue to it or does it have more of a little bit of a yellow flesh? And again, if you are holding him up next to each other sometimes that's the best way to tell. Well, this one's more cool. This one's a little bit warmer. This one is beautiful with the pink petals that are green and twisty at the tips. There's our little pink rainbow down there. And oftentimes pink flowers will have or white flowers will have pink buds. So you can see that. How does that make you feel? Does it, can you name some of these flowers like a butter yellow or California poppy, orange? It's also fun when you have this when you're looking at your garden is to

put them next to each other and see which colors what are those secondary colors in the flowers. So this little African daisy has this beautiful purple center in the middle. And so you can see if you put that next to another purple you're going to call attention to that. This exercise is fun and games and very playful but it can also be an instructional tool that helps you arrange your plants in the garden or putting together a flower bouquet or anything.

Day 17 - Paint the rainbow

- Working with bits of the rainbow that we assembled yesterday, today, we're going to work bigger on a larger scale, maybe a bigger piece of paper, and working with more gestural marks, try and quickly interpret those colors that we picked up in yesterday's exercise. Pay attention to the spaces between the colors, how the red turns into orange, turns into yellow. And it's fun. This is a good instance of clean palette, clean water, clean brush, relatively clean paints so that we can try and capture those pure colors. And I'm even gonna try and do it in the order of the rainbow. You can see my vertical rainbow here. And we're going fast. We're trying to rely on what we've learned to see. Yep, that's a California poppy orange. As long as I've been doing this, I always come back to the idea that nobody does it better than mother nature, keeps me in my place. So now with the yellow, I'm gonna work hard to not contaminate it, so I've got my clean water. You can see these yellow petals down here are much cooler. They're a lot softer than the yellowy orange above it. And then just for chuckles, we've got this very, very pale yellow of the stalk. See if we can't get some water to move around in there. So then moving into the greens, we can pick up on those, that limey. I find an olivey green is pretty common in nature. Kind of as the leaves age, they turn to that more mature color. That's a perfect example of adding in red to move it kind of in that direction. And then going really dark, sort of what you'd see here on this darkest green leaf. Again, I'm gonna make sure my brush is very clean before I go into the blues. Again, blues so quickly want to lean purple. So to make an indigo color, I'm just going to kind of muddy down that blue with a little bit of the green that I've mixed up already. Like I said, indigo is not a very common color in the garden, but today we're gonna go with a ceanothus for indigo, this plant right here. And then purple is fun. Sort of start out with a more blue purple, and kind of go into a warmer, more pinky purple. This is a much different way than we've been working in the previous days. I wanted it to be quicker. I wanted it to be more gestural. And think about how when we were playing with the flowers yesterday and arranging them in rainbow order, if any of that informed how you were working with your colors today, for instance on this top row with the red to yellow transition, do you feel like you can see more variations of those colors? And how that has informed your mixing.

Day 18 - Paint your food: radish

- The world is very colorful so we don't have to limit our studies to just flowers. Sometimes it can be fun to let your environment tell you what to paint. And for that, maybe you just go into your kitchen and open your refrigerator and see what your groceries are. You can paint your groceries. So here's some groceries you might have. I'm gonna paint this French breakfast radish today. I like how it has a lotta different colors of pink in it and it kind of, you get to play with some nuance. But this is sort of a warm pink. It's got maybe a little bit of orange in it Maybe a little more. Yeah. See? Radish. Yep. Here it's fun to kind of play with, see some of the gradations that we see. So this one has a little more of a shadow up at the top. Add some water to push the pink to the top like that. But that's not actually a white white. It's kind of a root white. It's been underground. Let's try and get that. So that's got to get where I really want. We wanna add a lot of water to it, 'cause it's... We read it as

white, but in actuality it's got a little bit of stains from the soil. And then of course the leaves. This is a Kelly green. Not that Kelly green. Hmm. Sometimes I'll go ahead and lay a color down to see where I'm at and then I can glaze back in a color over the top of it. We've also got some of the pale where the stem meets. Definitely think it needs to be more blue. You can fit a lotta detail into your color studies with just little marks. All right, I think that's our radish study. And this variety of radish is called French breakfast. It's a dress-up radish, if you will.

