
More Sketchbook Explorations: A 4-Part Series with Lisa Congdon

Chapter 1 - Brush Marker Background and Botanical Drawings

Part 1 Overview

(relaxing music) - Hello. My name is Lisa Congdon and I am a fine artist, illustrator and author of several books, including, *The Business Guide, Art Inc.*, the essential guide for building your career as an artist, and several illustrated books, including *Twenty Ways to Draw a Tulip*. I am an avid sketchbook doodler. And I've been keeping my own sketchbook for several years now. In this class, I'm going to show you how to layer on a background with some Koi brush pens. And then we're going to lay down a botanical motif with black micron pens. And finally, we'll add some textured detail with white gel pen. I'm always looking for ways to create depth and dimension in my sketchbook. And so I'm always playing around with different materials including different pens and different paints. And layering them on top of each other. And I think you will too. (relaxing music)

Materials

- These are the materials that I love to use, but you can really use anything that you have on hand. For this class, I'm going to use an 8 1/5 by five inch watercolor sketchbook by Strathmore, but you can use any flat paper or mixed media paper sketchbook, too. I also have a variety of Sakura brush pens, they're Koi brush pens, some Micron 05 width. This Graphic 1.0 pen is really great for filling in. I also really like the new Pigma brush pens by Sakura, also great for filling in, and the white Gelly Roll pens from Sakura are also really amazing.

Mark-making background with brush pens

- Your sketchbook choice is a really important one. But fortunately you have a lot of options. For this class, we're going to use watercolor paper sketch book. Watercolor paper is a lot thicker and sturdier than regular paper, it also has some texture. And oftentimes it's slightly off-white, which is a really nice background. When you use watercolor or pen on watercolor paper, it doesn't run through, which is why a lot of people like it. This is my own personal sketch book. And you can see here, it's really smooth paper, which is great for drawing, but sometimes pen or paint will run through, so I like to glue together every other page with a glue stick. For this class, we're going to be using brush pens, and brush pens are designed to mimic basically a paintbrush. And the great thing about them is you can make both a relatively fine point and also a really thick point with the tip or you can also use the side to make thicker strokes, like we're going to do in this class. For this class, you're going to choose five or six complementary colors of brush pen. You're going to want to test them out before you actually use them because oftentimes, the color of the lid is actually quite different than the actual color of the pen. You can see here in the back of this sketchbook, I tested out several colors that I was considering using for this class. And I decided against this orange and the red in the end, and these are the ones I'm going to use. I also regularly check out the color of the pens that I'm going to use when I'm working in my sketchbook. You can see here in the back of my personal sketchbook, there's all kinds of marks and that's just me figuring out, is this the color I want to use today? Let's jump to a blank page and get to drawing. I'm gonna start with the brightest color in my palette which is yellow. And I like to just lay some on in different places. Eventually we're gonna come back and fill in more with the yellow in this technique. The reason I'm working all the way across the canvas, as I like to call it, is to make sure that I get a really pleasing composition.

