
Beginning Watercolor: A 2-Part Series with Yao Cheng

Chapter 1 - Beginning Watercolor: Supplies and Basic Techniques

Part 1 Overview

- Hi, my name is Yao Cheng and I'm a watercolor painter and designer. (upbeat music) I feel so lucky that I get to do my dream job where I paint and create full time. People are often really intimidated by watercolors and medium but my approach is very simple. Really it's just about having fun. This is a great beginner's class because we're gonna cover a lot of different things. We'll talk about how to use the medium. We'll talk about different surfaces. We'll cover different techniques, such as blending, pulling and dipping with watercolor. We'll paint basic shapes like circles, triangles, rectangles. In the end, you'll have a basic knowledge of how to play and explore with watercolor. (upbeat music)

Materials

- Here are some basic supplies that you will need to get started painting with watercolor. Now this may seem like a lot of supplies to have but as you start to grow and love playing with a medium, you'll start to accrue your own collection of paints and brushes. Whatever it is that you feel most comfortable working with. First, let's talk about paper. There are many different types of watercolor paper out there but my favorite is the Arches especially in watercolor block. It comes in hot press, cold press but I prefer cold press because it has more of a tooth to it that you really get that texture and it picks up all of your brushstrokes really well. I usually have a few different blocks in different sizes on hand at once because watercolor takes a little bit of time to dry so I usually will go between two or three different paintings at a same time. So while one is drying, I'll work on various aspects of another painting. So, here we have two different sizes. This is a 12x16 which a really great beginning size to work with. And the larger size is a 14x20 which sometimes I like to split into two and work on two different paintings at the same time and multitask. To separate the sheets, I use a bone folder but you also use a x-acto knife or a ruler to separate the sheets. Watercolor comes in various different forms. It comes in tubes, it sometimes is already in the palette when you buy it. I like to create my own palette using tubes of watercolor. My preferred brand is always and forever, Windsor Newton. It just has such a beautiful saturation to their colors. The pigments are very high quality so I really recommend starting with these. To begin, you should get the following colors; Windsor Lemon, Windsor Yellow Deep, Yellow Ochre, Brown Ochre, Orange Red Shade, Scarlet Lake, Opera Rose which is the most amazing pink there is, Permanent Snap Green, Cobalt Turquoise, Manganese Blue Hue, Prussian Blue, a violet which is called Ultra Marine Violet, and then an Ivory Black. From these colors, you can mix hundreds of different colors. Palettes come in various different sizes and forms. I like the ones that open and close so that it's also portable. You can take it whenever you go. I like to squeeze out my colors overnight so that they're dried completely before I start using them. Here you can see all of the colors that we've mentioned before. As well as a white and a gold gouache that we will talk about later. Brushes also come in various sizes and forms. My favorite and the one that I use the most often are the round tips which I have in a lot of different sizes but here you can see three. Here's a size eight, 18, and a 24 in the round brush. Angle brushes are great for anything with straight edges such as abstracts. This is the 10 millimeter angle brush. This flat brush here is a quarter inch. This Mop brush is a 16 millimeter and it's really great for washes or anything that you just need to cover a lot of area with. This Oval brush at three quarters

of an inch is really great for anything with petals such as flowers or anything with a soft edge. It's also nice to have a couple of large brushes on hand such as this stroke brush at three quarters of an inch. And this Flat Wash at an inch and a half. I like to have a bucket for warm colors and a bucket for cool colors so that you don't end up mixing all of your colors together, becoming a brown mess. I also like to use a spray bottle from time to time. Paper towel is kind of essential. We'll talk about how to use it to create texture later but it's also really good just to have when you're cleaning your brushes and so forth. Sometimes I like to have color reference on hand to create a color palette before I begin painting and this will be included in the PDF. This may seem like a lot of materials and an investment to have in the beginning but trust me, it's gonna save you a lot of headache down the road if you have quality paints and paper to work with.

Working with paints

- Let's begin with how to work with a medium, the basics. This is usually my setup in my studio space. I have my paper in front of me, my palette, my two jars of water, and some brushes that I will be using frequently, as well as a paper towel for whenever it is I need to dry off my brushes. Water color is one of the most versatile mediums there is. It can be extremely opaque, such as this red here, which means that you can't see through it, or it can be extremely translucent, which happens when you add more and more water as you along. Here I've prepared some different techniques that we're gonna do together. This is a warm palette in which we're gonna add water to create opaque color to a light color, as in a warm and a cool. And then we're gonna try mixing on the palette from one color, here in pink, to another color, here in orange. And then we are going to assemble our own palette in which we're gonna create a 10 color palette of a photo reference, any that of your choosing or the one in the PDF included. Let's just begin with playing with the color red. I am using a size 18 round tip for this. I'm gonna dip my brush in water first so it's nice and wet to begin with. And I'm gonna mix it with some red. Make sure that you get a lot of color on your brush. The longer the bristle, the better because it will retain more pigment, so I'm really just trying to get as, pick up as much pigment as I can. To create opaque color, literally, straight out of the tube, is this color, look how beautiful that red is. So now I'm gonna dip it quickly in water, so you still have some pigment on your brush, and you'll see that it will lighten the more you mix with water. And you really can push this to 15, 20 different shades. This is one of the best things about watercolor, which is that it's just, it becomes so light and airy, and you can even really just rinse your brush now. And you'll still be able to see that there's still some color. You can really see the range of, from dark to light that you can get with just adding water, we're not using white. White pigment is really something I don't use with watercolor just because you don't need it. Water is your white, and that's a really important thing to remember as you start working with watercolor is if you wanna lighten something, just add water, that's all you have to do. Now we're going to rinse my brush so that it's nice and clean, and I'm gonna try it with a cool color. Here I'm dipping it in a cerulean blue, again, I'm gonna pick up as much color, and maybe this time I will mix it with a darker blue as well so you get a deeper, a deeper blue. We're gonna start with a really, just straight out of the tube, no water added or anything, and you can see that it's very opaque, very saturated color. Now I'm gonna dip my brush in just a little bit of water just to show you the range of what you can do. And isn't it kind of incredible how you can see the different levels of layers of color that you've added. You really see that cerulean blue now. So I'm gonna rinse it a little bit more. And there you go, that's all it is, water and pigment. Let's try mixing with two different colors, so here I have created a palette of 10 colors using, going from a pink to an orange-yellow. So let's try that one. Don't be

afraid to pick up a lot of pigment. Sometimes people are really afraid to use color, and it's one of the great things about having pigment squeezed out already on the palette ready to go, so you can use it liberally. So here I have a lot of pink, this is andopera rose. I'm gonna start here, I love the hot pink, it's kind of amazing. And I'm just gonna start moving across my palette, I'm gonna start dipping my brush into every single one of these colors. First I'm gonna pick up a little bit of red. You can still see a little bit of pink in there, and that's because I have not dipped my brush back into the water, I'm only using color on the palette right now. Now I can lighten it, if you wanted to, with a little bit of water, but as far as mixing different colors go, I'm not really using water for that. Now I'm gonna dip it in a little bit of orange, and I'm sort of just gonna move on down so that you can say, oh, well maybe I want to lighten this a little bit, just do a lighter shade of that corally, corally color, and maybe now I'm gonna mix it really just in the yellow. So you can still see a little bit of relation from the pink to here, there's still a little bit of red in this yellow. I'm gonna rinse my brush so that it's maybe a lighter shade of that, and then I'm gonna go right into the yellow. As you can see, I'm really not being that careful about mixing my colors on a separate block here, I'm kind of mixing it right in. I do this because I like the unpredictability of some of the colors that I pick up because, you know, maybe I didn't really plan on having some orange in my yellow, but by picking it up in my brush, I'm using unexpected colors together, and that's something that's really important in my work, and something that you shouldn't be afraid to do when your working with watercolor is just to experiment and play with different colors working together because I think you'll be surprised at the variety that you will get in your work. I'm just adding a little more water to my brush so that you can see a lighter shade of this yellow. So you can see I've gone from a dark, saturated pink all the way to a yellow, and you can see the transition of in between of how it became the yellow in the end. Now let's try it with a blue to green. Let's use the cerulean blue. So again, don't be afraid to just pick up color with your brush. Let's start with that, and maybe I'm gonna go straight into the turquoise now. You can see there is still the relationship of the blue here, but now it's got a little more turquoise in there. Lighten it with water so that you still see it's a little bit more turq. And maybe I pick up a little more turq, but now I'm gonna move into the green. So you can still see the turq here. The reason why I am not rinsing my brush out completely is because I want the relationship. It's important to have this relationship through a transition, so that it's still relatable. Even though it's a different color, there is still some of the blue, for example, in the turquoise, and when you're creating a painting, there then is that conversation between the two colors, then they make sense and they work together. Moving along, I'm going to now pick up more green. And maybe I want to lighten that a little bit, now it's a really light green, and maybe now I want to add some, a little bit of ochre to give it, like, a little bit more of a warmish green before going completely into like an apple green. And there you are. This is a really great way to play with watercolor and to really understand how color relationships work, really gives you a chance to become comfortable with working with water and how much water to use and when to use it. Now I'm gonna show you how to compose a palette using a color reference. Here's the photo reference I'm gonna use, and I use my Pinterest quite a lot for this purpose where I pull a palette beforehand before I start a painting so that I have a specific color range that I'm gonna work with. And I don't have to think about that aspect when I'm creating a painting. I know the colors I'm gonna use, and I'm just gonna focus on the shapes and sizes and composition of the painting. We're using this photo reference for color only, we're not going to actually paint the popsicles, it's just a reference. I've composed a ten color palette here ranging from light yellow to a dark slate gray. The way that I pull them is I'm looking at this photo and I'm seeing what are the main aspects of this photo, right? So it looks like there's a lot of light yellows