Day 19 - Paint a weed: dandelion

- When we think about leaves in the garden, we think about green, but in fact, there's a whole world of greens. There's so many different greens. Today we're going to look at this eucalyptus which is very much a blue green, almost a turquoise cast to it. So that's definitely not a color that appears in the rainbow, but it's out there in nature. I also like this particular sprig of eucalyptus because one of them has a golden stem and one of them has kind of a burgundy stem. So let's see if we can't get there. I know right away that I'm going to tone down some colors here on my palette because this is a much more subdued. It's not quite the rainbow that I'm looking at over here. So sometimes you can just premix some colors and that will kinda give you a starting point to work from. So there's kind of that burgundy of the stem. Let's see how we can shift this green to a more blue green. This is one where I really go back and forth and back and forth and try all my greens, add all the blues, which is getting sort of close but it doesn't have that duskiness of it. That's getting there a bit. That's actually maybe a little bit closer than I thought I was going to end up at, so let's put some of that down. We can always go back and glaze over it. Some days I feel like I can chase green all over the place and maybe get there, maybe not. So here's one where I'm gonna, if you hold it up against it you can kind of tell yourself like, this is actually not that far off. Maybe at one point I'll add a little bit of this, that in there too. I probably test out greens almost more than any other color. This is also an instance where it helps to know your color palettes. What are the blues? What does that blue act like? What does the different blue act like? Because those are your ingredients. That's how you're mixing your color. Now, that's a pretty, I feel like I'm getting somewhere with that. Maybe I'll go back over this. Let's try a really pale one. This one's more of a golden stem. Sometimes you use the most unlikely colors to get to the color that you think you see that you're trying to match, and that's where all of that practice color mixing comes in. And just being willing to take a chance, to make a mistake. Yeah, I feel like that that rosy glaze over the top starts to get that murkiness. This one's a little bit too green still. If I could do another study immediately after this one I would come up with something very different. But this is a good place to stop and this is what I saw right now. Let's call this one "Seeing."

Day 20 - Eucalyptus

- When we think about leaves in the garden, we think about green, but in fact, there's a whole world of greens. There's so many different greens. Today we're going to look at this eucalyptus which is very much a blue green, almost a turquoise cast to it. So that's definitely not a color that appears in the rainbow, but it's out there in nature. I also like this particular sprig of eucalyptus because one of them has a golden stem and one of them has kind of a burgundy stem. So let's see if we can't get there. I know right away that I'm going to tone down some colors here on my palette because this is a much more subdued. It's not quite the rainbow that I'm looking at over here. So sometimes you can just premix some colors and that will kind of give you a starting point to work from. So there's kind of that burgundy of the stem. Let's see how we can shift this green to a more blue green. This

is one where I really go back and forth and back and forth and try all my greens. Add all the blues. Just getting sort of close, but it doesn't have that duskiness of it. That's getting there a bit. That's actually maybe a little bit closer than I thought I was going to end up at, so let's put some of that down. We can always go back and glaze over it. Some days I feel like I can chase green all over the place and maybe get there, maybe not. So here's one where I'm gonna, if you hold it up against it, you can kind of tell yourself like this is actually not that far off. Maybe at one point I'll add a little bit of this, that in there too. I probably test out greens almost more than any other color. This is also an instance where it helps to know your color palettes. What are the blues? What does that blue act like? What is a different blue act like? Because those are your ingredients. That's how you're mixing your color. Now, that's pretty, I feel like I'm getting somewhere with that. Maybe I'll go back over this. Let's try a really pale one. This one's more of a golden stem. Sometimes you use the most unlikely colors to get to the color that you think you see that you're trying to match, and that's where all of that practice color mixing comes in. And just being willing to take a chance, make a mistake. Yeah, I feel like that that rosy glaze over the top starts to get that murkiness. This one's a little bit too green still. If I could do another study immediately after this one, I would come up with something very different. But this is a good place to stop, and this is what I saw right now. Let's call this one seeing.