Different shapes and sizes for each color. I put this down now, pick up the pink. You can see when I lay the pink down next to the yellow, there's a little bit of overlap and it makes a really nice peach color. So it's okay for your colors to blend. In fact, one of the great things about brush pens is that they often blend really well together. Notice that a lot of the pink, I'm laying down right next to the yellow, but I'm also going to put some pink on its own in different spots. We'll come back to this color in a bit. Now I'm going to pick up one of the grays. I've got two grays, you can see one is a lot darker than the other. Let's go with the darker one first and lay some of that down. I'm looking to make sure that I'm creating a flow, so that not all of the same color are in the same spots or the same width or length. The variance and idiosyncrasies that you can create in your artwork will make it really unique. Pick up this one, which is I think a bit of a peachy color. Again, you can see how these colors blend really nicely together. Sometimes the colors are so close that I like to make piles of pens that I've already used so I don't reuse them again. Here's another one that I think is a bit of a darker orange. This is another example of a pen where the color is definitely the shade of the cap but much darker in reality. Now I'm going to lay down my sixth color, which is a lighter gray. Notice that I'm being really loose here. I'm holding the pen rather loosely, I'm not worried about the colors slightly overlapping, in fact I sort of want them to blend a little bit together. I'm looking back, I'm looking to see if I've got what's becoming an overall pleasing composition. Now you can see that even though I've laid down all six colors, I still have a lot of white space, so I'm gonna go back in with the yellow, and lay some more of that down. A big theme in all of these classes is the beauty of imperfection. And you can see here that in all of the colors that I'm laying down, they're sort of blending together, they're very loose. Almost slightly messy looking, like a really nice abstract painting. I like the amount of yellow that I have for now, so I'm gonna go back to my pink pen and start laying down some more pink. I'm being really intuitive here about where to lay down the color, there's nothing scientific or mathematical about it. I'm just sort of looking back and seeing where I have it and where it isn't and making sure that I'm creating this nice flow across the page of all the different colors. For the purpose of the background, we don't really need to create a focal point. We're going to do that when we layer over in black ink. Now I'm taking all the different colors, and layering more of them in, filling in all of the white spots. Adding a bit more gray. So in the final stage, you just want to look, it's okay if you've got a little bit of white popping through, but if you want the whole thing to be covered, the last stage is to look and see what's left and fill it in. I've completed my background. Here's another one I made earlier. Very similar, similar color palette, or same color palette actually, slightly different composition. This is your opportunity to use your own creative license. I chose a vertical stripey pattern, but you could do color blocking or a more random pattern with your pens.

Creating a botanical motif with pens

- Now, we're going to layer over with some botanical vine shapes. They look like stems with leaves. You can make them in all different heights and widths. I might throw in a couple flowers and maybe a bird at the end. Another thing that's important is making sure your background is completely dry before you lay down the black ink. Sometimes, when you lay on wet ink over wet ink, it will bleed a little bit. I'm gonna start off with my Micron 0.5, and I'm gonna draw my first vine shape. The way I like to draw them is just one straight line. You can also give it some dimension by drawing another one down. Some of these shapes we're going to fill in and some we'll decorate in other ways. I'm going to make another right next to it. This one I'm going to make a little shorter, and it's going to have some petals or leaf shapes on top. And I'm gonna make one more before I fill these in. This one

I'm going to make even taller than the first one, but very similar in shape. Now, to add the leaves, make them a little bigger. So, now I'm at the spot where I've got another botanical shape next to this one so I'm going to pretend that this one is actually going behind this one. So, I'll start here and then sort of move my pen on top of the paper without touching it. Do you see how I've created this petal that looks like it's behind the other petal? I'll do the same here. Before I move on and create any more botanicals across the page, I'm going to start filling these in 'cause that's the really fun part. I'm going to actually take my Pigma brush pen. You can use a Micron 01 or any thicker-tipped black pen to do this. I'm gonna make the petals or leaves on this vine opaque black. You can see I'm going outside the lines, the original lines I created, which is fine. It doesn't really matter, it's all black ink. Use the tippy-tip of the pen when you're coloring in the smaller areas, and then you can press down a little harder in the areas of the leaf that are a little bit bigger. I think I'm also going to color this one in black. It's best to hold your pen sort of lightly, without too much pressure. It's better for the pen, and you're less apt to smudge or make a mistake. With this Micron 01 pen, I'm going to fill in the stem of these two. Then, I'm gonna pick up my Micron 0.5 again and I'm going to create some veins on these leaves to give a little different pattern. You can make all of your vines opaque black if you like, but I like to add a little variance. You'll notice that the lines that I draw are pretty straight and smooth. That comes with practice. You may find that if you are new to drawing, that your line work is a little bit messy or crooked, or your hand feels a little wobbly, and that will go away with more practice. And you'll be able to draw really smooth lines. Now, we're going to layer on some texture with a white gel pen. A really important thing to remember is that your ink, your black ink, your background color, needs to be completely dry before you layer on gel pen or it won't take. One way to add texture is to add little dots. Again, anytime you're using any of these pens, you don't need to press down very hard. Sometimes, the ink actually flows more nicely with a lighter touch. On these petals, I'm just going to draw some lines out from the center. You get to decide how to use the white gel pen to decorate the petals or leaves on your spread. I like to lay down two or three botanical shapes when I'm working across my sketchbook and then fill them in as I go, maybe two or three or four at a time. Some people like to lay down all of their basic shapes first and then go back in and color them in and add texture later. One of the reasons I like to fill in with texture and color as I go is it gives me a better idea of what it's going to look like in the end, and I can really make better judgments about my entire composition. On this vine, I'm creating really big leaves. These are going to be colored in black. When you're composing something like this, especially over a long, narrow spread, it's really important to think about overall composition, and what makes great composition is having varying shapes and sizes. The eye doesn't want everything to look the same. It wants to see variance and a little bit of disruption in the overall composition. I feel like it's time to draw a flower, and I'm gonna make a really basic flower shape. The bottom of it is going to have leaves very similar to the leaves in the vines. It's a sort of modified tulip shape. I'll give a little top to it which we can decorate later. I'm gonna draw some lines down here. To give some interest and texture, let's create smaller lines inside of these lines. Finish off the stem. Then, I have to look at it and decide, do I want to add any more leaves? I think I'm not going to add more leaves. You'll notice that this stem is sort of crooked which again, gives it some character. Now that I've drawn three more, I'm going to go back and fill in. I'm going to take my 0.5 Micron and add some pattern to this vine that sort of mimics the taller one over here. As much as it's fun to have a variety of pattern and elements in your overall composition, it's also really great to repeat certain things a few times. I'm gonna go back in with my white gel pen and put some dots of white on this larger vine which sort of mimics what I've done over here except at a larger scale. And on the