here. That's sort of the prominent color, so I'm going to, I've devoted three colors to that, one in light, one in this marigold here, that's kind of in the rind of the lemon, and then a darker, a really saturated yellow. Here are three shades of greens in light, medium, and dark that I pulled from this reference here, most notably in the leaves. I've included a turquoise here just as a hint since you can see it right in the corner. And then two colors in light and medium for the slate of this right here, and a little bit of brown that you see where it's, looks like it's a wet part of the plate. Let's now mix these colors together and compose our own palette. We're gonna start with the light yellow for this palette. I'm gonna take my brush, gonna rinse it, no need to change out your water, it's fine that it's a little bit pink. I'm gonna go directly into this lemon, Windsor Lemon right here. I'm not gonna pick up a lot because it's, it's a really light shade that we're pulling right now. I'm gonna, maybe it's a little bit more warm than just lemon, and I'm gonna dip my brush back into the jar just so I know that it's a really light color that I'm putting down. You can see here it's just ever so slightly pigmented in a yellow, which is exactly what we want to pick up this area here. Now we're gonna move on to a more, a deeper yellow. Maybe this one also has a little bit of orange, or warmer, warmer yellow in there. And oh, maybe little bit more. This is something that I do often, where if the color that I just put down is not perfect, I will dip it into the color that I think will make it perfect, and I will mix it immediately on the wet surface that I just put down. Now we're gonna do a even deeper color like this shade of the popsicle here I think will be really nice as a hint especially also that it's in the rind. And that one is definitely more of this Windsory yellow that I'm using here. I'm gonna dip a little bit more in the water, but as you can see I'm using a lot more pigment this time than water. Yeah, I think that's pretty good. Maybe I'll add just a tad of this ochre just to make it a little bit deeper of a shade. Now let's move on to the leaves. We want to capture the lightest area here, think that will be good to have as reference as well as a medium and the darker parts. I'm going to rinse my brush in the cool bucket so that it's nice and clean. And let's start with just this green, maybe, maybe I'll mix it out here, just pull some color out to the palette here, and I'm gonna dip my brush lightly into the lemon yellow, and you can see that it's starting to transition. It's okay that your colors become, as I like to call it, well-seasoned, where you have a little bit of green, a little bit of orange in your yellows, that's okay. It's gonna happen, and it's where all the happy accidents happen. I'm just continue adding a little bit more yellow until I think that's a good shade, and maybe I'll dip my brush lightly in the bucket so that it's a little bit lighter. And this color really picks up this hint of the highlight in the leaf here. I'm not rinsing my brush out, I'm gonna immediately go back to this green, I'm gonna say, looks like there's a little bit of ochre in this, sometimes you can tell, this seems like more of a warmer green than a cooler green. For a cooler green I would be mixing in blues, but for a warmer color, for a warmer shade of green, I'm gonna mix it with another warm color. That looks about right, and now I'm gonna try and capture that darker part of the leaf. So using this color here, I'm gonna pull in some browns. I probably will dip my brush in the bucket so I have a lot of water on my bristles so that it's wet, and I'm gonna just pull from my black now. See, that really darkened it there. Okay, I think that's pretty good. I'm gonna put that down. Now let's move on to that hint of turquoise there which I love. I'm gonna rinse out my brush, and I'm gonna go directly into my turquoise. I love this turquoise just as is, straight out of the tube. Maybe I'll pick up a little bit of green just for the relationship in this whole composition, but mostly it's just gonna be the turquoise straight out of the tube, and that's perfect. Now I'm going to rinse out my brush again because I don't want any turquoise in these next three colors that I'm gonna cover in the plates that it's on. I'm gonna go, let's do, let's mix the lighter, velvet gray first. And to mix the gray, again, it's just water and pigment. You can see that it becomes lighter. I'm gonna add a little bit of blue, and maybe a little bit more black.

And I'm gonna rinse out my brush out now so that it really lightens in color, and there you can see just a little hint of blue, but it's mostly gray. And I'm gonna do a darker version of that, maybe with a little brown this time. Hmm, I think this needs a little bit more blue actually. Yeah, that's much better. We're gonna go to the wet part of the plate now where it's got a lot of deep browns in with the blue, so I'm gonna go to my brown and it looks like it's actually a really warm brown, so I'm gonna just a little bit of red. That's probably too much, so I'm gonna pick up some black, and a little bit of blue, and a little bit of brown. All right. And just a little bit to lighten it, and there you have it. That color is very similar to that right there. I like to do this exercise before I start a painting just so it's something that is already established and I don't have to think about as I compose the other parts of my painting. And it's really just a reference point, it doesn't mean that I only use these 10 colors, doesn't mean I only use five of these colors. It's just so, it's a starting point at which I'm gonna say, all right, I'm gonna have yellows and greens and a blue-gray in this painting. And I can go off of that as well, I can add some pinks if I wanted to, but most of the time I will try and keep it in this spectrum of colors. Try out these exercises, get to know your colors, get to know your palette, get to know how to mix with watercolors so that you're more comfortable working with it. And really, just have fun.

Blending techniques

- For the purpose of these exercises, we're not gonna wait until the paper dries completely before removing the sheet and you will go through several sheets of exercises before you start painting anything and that's perfectly okay and I actually encourage it so that you get comfortable with how to mix, how to use your brush, all of that. I'm gonna show you right now how to separate this sheet of paper using this watercolor block. This bone folder I've had for 10 years now and it's just super handy for this purpose. This watercolor block comes with 20 sheets that are sealed by wax along the edges. So what we have to do is insert this bone folder in between the sheets to separate it, which is what I'm gonna do right now. It's good to put a little bit of pressure on, even if you're not using a bone folder, whatever it is you're using, X-ACTO knife, whatever, to put a little bit of pressure on the bottom edge as you're pulling away. Whatever you're using, just make sure you press down as you go so you don't risk tearing the sheet that you're separating right here and I'm gonna rotate it now so I can have better access to it. You can do this slowly if you like to in the beginning 'cause it is a little tricky to work with. Sometimes I do end up tearing my sheets when I do it too quickly. And there you are. I'm gonna set this aside and let it dry. In the meantime, I'm gonna show you some really fun blending techniques you can do. I'm gonna take a slightly larger brush. This one is a size 20. Also in a round. As always I'm gonna dip it in water. Any time you use watercolor, it's good to wet your brush first. As we did in the exercise with the color palette, you can pull and blend with water and this is what I'm gonna show you first. I'm gonna take a blue. Here, I'm actually gonna dip it in water and really just grab a lot of blue. I'm just gonna put a stroke down of blue. Look how saturated and beautiful that is. I'm gonna stop here because what I'm gonna do next is I'm gonna put my brush in water. I'm really gonna rinse it out as if I'm washing it and gonna use a different color, really gonna try to get any color off of this brush and with water still dripping off I'm gonna put it on the edge of where I stopped last and I'm just going to move across and you can see how the color is following where my brush goes and the further away I pull, the lighter it becomes. You can even stop at this point, rinse out your brush even more. Pick up where you left off and continue. Look how amazing that transition is. It's so fluid and natural and it's an effect that you can only get with watercolor. Let's try doing the same thing, but instead of using water, just