Day 21 - Paint a tree blossom: apricot

- Fruit trees blossoming in the springtime is a very ephemeral moment. One moment the trees are filled with blossoms, and the next, they're all on the sidewalk and you've missed it. So I always like to capture that one time of the year that is all about fruit trees. So today I'm doing this little, tiny little sprig of an apricot blossom. When you look at an apricot blossom you can see it's mostly white. And so you think, "Well, how do we paint white?" Let's explore. This is an instance where I use my pigment in the water. I start with what color is the water, and there are shadows in the white blossoms. We're gonna pay attention to that. We also want it to read differently than the color of the paper itself. Let's just start by laying down some water. You kind of might have to change your angle to the water, so you can actually see where you've laid it down. Here I'm laying in some little tiny dots of color that show the underside of the blossom, see if that doesn't start to look like an apricot. And again, I'm gonna paint a lot with water. I'm using the water to move it around. The base of these petals, it's a very kind of a rusty purple. It's more orange than that. Yeah, that's pretty good. Let's lay some of that in. Maybe even give it a little bit, just a little mark. It doesn't always have to be a full square. These shadows that I see are almost a little bit gray. By articulating or seeing the shadow, you're showing the white, if that makes sense. Put some more of that, that beautiful rusty color in there, 'cause we don't wanna be just looking at white. Eh, that's too much. And we've got the stamens, with that little tiny bit of pollen on the top, so I wanna make sure I capture that. But again, you know, there's not very much of it. So maybe I'll just do some, it's almost like in this study, you're pointing to something. Everyone looks at a apricot blossom, and sees a white flower. But if you show them other nuances, they're like, "Oh yeah, I totally see that now." And then of course the bark of the twig is a much darker color. My favorite brown is blue and orange. I find that that gets me to a much closer brown than anything that generally comes in the paint palette. Now that's got kind of a plum-y brown. And then you can see along this side, where it's kind of highlighted, probably is where the sun was reaching the most, so we can add in that kind of a detail. This might not look exactly like an apricot blossom, but it hopefully will remind you of that time of the year when the apricot blossoms were blooming.

Day 22 - Paint a wildflower: sour grass

- Wildflowers are sort of a signature of their place. They kind of exist independent of the gardener, they show up in cracks in the sidewalk, and where you least expect it. They're very independent. So today, when we do our wildflower study, I'm going to be painting sour grass. Here in Northern California at this time of the year, sour grass is up and down the streets and along the sidewalks, just blossoming away, in a very, very, very bright, clear yellow. We'll see how we can keep our paints clean for this one. Working with yellow, as I've said so many times before, it's really important to have clean water, clean place on your palette, and clean paint. Once it's contaminated, you're never going to get back to that pure, clean yellow. It's got a little bit of gold into it. I'm gonna give myself a pretty good size puddle of this. Well, I'm also working with a round brush today because I want to capture some of that wildness of the plant itself. And you can make a completely different kind of mark with a round brush, which is now we're capturing color and trying to express movement. All right, wildflower. That's a pretty good yellow. We'll see. And just because it's a very clear yellow doesn't mean it doesn't have some shadows in it, so we'll dot those in as well. I'm very much not a botanical illustrator, I think that's pretty apparent. But I do try when I'm doing these more abstract paintings or color studies to see if I can't intuitively express some of the marks, more of what it feels like to me than what it actually looks like. We've got a lot of our bright yellow field kind of laid down. Now, let's start working into some greens, some sour greens. There's a little bit of the shadow of the blossoms as well, and we can use water to pull that out. Oh, and if you kiss them a little bit, they'll start bleeding one into the other. That's a fun effect that you can encourage. I'm gonna do the stems as these lines because they are lines. Maybe a little bit of the movement of it, they cross. And there's also these parts of the plant where the flower comes out from at the base of each one, so try and get some of that into the yellow. And of course, even the green has a little bit of a shadow in it, so how can we show that inkier side? Then, like I do with greens, I add something reddish, not necessarily a deep red, but something that will modify that green to be more like what I'm seeing. You always have the constant reference of whatever it is you're looking at, so we're just trying to follow what we see. I see that the green up in here is a lot. I think it may need more blue. Working with a round brush is a completely different feeling. Some people may like it, some people may feel like it's a little too unstructured. Might change from day to day. Some days, that's all I want to use is the round. I also like to go back up when I'm doing a stem and kind of paint in a little bit of a dark edge to it because they're dimensional. There is always gonna be a light side and a dark side. And of course, it's fun to play with the water to see what effect you can get by just adding water. And I'm going to call this one, Go Wild.