flower, I'm going to add some veins to the leaves. And some little decoration to the top part of the flower. I think this flower needs a little scallop shape up top so I'm gonna add that. You can continue now working on with your pattern. When I'm moving across the spread, I'm always making decisions, as I'm moving left to right, about what comes next. That's always based on what's already been laid down and what creates a pleasing composition. I'm looking at what do I have down that's already opaque, what is just line work, what's short, what's tall, what designs have I already put down, what haven't I drawn in a while? Like it's a certain kind of vine that I used back in the spread that I want to repeat again. So, those are all the things that you want to be thinking about as you're laying down your spread. I'm getting ready to finish up this spread, and I've decided that I want to add one more flower. I'm going to place it a little bit lower and make it a little bit smaller than this one over here. To make it different. I'm gonna let this dry for a second before I add the white details. In the meantime, I think I'm going to add a little bird to the top of this flower, just to give a little bit of interest to the piece. Just a very basic bird shape. The outline, some little feet, perched on the top. Then, to finish off this spread, I think it's probably a good idea for me to add a little bit of something here. So, I'm going to add another vine. Notice as I work my way across, I'm varying what is opaque and black and what is just line work, which gives it some interest and makes certain elements pop and certain elements recede. When you're finished, or almost finished, you want to go back in and take a good look at your entire composition. At that point, you want to decide, is there anything I want to add? And right now, I see that there are a couple flowers and vines where I want to add a little bit of detail. For example, this flower right here has only four petals, and I want to add a fifth right down here. I'm going to go back in in a few minutes when that is dried and fill it in with some white stripes. I decided right here, I'd like to add another petal to this one. Then, maybe one right here as well. Now, I'm gonna go back in and finish them out with the white gel pen. And here we have our finished spread. What I really love about this technique is that you've got a really colorful background with the Koi brush pens, which you can also do with watercolor paints or collaged paper, but brush pens give you a lot of control that you don't get with paint or cut paper, and I really love that. This was the original piece that I did in my very own sketchbook. Some of the flowers are a bit more elaborate, and I did some lettering, but you can see where I got the inspiration for this one. I encourage you to explore different palette and play around with your botanical motifs and maybe even add a few more birds and really make this piece your own.

Chapter 2 - Flora and Fauna Patterns

Part 2 Overview

(lively music) - In this class, I'm going to show you how to create a balanced all-over design on the spread of your sketchbook. We're going to start with line drawings of flowers and we'll be introducing drawing really simple, cute animals into the motif, as well. And then we'll color them in with some Koi Brush Pens.