water, we're gonna try it with a different color and you'll see how amazing it is when two colors mix together. Again, I'm gonna use the same blue. All right, that's pretty good. And I'm gonna put down mm let's say this much. It really depends on how much of which color you want mixed. But for this example, I'm gonna use more of the green, more prominent. Let's do a green here and maybe I'll mix it slightly with... Like a yellow-green. I'm gonna pick up where I left off and rather than using water, I'm gonna use the green to pull it away. Watch how beautiful that is, that transition from blue to green. It's so natural and something you couldn't do, you couldn't try and mix yourself even if you wanted to. I really love blending watercolor this way. I can sit here and do this all day long. It's so much fun. Let's try it now with a pink to yellow. I'm gonna dip it in my opera rose. Maybe I'll do a little bit of red, pick up a little bit of red as I go. I love this pink, it's so vibrant. Okay, I'm gonna stop here. Now I'm gonna rinse out my brush completely and then I'm gonna pick up a yellow. Once again, I'm gonna pick up where I left off and I'm just gonna pull slowly, slowly away. Maybe I'll rinse off my brush some more just to pick up more water and let it continue. You can get really interesting crisp edges like you see here because the pigment will only go where the surface is wet. Another thing to know about blending this way is that depending on which direction you're pulling from and how you're pulling, the color will mix in different directions. Like you can see right here how the yellow is kind of pushing into the pink while the pink over here is pushing into the yellow. This happens sometimes. Sometimes you can control it, sometimes you can't, but a general rule of thumb is the deeper the color the heavier it's gonna be and the heavier it's gonna be the more it's gonna push away from itself. I'm gonna show you how two colors blend when they meet at one point. I'm gonna take this turquoise. Again, right off the tube. I'm just gonna I'm gonna draw a triangle and I'm gonna rinse out my brush, really rinse it out. You can see how much I'm using water and how the color is changing already. So it's important to have two buckets for this reason. If I had just been using one, this would already be brown. Now I'm gonna try using this yellow right here and what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna paint the shape right up to the edge and I'm gonna let it meet last. And all I have to do is touch it and you can see how this turquoise is pushing into the yellow rather than the yellow pushing into the turquoise and like I said before, this is because this is a denser color, so it's gonna want to move into the other color. Look at the blue here that we first painted. This may not be what we had intended it to do, but this is a thing I love about watercolor, which is it's unpredictable. I didn't intend for this texture, this ridge to happen here, but it's just something that happens. Depends on like how much water you were using and where you were putting the brush down when the brush was wet with water and you can see in the pink here that's drying right now that it's getting that tie-dye looking ridge right there and that's because this is still wet, so the water here is trying to push into this yellow here that's already a little bit more dry. Moving on to dipping a different color into a wet surface, which is another way you can use watercolor, and I use this technique a lot when I'm painting florals that I will show you in a later class. Let's use a yellowish-orange color. Yeah, that's pretty good. Okay, I'm gonna wet the surface here. And I want this pretty wet. By using a larger brush like this in a size 20, you have a lot more room and space to play with your colors and how it covers the paper. Let's go back to the dipping technique where I've placed down a light coraly-orange color. Now I'm gonna take a pink, a really saturated pink, and I'm just gonna put it on one place on the wet surface and you'll see how it'll just start to spread and really I don't have to do very much. I might, the more I do this motion of pushing it into the paper, the more it's gonna spread. As it dries, you'll see it spreading out more and more. I have a little bit of space at the bottom. So I'm just gonna show you similar to this right here with the dipping effect, but instead of dipping at one point I'm gonna actually stroke across the wet surface.

Let's do a blue. And this doesn't have to be a heavy stroke. It could be a pretty light one. But this will go a long way, this much color will go a long way. And really you can kind of just leave it there. You can see that this point where I stopped is bleeding into this wet surface differently from the way it is when I'm stroking across. Let's let it sit for about 15 minutes and let's see what happens once it dries.

More blending and dipping techniques

- Now that this is dried we can see how different watercolor can look from when it's wet to when it's dried. You can see here, where we put a stroke across the wet surface, that it sort of has this, again tie-dye-ey texture to it that wasn't there when it was wet. And that's just one of the unpredictable things that will happen and you sort of have to just embrace it for what it is and just go with it. Now let's try some other water color techniques. Since we're here I'm gonna talk really quickly about how to take care of your brushes. You, it's okay to leave brushes in a bucket for, even a couple of hours would be okay. But I wouldn't leave it overnight in a bucket because they can damage the tip of the brushes, especially the round ones. So, short period of time is okay, long period of time, not so much. Another thing that we can do with blending is you can wet your surface first just with water. This one has a little bit of a blue tint to it but that's okay. We're gonna let this dry for about, I'm gonna say about four minutes. When it's still damp but not wet. And while we let that sit for four minutes I'm gonna show you something else you can do. On my pallet here is some gold gouache that I've squeezed out ahead of time. I'm gonna show you how to tint with it and blend with it. Gouache is a little bit different from watercolor in that it's more opaque but it's also water-based so you can pretty much water it down to use just like watercolor but it has the characteristic of being very opaque. But for this purpose I'm gonna water it down and I'm gonna tint it with an orange. Actually I'm gonna not leave so much gold on my orange. You can pretty much do this with any color with this gold. And it's got this really nice luminescent quality to it. And again, I'm just gonna pull away from it. Like this. Just to show you that you can do this with a metallic paint as well. And that's pretty cool. That one's gonna dry really neat. You can also use the gold gouache as is. You don't have to tint it if you don't want to. I'll just show you really quickly what that looks like just by itself. This you might have to spray down with a water bottle beforehand just because this does need to be a little bit more wet and liquid. Here we're using gouache-like watercolor where we're kind of wetting it down with water and it's a little bit more translucent. But if you want something very opaque and for a real punch you can use it straight out of the tube where you would literally just take your brush, scoop some out and put it on paper. Get it on my brush and you can see the difference. And if I pull away from it now ... Maybe we'll add a little bit of orange to that. You really get that difference in saturation. The patch we painted before should be ready now and the way you can tell if it's damp but not wet is when the water is not pooling on the surface and it looks a little bit more matte. Like, you can tell from this to this the difference in the way that it reflects light. I'm dipping in my cerulean blue and I'm just gonna lightly touch the surface. You can make all kinds of patterns using this technique. The reason why we're doing this while it's damp and not wet is because you get a, you get a softer affect when it's damp. So the colors aren't going to blend as quickly and spread as widely as it would when it's wet. You can see here how it's spreading it much slower and it has a more faded, fuzzier look to it. It's pretty cool. You can do all kinds of patterns with this. Let's see what happens when we add another color to this. Let's say we're gonna put some green just in the middle. The possibilities to this is really endless. You can kind of do anything and everything to this and you can continue working with it as long as it's damp. The last pointing

technique I wanna show you is going to be working on a wet surface again but this time we're gonna use three colors to blend and it's gonna be a mix of blending and dipping. So I'm gonna take a little bit of orange, a little bit of pink. We're just gonna wet the surface. You can do this with multiple colors. Here I'm just gonna use three. This is my second color, which is the yellow. And you can see how it's spreading 'cause it's a more intense color. And then let's say, I don't know, I wanna dip another color in there just for a cool affect. If I just stay in one corner, I can even come back here. You're basically creating different textures and effects all at once and they're all going to meet. While it's wet and all the colors are interacting, intersecting with each other, we won't really know what this looks like until it dries.

Painting circles

- For me, watercolor is all about the expression. It's all about capturing a feeling and emotion rather than painting something realistic like a bouquet of roses and I think that really adds to the depth of the artwork because you're not just looking at something photo realistically. We are going to now put all of our blending techniques together and we're going to start using shapes to see how they interact. You can do this with any sort of shapes, but I like to use circles because it's very relatable. It's something that anybody can pick up a brush and do, but it's just as fun and enjoyable. Let's start with a warm palette and I'm dipping my brush in the Winsor orange right now and I'm just gonna start laying down shapes. It could be anywhere. Don't stress too much about where the first shape goes. Sometimes it's really hard to know where to start and how to start, but with this you really don't have to think too much about it. You can kind of just go with it, put it down, make a decision, put it down somewhere and you can always make it into something that's cohesive. So now I'm gonna take a yellow and maybe I'll make this a smaller shape. With this kind of painting that I do, I like to vary the shapes of my circles. Here you can see how this the one place where it's touching, the two colors are bleeding into each other and it's truly a magical moment to watch and experience when you're doing a painting like this. So I'm not really thinking about oh you know, compositionally it needs to then, I need to move it here or there. I'm kind of just going along, following where I feel like the next shape should go. I'm not really thinking too much about the end picture. I'm just being in the moment with the process and reacting to the color that I put down and what color I should put down next. Maybe I want to see what happens when... The marigold bleeds into the lemon yellow. Once it starts to blend, don't overwork it. Kind of just step back and let it go and move on to the next shape and let it do its thing. With the next color, I really like what's in the jar right now, so I'm literally just gonna lay it out here. And that moment of it touching is... Just great. And see here, I'm varying the size here. This one I'm gonna make pretty big to give it a little bit more variety and interest. You can see it slowly blending into this one. This is an opera rose that I'm using straight out of the tube. So all the blending techniques we just talked about, I'm gonna use some of it here together and some of it separately. So feel free to mix them together, use multiple techniques. Like this one here, I'm gonna dip into just this one spot maybe and so that this area right there will stay really red and that will bleed into the light circle while the light circle is bleeding into the pink. Now, I'm starting to think about how the composition will all come together, but I'm not putting too much thought into it. I don't want to interrupt what I'm thinking about color wise. I just really want to react. So you can kind of do this forever (giggles) if you wanted to. I'm picking up a little bit of purple here with my red... To get like a maroon and it's good to use a big brush like this size 20 here for a painting like this because you can still create really small shapes, really small circles, but you can also create really big ones without having to switch between two different