Day 23 - Conifer with needles

- I'm from the Pacific Northwest, which is also, Washington is known as the Evergreen State. We have a lot of conifers around in our forest, in our cities. It's sort of the signature of our place. So today I'm going to do a color study of a tiny sprig of a conifer. So here's this enormous tree. We're gonna try and capture its essence down on a little tiny piece of paper. To do that, we're going to use our round brush, like yesterday, and we're gonna keep it loose. We're gonna make our marks more closely resemble what I'm seeing on the sprig. So we're capturing color and movement. This is a Hollywood Juniper. One of my favorite things about a Hollywood Juniper, also has these little tiny teal berries on it. We'll see if we can't fit all of that into today's study. We know by now that mixing a credible green, a green that looks to be natural in the garden, is a bit of a chase, back and forth. Blue, yellow, red. All right, that's getting something. I think I need a little bit of red in there. So, and

this is the sort of mark we're going to make today, because we're dealing with the conifer, the needles. And this sprig, which has the berries on it, is a little more of a blue-green. Whereas this sprig, which is just on another part of the same tree, has a little bit more of a limey color to it. So let's start with our berried branches. Some are thicker than others, the needles, and sometimes I wanna fill in a little bit more substantive of a swatch just to express what the color is. That'll kind of translate to these other lines. And again, painting with water, you can kind of catch some of the highlights on the plant. The part where our eyes perceive a lightness, which throws the contrast of the shadows even more into relief. Let's put in some of those turquoise-y berries, which is actually my favorite part. You can see 'em up here. We might as well make them look like berries. The essence of berry. This is definitely an instance where I wanna get the water to move some paint around. I get the impression this is a younger sprig of the tree. It's not nearly, a little more limey-green. And the berries show up as more of a, also that limey-green. So we're working, it's the same plant, it's even part of the same sprig, but we're getting a lot of different greens in our study. We're looking for and finding a range of greens. Tone my green down with some red. It gets very dark, kind of as you get on the inside of the branch, the needles that are shadowed on the inside. Now let's capture the bark of the juniper. It's this wonderful, kind of a rusty, warm brown. The red, adding in the bark, which is a form of red, to this color study, adds a lot of energy to it because it is, we're sort of playing with complementary colors, how they behave. I like to think of it as one complement makes the other even more of itself. So those berries turned out a lot more turquoise as they started to dry out. It's funny how some of the pigments, the way they act, I think, I don't want to mess with it too much more. This is when I go in and just start mopping up color on my palette to shift things one little tiny way or another. Give it some depth. All right. I feel like I just did a self-portrait of my place. So I'm going to call this "Home."

Day 24 - Kismet color

- We've spent three weeks looking at color and playing around and arranging it and creating these color studies, and I'm curious to have us all think about how that felt. Did it feel like fun? Did it feel like it was a release? Personally, I find it when I'm creating a color study and I'm concentrating and focusing, everything else goes quiet, which is a really nice thing to have in your life. Looking at your color studies, you can probably learn something about yourself. There's not a lot of surprises for me. When I look at these, I realize I don't do a lot with red. It's just not a color that I, you know, is a familiar to me. I do have a lot with pink, and I'm surprised to see I do as much with blue, because blue is not a common color in nature, and yet I really enjoy, I guess it's the shells, my mussel shells and all. It's also interesting to look at those neutrals, you know, it's like, how do, you know, what are the different colors of neutrals? There's actually a tremendous amount of variety in what is basically just what most of us think of as a non-color, like this was the one for the rock. We also played with kind of loosening the mark and making it more gestural. I love this one on the wildflower, because it's so pervasive outside in the garden right now, and yet that feels like it felt that way a little bit. I captured that. This one is what I did at home and it's of a fig, and I kind of used the fig as the negative space around those marks. I do see a lot of yellow, and just inevitably, there's going to be a lot of greens. The green is a constant in the garden, and so that should not be any surprise to any of us. So think about what you see. Kind of look, bring to looking at your color studies the same kind of concentration and focus that you've been bringing to capturing the color or capturing the movement and notice how that feels. I am instinctively, crave to organize this into a rainbow. I'm gonna resist that, but it's fun. It's like you can move things around. You can create relationships with