How to draw flora and fauna

- Because I've been drawing for many years, I have lots of flower and animal characters that I can draw just from my imagination. But often, when I'm coming up with new designs that I wanna replicate, I use what I call a cheat sheet. And essentially, before I start decorating my sketchbook spread, I practice drawing animals, and flowers, and other things on a piece of scratch paper or on a piece of drawing paper just so that I can refer to them later when I'm creating my sketchbook spread. I'm going to show you how to draw a few basic flower and leaf motifs, and also some basic

animal shapes. As in the previous class in this sketchbook series, we're using a couple of micron 0.5 pens, a Pigma medium brush pen, black brush pen, and some coy coloring pens, and I've picked out a palette, which I'll go over in a little bit. I'm gonna start with what's the easiest, and that is drawing a few flower shapes. I really just like circular shapes, especially for all-over patterns. They're great space fillers, especially when you can add a little leaf. Sometimes I like to put the center of the flower a little bit off center. It makes the flower look a little bit more interesting and quirky. Sometimes people think that symmetry is actually what they're supposed to achieve, and in fact, the eye really likes to see things that are a bit off. It gives a focal point that's a little bit more interesting. I might even color the center of the flower with my brush pen, and you can see how that makes the flower really pop. Another way to draw the very same flower. Basic circle shape. Center, and then I draw a little scallop on the inside of the circle. And then inside of that I'll color. (pen scratching) And again, these are very stylized flowers. You can create your own motifs. In fact, I encourage you not to copy mine directly, but to make your own with their own little quirks and idiosyncrasies. Put a leaf here, and I'll be talking about the importance of making flowers in different shapes and sizes as we create our all-over spread. Make a sort of modified tulip or, I don't know what kind of flower this is. And notice that I'm repeating a lot of the geometric line work in the flowers. (pen scratching) So here are a few examples of some simple flowers. I encourage you to make you own flower styles by playing around with different shapes and different line work. I'm also going to use a few animal shapes in my spread, so I'm going to practice drawing a few birds and animals right now. Let's start with a really simple bird shape. This is one of my favorites to draw. Put our beak here and our eye here. You can decorate the inside of this bird however you like, but this is a really great basic shape to start with, and then you can repeat this throughout your pattern that you're going to be creating, but with different decorations on it. I like to add some feet to my birds. Very simple. Again, I'm repeating a lot of the same line work that I used in the flowers. Repeating the same kinds of designs, and scallop shapes, and lines actually makes your drawing look really cohesive. Don't have to be the same line work and designs that I use. In fact, you should try to make your own style. There's one bird. Drawing animals can feel really intimidating if you're not used to drawing them. But the great news is that we're going to be drawing animals that aren't intended to look realistic. They are going to be cute and very simple. And these are much easier to draw. I like to start by drawing the outline of the body first. Let's start with a bunny rabbit, and I'm gonna start with its back. So this is the back foot. Its ears. Of course we have to add the tail. Let's just put a circle there for the tail. And I'm gonna draw some big eyes on mine. Big eyes make your animals look really cute. And a big nose, and then I like to use little hooks on my dogs, cats, and rabbits. Inside of the ear is a nice little detail that you can add and then color in later. And there we have a little bunny rabbit. We're also going to be adding some fillers on our spread, and those can pretty much be anything. And some things I like to use as really simple space fillers are leaves, and hearts, which are really easy to spread around. You can also put in little vine shapes. The previous class in this series, we drew a lot of vines, and you can practice drawing your vines on your scratch paper. And you can even draw smaller versions of the same flower motif that we drew earlier. Just fill space. So now we have our cheat sheet, and we're ready to start creating our spread.