brushes. Let's do another big one. Ah look at that, it's amazing. Okay and I'm just gonna move on. Oh, I missed a little piece right there. Now I'm just gonna move on. This exercise really also teaches you a lot about how colors blend together and what happens when you mix a yellow with a pink or a yellow with an orange. So it's all a learning process. You're always gonna learn something new. You're not always gonna know what exactly is gonna happen and that's totally okay. And maybe here I'm gonna add a little bit of that lemony yellow. And you can see how it's now pushing back into this circle here. I'm gonna dip my brush a little bit. I'm not gonna rinse it out completely so I still have some of the yellow on my brush. And I'm gonna create a lighter yellow, a lighter and bigger. The direction of your strokes will also affect how the colors will blend into each other. As you saw here, with this one I kind of went this way with my brush and this red here tend to follow and I just made a little dot right there, but that's okay. I will just make it into a circle. Here this one meets two colors, oh three. I have it make three colors. Now that I'm nearing towards the end of this painting, I'm gonna step back for a minute and I'm gonna think about okay, how far down the page do I want this to go. You want it to have sort of a balance of white space, which is the background space, and the circles that you're painting on top so that there is a conversation happening between them. There's a tightness in space in places like this where there's very little white space and then there are other open, more open spaces where things really flow around it. I'm finishing up with my last circle and well maybe I feel like there's too much red happening here, so I'm gonna try and lighten this with water first. And then maybe I'm going to add some pink to this, to this guy. Noticing how like even when I'm going back and blending in, I'm staying away from this area where it's touching because again I don't want to interfere with what's happening there. I just want it to do its thing. We're at a good stopping point and I'm gonna let this dry for about 30 to 40 minutes. This is why I like to have a couple of different watercolor blocks on hand so that I can work on a different painting while that one dries. Rinsing my brush in my cool bucket. Let's start with a lemony green and I'm gonna pick right here. And maybe it's just water for now. And then I'm gonna go into my cerilium blue and I'm gonna do a small one for variability. And you can see that feeding into this color. I'm gonna put down a small turquoise one for variety in size. Now with paintings like this, you really have to work quickly. There's not a lot of room for hesitation, which is a good thing. You can't really sit and ponder was this the right shape, was this the right size, was this the right color. You have to just react and go because as soon as it dries or even when it's damp, it's not going to have this blending effect that I love so much. Let's add a little bit of black to this one to give it a really, really deep saturated blue. Oh maybe that's a little too much black. So as you can see, there are a million different ways to do this kind of painting and you can be as creative as you like. You can use two different types of shapes together and blend and intersect and interact with them. You can use a blend of cool and warm palette when you just use circles. The possibilities are kind of endless. So it's also very therapeutic. (laughs) I'm gonna put some turquoise on my brush and while I do that I'm gonna dip it into some yellow. So I have turquoise and yellow kind of blending at the same time. The colors are blending as I'm swirling around and making the circle. It's just another way to mix colors together. See, this one's a little bit dried already. So it's not, I'm gonna have to kind of force it to blend. It's not really wanting to bleed into each other. I think this one's kind of amazing what's happening here. You got a little bit of green, a darker blue and a lighter blue. All it takes is the smallest amount of contact for this sort of technique to happen. I barely touch this green circle here with the white and look how much it's blending already. I'm gonna put some ochre color into my yellow here to give it a little bit of warmth. So I'm still staying in a cool palette, but I'm just adding a little bit of warmth to my yellow. Since I only have one really dark blue here, I'm gonna try and

balance that out in this painting and add it a few other spots, but only in a few, I don't want to overwhelm the painting that I have here with too many dark colors. I love when a light color blends into a dark color. It sort of turns white and it looks like it's bleaching this dark indigo blue a little bit. Now we're gonna set this aside for about 30 to 40 minutes for it to completely dry.

Painting triangles

- Now, let's try using the same technique, but with a different shape. Let's try triangles this time. We're gonna start with tinting a little bit of gold with blue. And, before I start, I'm gonna quickly think about what kind of shapes and what kind of colors I'm gonna use. I'm not gonna think too much about it. I'm not gonna sketch it out first or anything because there is something to be said about not really knowing where the end product will go. For this painting, I think I'm going to use triangles. I'm gonna vary the sizes of the triangles, I'm gonna use warm and cool colors together, and I'm gonna keep my triangles all parallel to the bottom edge of my paper. So, looks like I didn't have enough water on my brush, so I just dipped it in the bucket a little bit. This is a pretty interesting color. Okay, I'll go with it. Now, these triangles aren't gonna look perfect. With hand-painted shapes, it's going to be a little irregular. It's going to be a little wonky, and that's totally cool. I actually really prefer the effect of that than really straight, ruler-drawn shapes. I think it brings more character to the piece. And see, as I'm blending, I'm pulling away from this point at which they meet, and, as a result, it's pulling this tinted gold into it. Maybe I wanna do ... Oh, look at that! That's awesome. Here, I'm using a slightly smaller brush for a little bit more control and detail work. It's a size 14. That's pretty cool. All right. Let's add a little bit of a warm color to the mix. Let's do a light coral, a really, really light one. We don't want it to overwhelm this because I'm thinking this is going to be mostly cool, but we're gonna have hints of some warm just to give it more balance. Now, when warm and cool colors blend together, it's pretty interesting, and it's also pretty unpredictable. Sometimes, it can look like muck, for lack of a better word, but sometimes it can look really cool. Sometimes, it's something that you would have never guessed that it would do, like this here is looking really blue here, but everywhere else it's turning a little bit purple. Now, if your colors turn a little muddy, that's okay. You can just take your paper towel and dab it while it's still wet to pick up most of the color, then go right back on top with whatever color you intended it to be. Maybe let's do a little bit of yellow. We'll do it right here. Now, I'm gonna go back to the blues. Let's do a light green. And I'm gonna make a big one. As you can see, with a smaller size brush, you're not gonna go very far with water retention. You will have to dip it back into your bucket of water more often, but it does give you a little bit more control. I do encourage you to start out with a bigger brush size, like the one I had before, which was a size 20, just because it will free up any hesitation you may have of, oh, I don't know... "Should I even be painting shapes this big? Should I be using this color?" it kind of takes all of that away, and you're really just enjoying it. Now, I'm moving all across the page. I'm not just going in one sequential order like I did with the two circle paintings; I'm jumping all over the place to maintain a sense of balance and variety. I'm gonna go back to just using gold; I'm gonna use pure gold. Maybe I'll move down here to the bottom left corner, and I'll make a really big one. Now, I'm using that Opera Rose again. Maybe I wanna add one here. So, like the cluster of circles that we did before, you can go however long you want with this painting. You can add as many shapes, as few shapes as you'd like. It's pretty much up to you. As you can see, this part of this green triangle has already dried, so it's not blending. That's a good effect to have if you don't want all of your shapes to blend, you only want some of it; it really just depends on what effect you're going after. Now that it's touching areas where it's still a little wet,

you can see that it's starting to blend, but here, where it's dry, you can see that there's a crisp line where the green ends. Water is a pretty amazing tool to have, using this medium. It's like an eraser, where if you made a mistake, say I didn't want this shape here, I changed my mind, I can quickly dab it away, and ... it wasn't even there to begin with, so... I'm gonna leave this shape here pretty light, so that, in the end, once it dries, the only edge you'll see of the shape is right here. Maybe I'll finish this with a few more places where gold will be. At this point, when I'm about one or two shapes away from being finished, I'll step back and look Are my sides pretty equal in spacing? It looks like I'm a little bit more to the edge on this side than I am here, so I'm gonna try and balance that out. Okay, I think we're done here. We're gonna let this set for about 30-40 minutes to dry completely, and then you can separate it from the watercolor block and call it done.