them. Let's look at these three studies right here. So this is affection. This is the one that I did of the dandelion, because I find that as I do these color studies, I really develop a fondness for the plants. I kind of see them in a different way, but that one, if we're establishing relationships, that kind of leads right into the daffodil that had mostly yellow flower with that little cup of orange, and then we went into the calendula, which was, you know this really saturated orange, which on its own is a little bit jarring, but you put it with some other relatives and it all of a sudden starts to hang together better. This is the perfect time to maybe look at your color studies and ask yourself, "What's your favorite color?" Is it a different color than you expected or is it something that feels very natural, that you've connect to for a long time? Which one feels the most resistant? I would say sometimes I'm resistant to blue, because it can be difficult to capture accurately, and yet obviously I keep going back. I keep trying, which is great. That's the beauty of a daily practice is you always get another chance to try again. My experience is there is a flow that develops, quite literally with the watercolor and moving the pigments around, but also on an emotional level or a concentration level, and I find this practice very meditative and restorative. So I encourage you to look at that. As you're looking at your colors, look back and think what you were doing. So are we going for the flow?

Day 25 - Oyster shell

- As I mentioned a week ago or a few days ago, I often repeatedly paint shells. I refer to them as my scales. It's what I practice for. I can even paint the same one over and over. And it's especially quieting for me, because I have to concentrate so hard on it. So oftentimes, I will choose to paint a shell if I'm having a hard day. Today, I'm gonna paint this oyster shell. It is white. So the trick will be to use a great deal of water and what colors can we add into our swatches that reveal the white? It's almost like the contrast of these other shadows and colors and details will make the rest of it white. One of the first things I'm going to do is to clean up a place on my palette. We're using color, but we're using very, very, very little color. Get this completely, it doesn't have to be so clean. Just needs a little bit of a clean space to work. Then I'm gonna start by laying down some white. Do it on your test strip as well, so that you can kind of try out whatever trick you're going to do. So I'm going to start by laying down some water, can be the color of the water in your jar, and then add a little bit of, I see these shadows as kind of expressed in a plummy color. So let's just get some of that going. I know it feels like you're just painting, you know, what do they say? Snowman in a snowstorm. But it's those subtle colors, and you know, look back at your palettes where you have, that's a great gray there that I think will be effective. So see, by adding in some colors along the side, what you're doing is you're revealing the whites that are inside the swatch. And again, you might have to go looking for your water. I'm always looking to see if I already have a color on the palette that I can use. I think of the colors that are on the palette have already been kind of toned or a little more nuanced than right out of the paint box. So this little kind of purplely gray mark is where the oyster attaches to the shell. So that's a very oystery part of it. And I see a lot of pink or rose color on the inside of that shell, so I'm going to lay down some of that. Maybe I'll even do one that's mostly the pink. Then I'm gonna use some water to move that around. Water literally pushes the paint, and so in this instance, I'm trying to get the paint to go to the edges, 'cause that's mostly where our color different, are showing up on the shell. There's a little bit of a blue. It's funny how a color that's not there actually helps reveal the one that is, and I guess I could almost see a little bit of blue in that spot, but that's, I'm adding in just the tiniest bit. It's almost like how a little bit of blue makes whites whiter. And what I'm going to do after we get these to dry down a bit is to go in and

add some details around the edges. That will start to give it a little more oyster look to it. And I don't mind if these sort of bleed and kiss together in the colors, because oysters are water creatures. Might as well have your watercolor and your water creature look like themselves. This may feel silly that you're just here painting white, but that's sort of where we start. So now we can go in and start putting in some edges. I'm going to use my round brush, because I can get a little bit more detail. I can get that fine line. I find blue is kind of a magic trick that I can use to make the white whiter. It doesn't make a lot of sense, but you'll see it on the page and then it will make sense to you. And if you don't have an oyster shell, pick something else that's white. Pick, pick, hmm, a white flower or a white rock. Something that you can use to explore the colors in the white, but also how you can use colors to reveal the white. You're almost trying to paint that pearlescent interior of an oyster shell. I'm gonna call this one pearl to kind of pick up on that pearly interior of the shell. I have a few other examples that I've painted before to show you how different it could be. It's very likely that this may even be the same shell, but it's what I was feeling that day. Maybe it was extra cloudy, maybe I had more pink on my palette or more of a warmer palette. But these are all different types of expressions of things that together still look like an oyster to me.