Creating an all-over pattern

- We're going to create an overall spread. Here in my personal sketchbook I have created several spreads where I draw objects on what I call an imaginary grid. And what that means is that you can kind of imagine that there are, sort of, grid lines in the background and everything is sort of spaced

and arranged neatly on that grid in some way or another. This is one way I really love to draw and it's a great way to fill space in your sketchbook. This spread right here is really similar to the kind of spread we're going to create in this class. This one is all botanical imagery and we're also going to draw some animals but you can see the overall design. I have a few others that are a little different. This one was created with some Koi brush pens and some white Gelly Roll pens but again, you can see how things are arranged. Another example in here that I really like, which is some fish that I drew with one color of pen and then decorated with some line work in white Gelly Roll pen. But the idea isn't what you're drawing, it's that whatever you're drawing, you're drawing onto an imaginary grid with some space around it. Whenever I start a sketchbook spread where I'm going to be arranging things across the spread into a pattern, I like to start in the bottom-left corner. That seems to make the most sense for me. You can also start in the top-left corner or if you're left handed or your brain is oriented differently it's also fine to start on the right-hand side. But the idea is that you're working your way across and adding things as you go to the pattern. So I'm gonna start in the corner here with a little bird. And this isn't exactly the bird that I made on my cheat sheet but again, you're not trying copy anything exactly. You're just drawing and creating a pattern freeform as you go. I like to add detail as I draw things but some people like to get all their basic shapes down and then go back and add detail later. You can decide the way you wanna work in your own sketchbook. So here we have a shape. I'm probably going to fill in something smaller down here, maybe a couple of hearts to fill the space but the idea is that you're working outwards. So I think above the back of this guy I'm going to add a flower and I'm gonna use the back of this bird as my guide. I want maybe a quarter inch, approximately, between the edges of things so I'm gonna bring the first pedal of my next flower down about a quarter inch away and then work out from there. Add a couple leaves. And then I've got some space here that I need to fill in so I think I'm going to put a leaf there and notice that I'm just sort of using the space, making sure that the edge of the leaf kind of falls into this area. This is something, if you like making arrangements of things in your drawings and you want them to be clustered together in a really organized way, just practicing doing it alone will get you there eventually. Now I'm gonna try to fill in this space with something so I'm gonna put another leaf here. And notice that I made the leaf sort of curve up a little bit so that it would fit right in that space. I think it's time to draw an animal so let's do a little bunny rabbit here. Let's give him a little circle on his tummy there. Put a little heart here and there's often gonna be small spaces where you just need to fill in and so coming up with your own little shapes and motifs that you can use to fill in spaces. So you do see how we're creating our area here with all of these different shapes that sort of fit together almost like a puzzle? Let's put another flower here. I'm gonna create a similar flower to the one that we made on our cheat sheet. We'll go back in later and fill in both with black ink and with color after we're done drawing all of the line work. I think this is a good place for one of my vine shapes. And maybe right here I'll add another flower. And to fill in this space I'll add a leaf. Leaves are really great ways to fill in little spaces in your drawing. I have a space here in the corner that I need to figure out how to fill in and I think what I'm going to do here is another vine. So now you can see I've got most of the first half of the left-hand side of this spread almost finished. I'm gonna add another flower. I'm gonna add another animal here. How about a cat? I'm gonna save this area for the cat's tail but first I'm gonna draw the body. Just drawing the outline of the cat body. And then I'll fill in this area with his tail. And I think I might give him a little striped collar. Notice that I'm spreading the flowers out and the leaves out. I'm not clustering all of the animals together. I'm sort of varying what shapes go where. I think I'm going to put another leaf this direction and I like that it's at a different angle than either of these

leaves. Breaking up the space with similar shapes but oriented differently is a great way to think about adding things to your pattern. I don't have any vine shapes towards the bottom of my sketchbook spread so I'm going to add one here. Vine shapes are great for mimicking the contour of something that it's next to. Like, here you can see this vine shape is kind of wrapped around the flower. This one is wrapped around this flower and this one is wrapped around the edge of the bunny rabbit. So at this point, you'll just continue to add flowers, hearts, leaves, animals, whatever motifs you wanna add to your own. Be really creative and make yours different until you have finished the entire spread. I have finished one here previously. You can see that I added a few more different flower shapes and also some different animals like this owl and this little bear and this cat over here. And you can also see that I've filled in some of the spaces with black ink. And what that does is it makes certain parts of your drawing pop. We're also going to add color which will also add some pop to the piece. But I think I wanna fill in the center of all of my little flowers with black and another one down here. One over here. And then I sort of scan over to make sure that I've gotten everything that I want filled in filled in. Now we're gonna dig in to the really fun part which is coloring our sketchbook spread.