Painting an all-over pattern

- We're gonna step away from painting with shapes and just concentrate on blending techniques to create an all-over pattern. And we're gonna go back to our palette that we created in the beginning with the popsicles. I'm gonna use that as my reference point. I'm gonna use my favorite brush. It's a size 24, it's huge, it's awesome. This will come in handy when we're doing blendings and really large strokes. Once again, I'm gonna wet my brush first, and using this palette as a reference, I'm gonna start with this yellow. Before I start, all-over pattern is a little bit different than a painting in that you're not so concerned with one focal point for a composition. It's more about achieving evenness and balance throughout the entire page, and that's what we're gonna try and do today. I'm just gonna lay down some big strokes and rather than laying down one as a focal point, I'm going to lay it down in multiple places, and maybe I'll vary the color here. And I'm gonna use some of this green now. I'm gonna do thinner strokes. So this is really just about color and blends. I'm putting down thinner strokes now to juxtapose with the large strokes. Now I'm gonna try and pick up some of this gray, this slate gray that we created before. Oh, I got a little bit of gold in there, but that's okay, it's a happy accident. We'll just go with it. I'm gonna place one up here to balance out this gray down here. Let's do a darker version of that with a little bit of brown. And the colors can sit next to each other, they can blend into each other. It's really about whatever you want to express. I'm making smaller short strokes to create these dashes to bring more variety and interest to the page. And I'm moving very quickly and very swiftly, and this is because I wanna capture the rhythm of my painting, I'm not really stopping to ponder about this shape or that color too much. This is the approach I take with most of my paintings, to be loose and quick and reactive. I'm gonna bring back this yellow that I've kind of steered away from. I'm gonna lighten it with my water. I'm gonna lighten it even more. You can also lighten with a paper towel and just sort of dab it to remove some of the color that's on your brush. Maybe I want those to be, mm. Let's dab some color while it's still wet. And I think we're done. The way that I can tell that this is a good stopping point for this piece is the good balance of positive and negative space that I have here. Now I'm gonna set this aside and let it dry. I'm gonna show you some paintings using the same techniques that we covered today. This one here is just like the circles that we painted earlier, except I had a specific palette in mind. I think I was looking at vases of florals, a picture of vases when I was painting this. This one here is from the same group that I did. It was a series of five paintings that I did using the same technique, but just with different color palettes. This one here, I don't think I was looking at a specific palette, but I was more interested in just having really light colors next to really dark ones. That was really my main goal and I was really interested to see what happens when they interact with each other, such as this one here, which is one of my favorite circles that I've painted. This one here, I was looking at a

photo of macaroons, actually, that was my color reference, and I also used the oval shape of macaroons and I abstracted it more to create this piece here. You can see that it has a very similar color palette to the cluster one on my left, but I added some other warmer yellows and greens and ochers into it. This then became a set with this piece here where I used a technique that I will talk about later using layering, but I wanted to tie over some of the pinks that are in the macaroon piece. This one here is very similar to the triangle one that we painted today. It also has some gold in there. I was thinking about forests when I was painting this, primarily because triangles are very reminiscent of the shape of trees. Here you can see I spread out and tinted some of my golds in various places, and it was primarily about using blues and greens. On this one, it was all about blending. I used a really simple shape, which is just a continuous stroke that I moved across the page, left to right, up and down. It was more, I really wanted to capture the bleeding effect that you can see here, so I started out with a really light color and then I moved into a darker tone of it, but then that bled into this second column here where it starts out really light on the right and then moves to the left to be a more dark indigo. This has a really nice flow with a lot of movement in it. This last one was also about blending, but it uses a little bit of a different technique and has a little bit more complexity in it. I used primarily just strokes of color with my mop brush, but I used, I varied different sizes of the strokes. This is a finished painting by itself, but it also happened to turn into an all-over pattern that now lives on a pillow in my product line. You should have a pretty good idea now of how to use watercolor as a medium. You should go and try playing with different color palettes, using different colors together, warms and cools at the same time, try blending with water, try pooling with water, with other colors. There's a lot of different techniques you can use and you can mix and match any of them together. It's really about when to control and when to let go.

Chapter 2 - Beginning Watercolor: Mark-Making and Expressive Brush Strokes

Part 2 Overview

(upbeat music) - Hello there. So by now, you've probably had a chance to get to know your colors, your palette, trying different pooling, blending techniques with your watercolor. And now we're going to get to know our brushes a little bit. (upbeat music) I'm gonna show you how expressive your strokes can be by using your brushes in certain ways. Then we're going to create some simple trees and leaves together. And finally, we're going to paint some simple wreaths. (upbeat music)

Materials

- In addition to the materials and supplies you've been working with I'm going to show you some specific brush sizes that we're going to use in this class. Starting with the round tip brushes, here we have a size six, a size 14, and size 20, that we're going to be working with. Mop brush is a great one to use to cover large areas. This one here is a 16 millimeter. The small angle brush here is a 10 millimeter. This flat brush here is a quarter of an inch. This larger flat brush is three quarters of an inch. And this round oval brush is a three quarters of an inch. In addition to that we're going to be using our paper towels, not only to dry our brushes, but we're gonna use it to create textures. We're still gonna be using our Cold Press Arches watercolor block. Remember to have your two water buckets right next to you as you're working, your spray bottle, and your paint pallet.

Understanding brush strokes

- Before we get started I just wanna talk to you briefly about how to use your brushes and the intention that should be there when you're using them for making every mark. When I use a brush I

usually hold it like this and that's probably from my background training in Chinese calligraphy, I'm not sure, but this is just the way I hold them. I have it lightly pressed to the paper, so I'm not putting too much pressure, but just enough to anchor my hand as I'm moving along. I like to move swiftly across the page, so I like to be able to have the freedom to have movement. Whenever I make a mark I don't ponder about what kind of mark I'm gonna make so much, but I do think about what kind of emotion or feeling I'm trying to express. Is it a very energetic emotion I'm trying to come across? In which case I would make large broad strokes. Is it something that I want to be more delicate and light? If that's the case then I would make lighter, smaller shorter marks. Just make sure there is intention and purpose behind every stroke that you're making. We are going to start off with wetting our palette a little bit. I'm gently spraying each well where my paints are just to get them a little bit accumulated to some water. So I don't have to keep picking my brush, putting it in water and trying to wet them. I can just move forward with painting. Okay, I'm going to start out with a small round, the number six. I'm still going to wet my brush as always. And let's just start making some small strokes. Let's just see what a round brush can do. You can make strokes like this very short ones, the longer the bristle, this is a relatively medium short bristle, but the longer it is the longer, of course, your mark would be, it would make something like this. With the round tip, which is my favorite to work with, it's so versatile in the kinds of marks that it can make. You can make really small tiny, tiny dots, but then you can also put a lot of pressure down and you can pull from it, you can keep stroking it. You can even dry your brush a little bit and then make dry textured marks that really picks up the tooth of the cold press watercolor paper. Moving along to our medium sized round tip in a size 14, I'm gonna wet my brush and let's see in comparison how big of a mark this tip can make. Again, you can make, I'm putting medium pressure down, you can make a stroke as large as that. You can also go the other way around where you first put your brush down is going to be the roundest part of your stroke and where you lift up is going to have this really interesting brush natural texture to it. Again, you can make still with a size 14 you can make relatively thin lines, such as this one here. You can make really thick ones if you put more pressure down like this. You can also with larger sized brushes move along and make strokes that are thin to thick with relative ease, like this. See, this is actually what I really love about watercolor is you get textures like this where there wasn't so much pigment on your brush and yet there's just enough to imprint that beautiful natural mark that you're making. Moving on to our large sized brush that we just talked about in a size 20. Let's do a little green this time. You can see with medium pressure I'm making just as much of a stroke, just as large of a stroke as I did with the size 14 and if I wanted to really press down I can make something like this. This size brush is wonderful and so much fun to use when you're doing something like florals where there's a lot of variety and sizes involved. Let's see. Again, you can make, I just made a mark and that's okay. You can still make medium size strokes. You can see that the bristle here is much longer than this one here in the size six. And this is going to allow me to make really long strokes like I just showed you. Whereas if you tried it with a size six you will run out of water much sooner than you would with this where you can just kind of go farther. Still using our size 20, you can also then make, like really simple patterns with marks. This is a really great exercise and just getting to know, okay if I press down really hard, what does that do? If I press really lightly, what would that do? This is something that anybody no matter how versed you are in art and painting can do. And it's just as enjoyable. Great, let's move onto our angled brush. This brush here in the size 10 millimeter is really great for geometrics, anything with straight edges that you're trying to capture. It's also really great for painting little houses and roofs that I found. I don't use this brush as often as I use the round tip, but sometimes when I am painting squares or triangles I do go to this