Day 26 - Pinecone

- After green, brown is probably the most prevalent color in nature. After exploring all the different nuances of white, today, we're gonna look deep into brown, see how much variation we can get out of these pine cones. As I mentioned before, one of my favorite ways to get to a brown is to mix blue and orange. It just seems to have a little more interest to it than a brown paint. The other thing we're going to try and get to with this brown is saturation to get some nice dark browns, whether we do that by mixing a darker hue on the palette or if we're going to layer it in there. Let's see what we've got here. See, I think that's too plum. You can see, just adding a little bit of an alternative color, I can shift it one way or another. All right, I think that's a good one to start with. Especially when I'm working with monochromes, you know, different variations of the same color, that's when I use a lot of testing on my test strip. Even the slightest shift from one color to another shows, you know, if I'm going in the right direction or if I went in completely the wrong direction, start over. 26 00:02:27,930 --> 00:02:29,760 27 00:02:29,760 --> 00:02:32,250 After doing this for as many years as I have, I really feel like I do see more color than I used to. And when I'm showing others my paintings or, you know, just they follow my practice, it helps them to see more as well too. See, I feel like I want to get that to a nice dark. Those shadows are really deep. Go back up to this first one, and glaze over. Remember, you can always kind of literally hold it up against it to see where your colors need to shift towards. It's like a dance. Even if you're going over a previous color swatch with the same color, it's going to be different if the color underneath is different. And when you think you've gotten to a study that looks like a pine cone, you can stop. This one should be called chocolate, but I guess I'll do pine cone.

Day 27 - Paint a juicy fruit: strawberry

- Red is the color of delicious. Out in the garden as the berries ripen and turn red it signals to us that they're gonna have the best flavor, the more sugars, the sweetness, and obviously the fragrance coming off of this strawberry that we're going to paint here today is amazing. Let's try to capture the juiciness, the sweetness, and the flavor of this strawberry. To begin, I'm going to mix up a good size puddle of red. And I wanna use plenty of water to get that juiciness, but also that means I'm gonna have to add more pigment to it so that I don't end up with a pink strawberry. Alright, let's try

that. Oh, my paint wants to get away. Sometimes I feel like there's almost a shadow of another color. Red is so easy to go flat that if I try and call out some of the shadow colors in it, then maybe it's not quite so flat, one dimensional. There we go. See if we can get some water in there. We've also got shadow here on one side. I also like to play around with the edges between the swatches where they don't quite touch so that that negative space between them becomes kind of a player in the color study as well. More water's gonna be more juicy. I wanna make this up here a little more juicy. This is a good one. It shows the water as it's drying out. And, of course, we've got green leaves. Let's do a little more of the shadow on this side. Also, you can see that point right there where they kiss. That's, you know, the juices are flowing. And red being a complimentary to green, that's where the berries show up so nicely and clearly to the crows that like to come in and harvest them all from my garden. A little more depth to our red. While it still reads as red, it's almost reading as more red. Yeah, I like how that one's got some real depth to it. So now I'm gonna take some drops of just plain water and drop it into parts of the red that are still wet. So here you can see a big puddle of it. It's all kind of going to one side. You can wash it back across. That is some juice. But you can see if you drop water into it then the paint moves if it's still wet. And that kind of looks like the seeds that are set in on the strawberry. That's a very strawberry-ish sort of characteristic. I think I want this a little bit darker down here. You know, a ripe strawberry in the summertime has an intensity to it. You know, the whole garden will smell like a strawberry. So we try and communicate some of that in how we're doing our color study. I don't know about you, but I really want a strawberry now. So let's call this one summer.