Adding color

- I like to choose palette with my pen set before I begin coloring. This is a totally optional step. You can just wing it if you would like, but I like to pick a few pens, typically anywhere between four and seven that I'm gonna use throughout the spread to make it really cohesive. And what I end up doing a lot is making marks in the back of my sketchbook to make sure that I'm choosing the colors that I really want. And that's because most of the time, the lid color does not necessarily match the pen color, so you always wanna test out what the real pen color is. So, you can see here in the back of my sketchbook I have done some markings to try to choose a palette that I'm going to use, and I think I'm going to use this one here. The process of choosing colors is really intuitive. It's really about what appeals to you and what you want your final drawing to look like. You'll recall that when I created this overall pattern, I started in the bottom left-hand corner and slowly worked my way across until I got over to the right hand side of this spread. When I color, I wanna make sure that the color is really balanced throughout the overall composition, and so, I'll typically choose a color. In this case, I'm gonna choose this fluorescent green, or bright green, and start laying it in different spots over the entire page. So, I'm gonna start with this leaf here, and then I might go down here, and use it to color in this vine. And again, you'll notice that my color I'm laying down is seeping a little bit outside of the lines, and that's okay. We're not aiming for perfection here. You don't need to color inside the lines always. So, I've got some green here and some green here. I'm gonna move over, and I want to kind of break up the space with the color, so I'm gonna look for another spot. And I've got another green over here, so not all of the green bits need to be colored in with this particular shade. And, in fact, sometimes it's fun to color leaves blue or pink. I was considering coloring this leaf the same color green as this leaf, but they're so similar, and they're so similarly placed that I wanna make sure I color this leaf a different shade of green. I'm definitely going to come back in and add more of this color green, but before I do, I'm going to fill in with some other colors. You can see this page is already starting to come to life, just with two colors laid down. You may notice as you're using the Koi Brush Pens to draw color over your line drawings that a tiny bit of the black from the line drawings will smudge. It's always a tiny bit, and the best way to prevent this entirely is to let your ink drawing dry for at least a few hours before you color it in. Or, you can take a hair dryer to it, and dry it that way. So, as I'm coloring with any color, I'm looking to make

sure there is a flow of that color across the page. As when you're painting or drawing anything, you wanna step back periodically and look at the overall composition and make decisions about what needs to be added. When I'm choosing color, I'm always looking for combinations that work well together, and aren't too contrasting in a way where they're competing with each other. And that's why I like to test my colors out in advance. I also like to choose colors that are all at about the same intensity, and you'll notice that the colors I chose for this drawing are all sort of pastels at the same level of intensity. They're all pretty light colored. I avoided using any blue or green or pink that was really bright and saturated. Conversely, I could have chosen all really intense colors or a mixture. So, the idea is that you're being really intentional about the colors that you're choosing to give a certain look to the overall feel. Now, I'm adding more green, but you'll notice this is a slightly different shade of green which also breaks up the piece. So, this is kind of an interesting gray. It might be tempting to only want to color your animals traditional animal colors like brown or gray or white or some kind of soft yellow, but I encourage you if it fits in your palette to color you animals quirky colors like pink or blue or green, whatever fits in in the overall scheme. There are no rules when you are coloring your artwork. Now, it's time to color the rest of your spread. You'll notice that I have completed the spread and that I've chosen to leave a few distinct areas not colored in. Sometimes, I like to leave things left open in white or whatever the background color is. It's not necessary to color in every single thing in your drawing. Remember when you're creating an overall spread like this in your sketchbook. To start from left to right, and fill in the space as you work in the direction, or you can work of course, from right to left, if that works better for your brain. Also, leave a little bit of space between each of the objects on the page, and try to keep that as consistent as possible overall. You can fill in little spaces with smaller shapes like hearts or smaller flowers. Use the lines in your drawing to dictate what you draw next and where that falls, and then, when you're coloring, think about the overall composition in making sure that your color is balanced throughout the page. And if drawing this way from your imagination seems challenging, don't forget to make a cheat sheet to practice and refer to over and over again.