brush just because it's easier to get that really straight edge. As you can see here, you're not able to pull in a really long stroke because, again, the bristles are not long enough for that, but for relatively short ones, you get this really interesting angle to both the beginning and the end of your stroke. You can also tilt it and this is great for making triangles. Of course, then you might have to go back and finish that. You can see here I'm kind of blending as I'm creating the shape. This is sometimes fun to do to get unexpected colors. You can also use it upside down. Or even this way. This brush can really make all kinds of different marks for you. You should play with it and see if it's something that feel comfortable working with. Let's move on to our flat brush at a quarter of an inch. This one is similar to the angled brush that we were just using, except it doesn't have this slanted edge that you get with the angle. Instead it makes just straight almost rectangular marks. I use this one probably just as often as I use the angled to make easy shapes like squares or rectangles. Sometimes, actually, this is really great if you wanna get delicate long straight lines. It's also great if you wanna make stripes. See here I'm not able to pull the water and the pigment on my brush very far and I have to keep putting my brush in water to complete the stroke. Sometimes that's okay. It's totally fine, there's nothing wrong with that. Our larger sized flat brush in the three quarters of an inch will do just like the quarter of an inch, but it will make bigger, bigger strokes, that really is the only difference. So, you can make larger squares. You can make larger strokes as well as fine lines. I'm not putting that much pressure on my brush. I am putting some to kind of push it from left to right, but I'm not, this would be putting a lot of pressure down and I'm not doing that. The reason being that if I put just enough pressure I don't really have to worry about being too straight or steady with my hand. This flat brush will kind of do it for you if you kind of just let it do its thing and guide it along with your hand. This oval brush is just like our flat one that we were using except it's got a softer round tip to it. You can see all I'm doing is rotating this brush around a center point and it makes perfect little circles. Depending on the size of oval brush that you have it will make larger or smaller circles. Here I'm not putting that much pressure down and I'm still able to create smaller ones. If I wanna put a lot of pressure, probably wanna move a little bit slower just so I can still have control in the circle that I'm making, but as you can see I'm making bigger ones. You can do really fun things with this brush for florals. You can make, for example, a petal like that or you can do really quick gestural marks as well. You can also just use the tip of this. I'm going along really lightly here. You can make dashes. This brush makes really interesting dash marks, just one gestural movement marks like this. Let's switch to another watercolor block now so I can show you how to use the mop brush. This handy mop brush here, I don't even know how long I've had this brush, but I use it often when I'm making landscapes. They're really great for capturing skies and clouds. So, you can use this brush just by itself like this and you can pull like during the last class to blend it and create lighter transition as you move down page. Oh, I love that, it's so pretty. It by itself it can also make really fun marks. The bristles aren't really long to make long ones, but it also is like the flat brush, but it has that round tip, but it's also different than the oval brush in that it's not a rounded tip. It can create medium sized strokes like this just on the tip of it. Like I said, my favorite way to use this brush is to create skies and that will need our handy paper towel to do this with. I'm gonna mix my cerulean blue with just a touch of the darker blue here. I'm imagining that this is going to be a clear blue sky day. This is the type of sky I'm gonna paint. Okay, so I'm just gonna put some down pretty generously across the page. I'm gonna dip my brush in water and just like I showed you here I'm just gonna pull along. So, to do this, you have to do it pretty quickly because the paint needs to be still pretty wet on the page. I'm gonna take a clean paper towel and think of your towel like an eraser. It takes away the things that you don't want on the page or that you wanna keep the

whiteness of the paper. Just as it is I'm gonna scrunch it up a little bit to create a natural texture with it and I'm gonna just, you can press firmly or softly. This is kind of magical, but you can kind of dab along and create little clouds. If you don't like the way your clouds look, like maybe this one is too textured, I can go back over again and I can kind of wash away that and I can go and redo it and say, "Okay, well maybe this time I won't press as firmly" and create softer, cotton candy feeling clouds." But if I want to really take away the pigment I would press firmly and I would even hold it there for a minute just to wait for the paper towel to absorb the pigment. Isn't that great? Look at that, looks just like a cloud. Getting to know your brush is just as important as getting to know your paints. Putting intention behind your strokes and marks is really gonna show through in the end result of your artwork.

Painting leaves

- Simple brush strokes and marks can also become leaves and trees and I'm gonna use the number six round tip to show you how to make easy leaves. I'm gonna start with a dark green to begin with, keeping in mind that I'm going to transition to a lighter green as I move across, but starting with a dark green. And I'm always going to start from the stem first. And create here where the stem is. And then as I move away and create leaves... I always go with the natural growth and motion of the plant that I'm painting. I'm going to dip my brush in some water so I can transition to a lighter green. This will give your leaves more movement and life. I'm pressing down lightly when I'm creating the stem and even these little stems here, but I'm pressing down more as I'm creating the leaf. You can also make this into... Something that's round. I usually paint a little bit faster than this, but for the sake of demonstrating I'm gonna go a little slower. And maybe here I decide okay, well I want some yellow now in my leaf. And as I've finished this branch here, I can always go back and add to it. I'm just gonna move along in a circular shape. You can always improvise the shape of the wreath that you're making... As you go along. And that's okay, that's a good thing because you're creating something that feels and looks more organic. Now I'm gonna mix and I'm gonna bring it back to a darker green as I'm ending the circle. I'm gonna, maybe I feel like this transition here is very extreme with this light green to a dark. So I'm gonna go back to some of the ones I just made that are wet. I'm just gonna dab so that they have a little bit more of this dark green that I'm using now. I'm just gonna finish here. Maybe I want a little bit more of a true green... To finish off and a little bit more variety. There you go. You can also do this with a larger size brush that I'm gonna show you next. Using my 14 round tip. Now, larger size brushes are not gonna give you something that's more detailed like the one I just showed you, but you can create bigger ones a little bit faster. You can tell the strokes here are a little bit different. Let's add a little bit of blue to this one and every once in awhile I'm gonna add one where the center stays white, gives it a little bit more depth and realistic feel to the leaf. I'm gonna dip my brush in a little bit of water, going back to my turquoise. Oh, that's probably a little too turquoise. And maybe I think this transition will end a little bit more of a lighter green. Great, now let's do one adding a little bit of berries into our leaf. Again, I'm gonna start off with the branch. I'm going to get some of my brown... In there, darken it a little bit. Okay. In this one, again I'm gonna start with my stem and I'm going to space out my leaves, leaving room for some berries. I'm gonna just create the branches of where I'm thinking the berries will go. Again, this is pretty interpretive. I'm not looking at a photo reference. It's just it's a little bit more abstract, but the objective here isn't to create a photo realistic branch. I'm going to use a smaller brush, my number six here, and let's make these berries red. So I'm gonna go into my red with a little bit of orange and I'm just gonna create really simple, easy circles. Let's try a longer leaf now. These type of leaves are

usually in flowers like tulips and they're usually pretty bright green. I'm gonna start again at the stem and this time I'm going to put a lot of pressure down and I'm gonna lift up at the end. I'm gonna continue. Maybe this one I want a little bit darker. So I'll add a little bit more green with a little bit of brown and I'll just dip it into the tip to give it a little bit more dimension and maybe here I'll do a small one. If this was a completed tulip, I'm imagining that the flower part would go here, so I would just add... I would just add another leaf here. Like that. Now let's try some eucalyptus ones that have a little bit more teal and turquoise in them. I'm gonna start with little bit of brown, little bit of teal, little bit of green. Again, starting with the stem. Eucalyptus are pretty fun to paint. Their leaves are very generic. So I'm gonna start with a bluish green at the bottom and I'm going to gradate from darker colors to lighter ones at the top. They're very round. So I'm gonna, oh maybe I need a little bit more green just so it fits into the rest of the stem. And I like to paint them really lightly, so I'm gonna use a lot more water than pigment here and just try a little bit more torque and as they go up, they kind of overlap the stem. Like this. Maybe I feel like the bottom part should be a little bit longer. So I can always extend it later. As long as your paint is wet, you can keep going. So you can choose not to define your leaves like I am with the centers, or you can if you want to, it's completely up to you. Cool, let's try painting another one. I'm gonna use a little bit more brown this time. Maybe I'm gonna add a little bit of red into my brown. And a little bit of black to really darken it. Little bit of green just for that relationship. Okay. I'm gonna start here, again with the stem, and I'm gonna just ever so slightly start the stems here. I'm gonna rinse out my brush. Now going from dark to light, I'm going to get a green, turquoise color. And this one here I'm gonna leave more of the centers open for a little bit of definition. You notice here that my leaves aren't perfect. I'm not thinking too much about each leaf. I'm just reacting and doing and I'm going pretty swiftly between each leaf. This is because I want to keep the motion going so that by the time I finish the top part of the stem, most of my leaves are still wet in case I need to go back and add more color or take away or whatever. It gives me a little bit more freedom to make changes if I need to. I'm just gonna pick up some of that brown for the stem. And maybe ooh I really like how light that is and I'm gonna go back, I'm gonna take a different brush, I'm gonna hold this one, use a different brush now, I'm just gonna... Add a little bit more wetness to the branch because I like how it's bleeding into the leaf. Again, I'm not worried about oh these tips are pointy and these aren't. I think it's good to have some variety. I'm gonna end really lightly. Mm maybe I'll have a small one there and take my small brush, just add a little bit of stem right there. That one actually ended up bleeding, which I kind of like, so I'm just gonna leave it. As you can see, painting leaves are pretty easy. You don't need to have a lot of knowledge in plants to create something like this. It's more about the expression of the leaves and being confident with your brush strokes.