Day 28 - Artifacts of a day

- Just like you can record a very ephemeral moment, like when the cherry trees are blossoming in the spring, you can also create a color study that captures everything of one particular day. So this in my sketchbook last summer, we were up in Alaska and I was walking on the beach, and I collected some shells and probably some rocks. I don't even remember what it was that I did this multi-object color study of, but I do very much remember that it was from our trip to Alaska. So today, as I walked to the Creativebug studio, I collected things along the way, and I'm going to do a color study that will mark this as that day. This is also a chance for me to indulge my love of pink. It's interesting, we talked several days ago about warm pink and cool pink. You know, if something has a little cast of yellow to it, it leans blue. Oops, well here, we'll just test on here. See that's very much more a cool pink that would be down here. Let's try and get something warmer for these camellia blossoms. This pink that I mixed here first, you can see is pretty cool, so I'm gonna stick that down here by the roses. That's much more kind of in keeping with that. But to get to that warm camellia, I'm gonna have to go another direction. And again, it's a very, very pale pink, so we want to emphasize that. And this, you know, I'm just doing the testing right on the sheet itself. Ah, that's close. It could go a little more orange. Having said that, now it'll be way too orange. No, that's, I feel like that might shift it there. Oh yeah, see how it almost has that, like I said, that cast, that warm cast? Camellias are so beautiful. They look so fragile, and yet they bloom in the middle of winter. They also brown very easily, so that kind of orangey golden color at the bottom is sadly very much a part of a camellia. So let's try and get that hot pink. Hot pink that's obviously going over. It's seen better days. I always like plants that have both the cool and the warm versions of themselves in the same flower. I think that's very interesting. Not something I would notice unless I went looking for it. Maybe we'll put some limey green leaves on there. And that's a weird green, so we add a little bit of red to it to bring it back to normal. And then this flower cluster down here is interesting because it

has pink flowers coming out of it, a warm pink flower, but the parts of the plant that the flowers are coming out of is actually very red. Kind of almost a rusty red. So you get that two different versions of pink or different, I guess it's more like different expressions of red. Yeah. Let's get a little closer to it, 'cause it's actually very saturated. Oftentimes, new growth in the spring will have a lot red new growth before it ripens up to green. So let's add some of that green into the edge. I'm much more happy with that green than I am with the one I first mixed with that. See if we can get another bold stroke of those big blousy camellia flowers with that little bit of brown at the bottom. Ooh, wow. Hello, red. Red is the most powerful color in the landscape. You can't help, gonna put this down here 'cause that, nope, see, it's up here. You can't help but see red, and in fact, sometimes when you see red, you can't see anything else. So it's actually pretty difficult color to use in the flower garden, although it is absolutely one of my favorite colors in the vegetable garden. This color study is an artifact of the day that I walked to the Creativebug studios on a spring morning. It was beautiful outside, and it was very pink. So that makes it a very good day.

Day 29 - Language of flowers: rosemary

- Spending time with color in the garden and out of the garden is sort of like a love letter to nature. It's interesting that back in the Victorian, or starting with the Victorians, they actually developed a language of flowers assigning different meanings to different buds or blooms or pieces of plants. And that way they could convey sometimes not very good feelings, sometimes a beautiful feeling, sometimes loneliness. But all of this could be contained and expressed in a posey of flowers. Some of the flowers in this language of flowers are for instance, and you'll have this in your PDF for the class, apple blossom means good fortune. So that's a fleeting moment in spring. I don't know how that says about your good fortune. Eucalyptus is a healing touch. Ferns indicate magic or fascination. I'm going to use rosemary today because rosemary is for remembrance, and I feel like that is an empathetic part of being human, that we remember things. I'm going to start with the flowers of a rosemary which are kind of a periwinkle blue, little bit of little blue, but a very purple blue. And then you add more purple, and then you add more blue until you think you see, nope, needs more blue. Rosemary is a wonderful plant to have in the garden. Not only is it beautiful, the bees love the flowers, but it's also delicious in the kitchen. Now we're going to go for that almost coniferous green. If you have a mix on your palette, and obviously you see why it's important to have a white palette is because you can kind of, it's almost a test swatch before you get to the paper. Don't give up. Sometimes you can, you think you're way off, and you might just need to keep adding one color or another. And remember, one of the best things I think for getting to a realistic green is red. Each leaf of the rosemary, each little needle also has kind of a light colored stripe on the underside of it. So we can try and capture that lighter green as well. And I'm using my round brush and going a little more loose in style because emotions can get messy in a perfectly wonderful human way. It's hard to see, but there are also some kind of gray, purple gray parts where the flower has already fallen off. So let's try and make a purple gray in there. Yeah, and again, it's almost a little bit fuzzy. So how do we make fuzzy? And then the stem, the woody stem that goes up through it is sort of a very, very cool brown. Trying to get some of that dark in there. So we could give this to a friend. You could give this to your mom and it could be a remembrance. Rosemary is for remembrance, so I'm going to call this one memory.