Chapter 3 - Color Blocking with Watercolor

Part 3 Overview

(upbeat pop music) - I'm really excited about this next class because we get to play with watercolor paints. Watercolor paint is a really forgiving medium, which means that when you lay it down, it sort of flows on its own and becomes beautiful when it dries without much effort. First, we're going to mix watercolor paints. I'll show you how to mix a few different colors to create a cool palette. We're going to create a design of rectangles and squares across the spread in your sketchbook. And finally, once your paint is dry, we'll add some abstract drawings on top of the color blocking with some micron pens and some white jellyroll pens. I love working abstractly because it frees me up from having to make anything look perfect or exactly like something in the real world.

Materials

- In class, we're going to use a lot of the same materials that we've used in the last two classes, but we're going to replace the Koi brush pens with watercolor paint. So we'll also use the Micron pens in an 05 width, a white gel pen. You'll need a palette or two for your watercolor paints, unless you're using a dry watercolor palette. You'll need a jar or a glass of clean water, a paper towel or a rag for dabbing your brushes, and one or two flat-tipped, medium to small sized brushes.

Color blocking with watercolor

- The first step in this spread is laying down some color blocking with watercolor. I've already begun laying down some color in various rectangular and square shapes, and we're going to continue to lay down color in sort of alternating directions as we move across the spread. I always like to start on the left because I'm right handed, but you might want to start on the right if you're left handed, because you might smear the paint otherwise with your hand. We've got our little jar of water, super important, our paper towel, I think it's time for me to lay down more of this aqua blue, which I created using some of this darker blue which you can see here, I also made it slightly opaque by mixing in some white, adding a tiny bit of yellow to give it a greener hue, make it more of an aqua. I still think I want to add a tiny bit more here. You wanna make sure, if you're using watercolors that come from a tube, that you add enough water. You don't wanna add too much that the watercolor is actually too watery, but just enough so that you've got the right amount of color, and you can do some little tests off to the side on a separate piece of paper. If you're using dry watercolors, it's especially important also to add water so that they're not too dry and that you spend enough time mixing the color, the water on top of the dried watercolor to get the right amount of opacity. And I lay down more of this aqua blue right here, in this spot, the brush I'm using is this flat head brush with a slight angle, not too big, but you could use a bigger brush for color blocking if you wanted. And then, since I'm going to go to another color pretty immediately, I want to make sure that I clean my brush enough in the water and then dry it off a little bit on the paper towel, and I'm gonna add a little yellow here which I've got over here in this palette, this is yellow that's straight out of the tube, it's not mixed with anything, yet. I may mix it with something later, and then I've also mixed up a combination of my Opera Pink with some of the yellow here, you can see that mixture here, and I'm gonna just take the tiniest, tiniest amount of that with a fairly wet brush and create a sort of very light layer of film, you can see I've done the same thing right here, I've just sort of brushed a little of it over to add a little bit of interest. And I'm not covering the entire block of yellow, but just a little bit. As you're creating your overall spread, you want to alternate colors and make sure the page looks really balanced in terms of the colors that you've chosen, and I have a lot of pink laid down already, and two bits of this aqua blue, and I think it's time for me to lay down another area of green, and I made this green starting with this blue, adding a little bit of yellow and just a tiny bit of white. I'm gonna make this strip of green long and narrow, I'm alternating my shapes so that the composition is more varied, and therefore more interesting. You're always trusting your eye about what creates good composition and color balance in your piece. While this is still wet, I want to add, just like I did on top of the yellow with some of this neon orange, I'm gonna add just a tiny tiny bit of this blue here to the edge, just the lightest touch just to give a little bit of a variance. Washing my brush completely, drying it off, think I'm going to add a little more black now. Since I already have a black shape that is square, I'm going to make one that is more of a rectangle shape so that I'm repeating the color but not the exact shape. I'm also going to make a little black area right here. Notice that my paint is pretty wet, it's not so wet that it's dripping down the page, but it's wet enough that it's really easy to carry my brush over the paper. And you'll notice also on a lot of these color blocks that the paint is making these interesting markings as it dries, and that's actually really beautiful and you want some of that. That's the great thing about watercolor, is that it makes really interesting markings as it dries. Sort of coming to the edge of the left hand side of the spread, and I've got my spine here and I wanna keep everything on this side of the spine, so I'm gonna add a little bit more of this red here, then I'm going to actually add a little bit of neon pink on top of to break it up a little bit, and I'm going to put that one down here, and while the paint is still wet, I'm