Painting trees

- Now that we have painted some leaves, let's talk a little bit about trees which we're going to paint next. Trees are a little bit more involved than painting leaves, however, I'm gonna show you how to create realistic looking trees without being overly complicated or intimidating. It's not, it's actually really, really fun to paint. We have a PDF here, which you will have access to, so please print that out, and have it next to you for reference. In this PDF you can see there are various different shapes and kinds of trees. We're just gonna study this for a minute just so we can think about how to go about painting a tree. You'll notice that there are branches that you can see in various parts that peek out among the leaves, so we're gonna keep that in mind. Also the way that I like to think about trees, is we want to paint them from the bottom up, or they way that they would naturally grow. So

imagine a seed in the ground, peeking out of the ground, forming a stem into the branches, and then the leaves forming from the branches. Let's pick up our Size 14 round tip and I'm gonna make this more brown than green. I'm gonna mix some black into our browns, and let's add just a little bit of red to give it some warmth. I'm gonna mix this with a little bit of water, so it's a pretty good consistency. Okay, I think that's pretty good! Alright! I'm gonna start with the trunk of the tree. I'm gonna leave a little bit of space here for definition, and let's say, alright that's pretty good. I'm gonna paint a tree that looks like this. When I'm at painting this tree stump, I'm going back and forth moving the paint along so that it covers pretty evenly. If want to give it a little bit more dimension, I can go back and pick up some more black, a darker color. I'm just gonna lightly push it into an area. I think that looks pretty good. I'm not using a whole lot of pressure, and again, I want to keep some of the space open, so that it depicts maybe the groove of a tree trunk. Okay now, I'm going to move into the center branches. I'm going to say, alright, I think I wanna branch here, and maybe this one grows into a branch there. As you can see, I'm moving from the center out, and this is because, again, I am trying to capture the growth of a living tree, so the way that a tree would form is from the center outwards and that's the motion that I'm going to try and capture. I'm now going to complete this branch because, again, in this photo reference here, you can see that some of the leaves cover the branch, and I'm gonna give that some of it is in hiding. The branches cover it up in some places. I'm gonna move pretty swiftly along here, so that all of my paints are still wet. This is the best part, is creating the leaves. Imagine wind blowing through leaves and you can hear the sound of it moving, but you can also see that the leaves are kind of flickering in the sunlight. It's moving back and forth. I'm gonna try and get that motion here. Starting with a just pretty medium colored green, I'm gonna start alright. I'm always gonna pull from the branch and these are the type of marks I'm making. I'm making really short, a little bit pressure, not too much. And I'm just going to make some really small ones, as the tree is growing outwards. Maybe these are smaller leaves and the ones in the center are larger ones to again give it that dimension. I'm gonna add some black into my green. Maybe that's too much black. In my mind I'm imagining I can hear and see the wind blowing through. At this point I'm not really looking at the photo so much any more. It was really just for reference for shape and where I'm placing the trunk and the branches and so forth. Now I'm just reacting to what I've already placed down. You can improvise this to be as big of a tree as you'd like. And that's another reason why we'd like to start from the center, first, so that there's room to grow and form its own shape. I'm gonna go back to a darker green here. I want to avoid having an evenness of light on the outside and dark in the center. It is more natural if its more variegated, so maybe this side of the tree is gonna have a lot more dark green than the other side. I'm dipping my brush lightly in areas that are still wet, which is most of the tree still to let it blend and in a very natural way. I'm not really forcing, I'm just kind of choosing areas that I think needs a little bit of a darker color. At this point you can sit back and see, okay, maybe this is the shape that I want, maybe I want a little bit more, a little bit less. It's really up to you! In my case, I'm thinking, I don't like so much that there is an evenness of white space among this tree. So I'm gonna cover up some areas. I'm gonna say maybe this is the area where there's gonna be a huge clump that I'm thinking, and I'm gonna leave other areas here with a little bit more white space. Again, a live tree would have density of leaves in different areas, and that's what I'm trying to capture here. Now that we're towards the end of this tree, I'm going to go back with my brown. I don't even need to rinse out my brush, since there are greens in the painting. I'm gonna go back with my brown and I'm just gonna add areas which I think, need a little bit more definition for the branch. Maybe here I'm thinking. With a clean brush, that I rinsed out in my bucket, with areas that are still white, I'm just gonna pull

with my clean brush and have like lighter color leaves. Maybe that or more in the distance. Yeah, I think that looks pretty good. To finish it off and now make it just look like a footed tree, I'm gonna add some grass. Maybe I want the grass to have a little more ochre of a color to it, to differentiate from the greens in the tree. I'm just gonna lightly with my brush, make swift movements that capture the blades. Maybe I'll do some over here too. This is really not the focus of this painting, it's really just for reference of where the tree is sitting. And then I'm gonna dip my brush in my bucket. I'm just gonna wash over some to convey that there's more grass here. This tree that I painted, you may think, I don't know if I can do that, but try a few, do some practice ones, and it's really not as hard as you may think it is. It's actually, really, really fun to do. I'm gonna try a different tree now, and in this one we're gonna use our paper towel technique to create a more fog look. We're not going to be using our tree reference. We're kind of just gonna go from memory here. Alright, again, I'm gonna create a brown. I need a little more water here. A little bit of black, a little bit of red. Alright, that's pretty good. And, this tree is going to be a little bit taller. It's gonna be a little skinnier, and we're gonna use a little bit more blue in this one. Alright, so quickly I'm gonna lay down a tall trunk of the tree. I think that's pretty good for now. Now I'm gonna mix my Cerulean Blue with some green. I'm gonna make this a deep blue, actually. Alright, that's pretty good. And now I'm gonna make these leaves a little bit longer, a little bit more gestural, like this. Maybe on the side I want a little more black into my blue. I'm gonna work even faster here, because I really want the paint to be wet when I use the paper towel. Every time I paint trees, I feel like I'm channeling Bob Ross. I loved watching him paint when I was growing up. Okay, think it's pretty good. Just to make sure that everything is wet, and fluid, I'm gonna use my brush, I'm gonna just dip some water into here, great! I'm gonna take my paper towel that I was using. Again, I'm gonna scrunch it up, and I'm just gonna start dabbing away. Maybe I'm thinking of hey, I want the fog part to be here so I really want this to fade back into the paper. Like this. And now I'm lightly tapping it to pick up some paint, but not a lot, like here. Again, we want to vary, the techniques we're using so it looks a little more natural. I wanna go over this area with a little bit more paint. I'm thinking it's got a little too much taken away. As you can see, as I'm painting, because I'm moving along so quickly, there are little splotches all over, and that's okay. That's gonna happen. You can just blot them away with your paper towel. (paper scratching) So I'm not spending a lot of time on this kind of tree. I don't wanna keep going over the parts that I've taken away, 'cause I wanna keep that natural feeling of it. So, I'm gonna just step away and say, alright, that one looks good and move onto the next one. And I would encourage you to practice a few of these as well. Maybe some can have more of the fog look. Maybe some don't have as much. You can group them together like I'm doing here to make it look like it's more of a forest. Maybe this one has even deeper blues. I'm doing some short strokes and some long ones to give it that feeling of small leaves and other areas that are a little more generic, a little more abstract. Since the fog part is here, I'm just gonna continue it here, to give it that continuity. I'm varying the angle of my paper towel. I'm rotating it from wet areas to dry areas, and I think this one, since this part is pretty dry, I'm gonna go back and add a little bit more. I'm now lightly dabbing away, because I still wanna keep some of that color. Let's give it some grass on the ground, again, just to ground it. Maybe this time I'll do really short ones. (brush scraping paper) Noticing that I'm making really short strokes here. That looks great. Now, not all trees have to be green, or bluish-green. They can also be colorful, like in the Fall. I'm gonna show you how to do that next. This tree, I'm thinking really quickly about what colors I'm gonna use. I'm gonna use primarily like an orange-red with some yellows and just a little hint of green. I'm gonna mix again, making the tree stump. Oh wow, that was a lot of red. That's okay, mix it with the green. That works too. Now