Day 30 - Revisit first flower: chrysanthemum

- We've been painting together for nearly a month now. All of that looking and paying close

attention has probably added to what we can actually see. So as we're going to revisit that very first flower that we painted at the beginning of the month to see if we can't notice what those differences are in how we perceive color. Here's our little chrysanthemum ish type plant. It's a purple, it's a pretty common florist plant. You could pick it up at the grocery store. But maybe we see it in a different way now. You see the edges of the petals that go more pale. We can even drop in some water to replicate that center of the stem. We can find the really saturated parts in the shadows. We know to look for all of the colors, not just the obvious ones. Look for that golden dark center. We know that areas of very, very dark set off the lighter areas. And we know we will spend the rest of our lives trying to mix green. We know that the stem is probably a lighter shade than the foliage. Except for up underneath the flower where it's in the shadow. We know how to shift green to a more natural version of itself by adding a little bit of a color in the red family, we'll just say that. I wanna push that blue green color right there at the end. Rather than stop where we think we might have, we know that we can go back in and glaze over another color add some more life to it. Maybe even add a little bit of that dark center right down there at the end. All the colors that add to the likeness of the flower itself and make it seem more like an object in nature, varied and always changing. I'd be interested in what you're naming your color study here at the end of a month of looking at color. But I think I will write "seeing color".

Day 31 - Holding your days: ideas for display

- When you do a daily color practice for as many days in a row as I have, the days do tend to accumulate. And in fact, that's kind of how I refer to my practice as a whole, is an accumulation of days. And I will give one of my cards. Anyone who gets a card from me or gift, you're gonna get it on a color study. In the house, in our bedroom, I have put an installation of, you know, it's probably several hundred of these color studies up there, and they're the first thing I see when I wake up in the morning. I wanted to talk a little bit about how you can honor the colors and the days that you've put into this, and I hope to some degree you'll keep going and have your own accumulation of days. Let's start by looking at the very first one we did. So this was our little chrysanthemum. And if I look back at that first day, and I've lined it up, the next day we zoomed in a little closer and did it of just the flower. And then several weeks later, we did this last one. And I put them together and I really see a relationship between them. I mean, yes, they're all of the same object, but I also almost feel like I saw differently as I kept doing it. There's a momentum that builds up when you're doing it every day. That's one way you might arrange them is by subject matter. I also happen to really enjoy working with neutrals, and this is the rock study that we did. Here's a couple versions of the eucalyptus and of course the oyster shell. And, you know, these are just colors that we wouldn't necessarily think we're seeing until we look for them, and then we notice that they're there. So this might be a nice grouping that you could put together. They kind of start to relate to each other. So this is more relating on the basis of color, not the subject matter. I also went through a phase several years ago where I cut up my paintings, and this is just ridiculously fun to play with, and, you know, it becomes sort of an accumulation of days/confetti. And I like to think of each little square here as a landscape. It is a tiny little landscape of a tiny little piece of a particular, I'm thinking this one was probably a strawberry. I've also taken the paintings and a hole punch and created garlands. And I don't give any thought at all to what the colors are or what, you know, the relation of one to the other. I just sit down at the sewing machine and have at it. I've got a couple of different colors in there to introduce a little bit of variety. And that's a really fun, it's a fun gift. I've given these to people who hang 'em up in their windows or something, and it feels like I'm giving them a part of

myself because this represents an investment of a lot of time. Not that I wouldn't be doing it anyway. One of the other ways that I create something else from these color studies, at first I thought, "Well, I'll have all these individual paintings," but really on their own, they don't say a lot to me. It's only in numbers that they start to really take on their own personality. So I've created these little art folios where I've bound them with masking tape or bindery tape on the back into this folio. And for these I select relationships, so they're not the same subject, although this is oyster, one of my favorite subject. And I like this one because it had pink. And then I had bound the outside in some of this vintage garden text, and that becomes a special little gift or a booklet that you can give to someone. All to say that I'm very fond of color. I love it dearly. And I wouldn't have had that relationship with color in the natural world if I hadn't just picked up a brush and paid attention.