that I'm thinking about it, I'm gonna make it a little more green. Alright. Okay, I'm gonna start here, and go up. This one, I'm thinking again, (speaks off mic) reference, I'm just going with the general shape of the tree. That's all I'm thinking about. Maybe, I'm gonna create a little round ridge here. That often happens with tree branches. As they grow out, they form a little ridge, looks a little more realistic. And this one is gonna be taller again, than round. Alright. (brush clanging) Okay, so we're gonna start with red. We're gonna go center out, a little bit red and orange. We're gonna say... I'm just gonna generously, quickly put down where I think the red is gonna go. With my green, I'm just gonna mix it in with the red so it doesn't look out of place and by itself. I'm gonna say, I'm making really short strokes here, because I'm thinking the leaves are gonna be round, and fat ones. Okay, I think that's pretty good for the green. (water splashing) Rinsing out my brush, going back with the red. Maybe I'm thinking, so intense, I love it! Say, red ones go here. Maybe a little red here. Now I'm gonna rinse out my brush. I'm gonna pull with it, with some water, just to get that lightness of the red. I'm gonna bring some of my red back into the green. And then, I'm going to go with my yellow, my golden yellow, we see in the Fall, and the whole point is that you want everything to kind of mix. If you look at a leaf during the Fall time, you'll see that sometimes the bottom part of it is green, but then it gradates into red. We wanna capture that. You can see that I'm creating my branches and leaves with the some brush with each stroke. You can also do this together like I'm doing or you can do 'em separately with a different brush with the brown. This tree is not gonna be as uniform. Maybe it's a little taller than it is wide, and I'm gonna finish with a little more green to tie it all back together. You can see that I'm using a lot of pigment. So don't be afraid to pick up pigment with your brush. I'm gonna create some underside leaves here, and I am going to with my brown, I'm going to add some more definition to my branches. I'm gonna add a long one. It's going to fade and blend, but you'll still see a little bit of it. I say maybe, I'm thinking this trunk should be a little bit wider, and to balance it out now (laughs) it's looking a little lopsided. I'm just gonna go back with my red and orangy color, just add a little more here. A little bit of yellow. I love when everything mix together. With this tree here, I'm just playing with the irregularity of the tree and the color. I'm just gonna finish this off with some grass. Picks up some of that brown, it's perfectly fine, and let this dry! The great thing about this way of painting is that I'm painting these pretty quickly so I'm giving myself permission to say, okay, maybe this one isn't perfect, but that's totally fine. I didn't spend three hours on this tree. I'm not tied down to it. Is just paint them and then I move on.

Painting a wreath

- The leaves and trees we just did were very loose and gestural. Now let's switch gears and do something a little more controlled and delicate, but still using strokes. I'm gonna pick up my size six round and I'm gonna make a wreath, a floral wreath, with turquoise. This wreath is gonna be mostly greens, we're not gonna be adding large florals to it. Again, we're plying the type of leaves we just did. We're gonna dip it and lighten it some more. I'm gonna make some room for some smaller greeneries. Okay at this point I'm gonna stop. I'm going to take a different brush. This here is a size eight. And I'm going to add some dark blue greens. And do small dashes here. Just making short little strokes to make little circles, little dots. Whoop, a little bit got there, that's okay. And I'm gonna continue. Switching back and forth here helps me see the overall composition and having two brushes on hand with different colors will help save time from mixing different colors. Rinsing it out and so forth. I'm creating a eucalyptus little piece right here. And I'm gonna go back to adding some more of this blue, these blue little guys. Maybe one here. I'm not really looking at anything creating these, I'm sort of just eyeballing them. They don't have to be perfect. They're just adding variety.

Okay. Maybe I wanna go back to a truer green. I wanna extend this to a truer green. And we're gonna add another variety of greens here. With a little bit of a warmer color. In this wreath I'm going for a more rounded shape. I'm gonna go with a light coral color. It's gonna be really light. Because these are just hints of color. It's primarily going to be greens and blues. I don't want this warm color to be the focal point, it's just gonna be hints. I'm laying these berries down first to avoid them touching the stem. And go back with my green brush and I'm now gonna complete the berries. That way it helps me avoid them accidentally bleeding together and making a big glob. Alright, I'm gonna move quickly here and finish completing this rounded shape. Maybe another eucalyptus will go here. And a long leaf here. I'm gonna add in, add back some of the turquoise. I'm gonna say one will go there, just for placement, just so I know I'm not gonna complete it just yet. I'm gonna go back with my navy blue color. I'm gonna add some more. You want them relatively spread out and balanced so not one area feels heavier in color than another. Maybe this guy only has a few. A smaller one. Okay, going back with my green. I'm gonna continue. Now I'm gonna build a stem there and there. Those are gonna be my coral-y berries. Rinsing out my green brush, I'm gonna just do more blue than green. I'm gonna do another eucalyptus. And actually I'm gonna have this be really light I'm gonna dry my brush a little bit so there's not as much water. I'm just taking area with color, I'm picking this area here and I'm using it elsewhere. It's another way to paint with watercolor. Actually I changed my mind, I think this one will be a eucalyptus. It's nice to get this lightness here versus here versus here. Let's add some more of these orange-y berries. Maybe I want to add a little bit more red but lighter. And I'm going back with my green. One thing to keep in mind when you're creating wreaths is you don't want too many different elements in your wreath. Sometimes that can look a little too busy, a little too heavy. You wanna choose four or five different elements, whether that's color or a variety of greeneries, or size of leaves, you kind of wanna keep it to about four or five so there's not too much going on. The viewer feels like it's really overwhelming to look at. I'm pretty close to being finished now. I'm trying to decide where needs what still. I have a pretty good balance of the dark blue that it's in certain areas but it's not overwhelming. It's not feeling heavy but I am gonna add one more. I'm gonna add a small one there. Just, oh, maybe he also lives over here. Making the greens a little bit more dense. I'm gonna add some smaller guys at the end. I'm gonna pick up a little bit of a darker green. Maybe right there and right here. That space feels a little empty, versus the rest. So you can decide when to stop and when to add more to your wreath. At this point I think I'm gonna stop here because if I add anymore, I think it's just gonna become too heavy. I'm gonna set this aside and let it dry. I'm gonna show you some other paintings that use expressive brush strokes. In this painting, I wanted to experiment with different types of brush strokes. Really was just about that. I chose a color palette that's pretty simple. It's got mostly blues and greens and a little bit of warm corals like the wreath we just did. And I wanted to add another level of complexity to this painting by creating shapes within the marks. What I did here is I lightly drew with pencil to outline these triangles. And then I carefully painted these areas within the triangles that makes up the triangle. If you do use pencil, make sure that your watercolor marks don't go over them, just because you won't be able to erase them after the marks have dried. What I like about this painting is the movement that I have created by these marks here that looks a little bit like herring bones, and then these little dashes, as well as large areas where your eye can rest. This painting is very similar. Has a lot of the same elements that I was going after. I just used a different palette that's more pastel and light. This painting is one of my favorites. It's very simple. I kept it monochromatic. Really wasn't about color. It was about mixing large triangle shapes with long, thin strokes to create an all over pattern. You can see that there are some areas that are really dark but

they're not overwhelming because they're just in small areas. And then other areas that are really light, almost the same color as the paper but just enough that you can still see that they're there that are like blueish gray. This last painting is different from the one I just showed you in that it's all about color. And not only is it about color, it's about gestural marks. I was thinking about flowers when I was painting this, but I didn't want the flowers to be realistic, I wanted to hover somewhere in between abstract and realistic flowers. So you kind of get the feeling that there's some sort of floral shape without knowing that, "Oh, that is exactly what it is." There's room for interpretation. I started from the bottom left corner and you can see that there is a little bit of a motion here with this painting. And I painted some areas really light. Once this dried a little bit, I went back on top and I added some little dots in areas like this. I wanna remind you that not every painting when you begin has to be a perfect masterpiece by the end. It's a lot of pressure to put on yourself when you start a painting to say "This painting is going to be perfect. "It's going to be amazing when I finish." Instead you should think of it as "I'm gonna try something here, "let's see where it takes me, "let's see if it works. "If it doesn't, that's perfectly fine, "I will just move along to the next painting." For every painting that you see here, I may have gone through four or five different ones before I've arrived at something that I feel like is more final. And this is because I use watercolor painting as part of my sketching process. There's some artists that sketch in their sketchbook with pencil but I prefer to sketch with paint itself. It helps me loosen up and not feel like my painting has to be perfect. So when you paint, try and be in the moment with your process. Try and enjoy the colors you're putting down, the shapes that you're putting down. Not worrying so much about this painting has to be so beautiful when it's done, it needs to be stunning. That's really not the right frame of mind to be in. Give yourself permission to go through several different paintings before you arrive at something really great.