going to take a little bit of this neon pink that I've got here, some of it's already mixed with that red, like I did with the green and the yellow, just gonna lay on a little bit of the florescent pink on the edge and let it sort of bleed in. The idea is not to have every block look uniform, you wanna let the watercolor paint bleed into itself and create a really nice background for what we're going to eventually draw on top of. Going to add another yellow block right here, before it dries, I want to add just a tiny touch of this neon orange to one edge, and one way to help one color bleed into another, if you're layering while you're water coloring is drying is to get your brush just to get some water on it. Water is your blending medium when you are using watercolor. I've got this little spot here that I'm gonna add a little square shape to, and I think I'm gonna do that in my blue, I've got approximately five colors that I'm laying down, and I'm just keeping it at that. And that keeps it really simple. And let's add one last color block to the upper right hand corner of the left hand side of our page here and I think this one should also be pink. Notice I'm leaving a little bit of space anywhere between an eighth of an inch to as much as maybe even a quarter of an inch between my blocks, doesn't have to be completely uniform, you can even go back and add more paint to some of them later. And I'm going to add a little bit of, just a touch of this neon orange to this one. I finished the first half of my spread, and now it's time to finish the second half. Once you've completed your color blocking, make sure your paint totally dry, and then we'll move on to layering abstract drawing on top of the color blocks.

Adding geometric patterns

- I'm going to take my white jelly roll pen, and my black 05 micron, although you could use a thicker or a finer tipped black pen if you'd like. And I'm going to lay down some abstract, geometric, designs and patterns over the entire spread, using the color blocks as my base. I did start the color blocking similar to how I started the painting in the previous class, from left to right. But I'm going to approach the drawing on top of the painting, more randomly and work my way over the spread as my intuition takes me. I approached the color blocking from left to right, and you might have approached it from right to left, but I'm going to approach the geometric drawing on top of the color blocking, more randomly. I really like this blue rectangle right here, so I'm going to start drawing on that now. And again, remember that it's really important, especially when you're using gel pens, to make sure that your paint is completely dry before you start layering. I think on this little block, I'm going to draw a triangle pattern. This pattern, may be familiar to you, if you took my basic line drawing class. I'm randomly connecting triangle shapes together. They're a little bit wonky, and oddly sized. And that's something that we want here. We want it to look abstract and not uniform. I'm going to add some stripes inside some of them. You'll also notice that as the white gel pen dries, it becomes more opaque. So when you first lay it down, it may not look super dark, and that's okay. And again, I'm adding stripes in really random directions, I like the way that looks, so I'm going to use the black pen, on some of the lighter blocks. This one I'm just going to draw random dots inside of. These scallop shapes inside this guy. I think I'm going to add a little dot detail inside of the scallops. Here in this guy, I'm going to make a series of concentric circles. And then, I'm going to create a sort of starburst design. This is another shape design that I taught in my basic line drawing class. So you can see now we've got four color blocked spots filled in already with some designs. On this one, I'm going to do some larger dots, again, sort of randomly placed. And just to break things up a little bit, I think I'm going to use the black micron on this green rectangle here. Just playing around with different motifs, and again I want to make sure that I repeat all of these elsewhere. So it looks like an overall cohesive pattern. I've come up with about five different pattern

motifs that I've been laying on top of my color blocking. And these are the five that I'm going to start repeating now, across my entire spread. You should choose at least three, and maybe as many as six that you repeat. If you choose too few, you will start having to repeat motifs next to each other on the color blocking, which doesn't look as interesting. And if you have too many, then it's going to look too varied. So for example, right now, I'm going to take this pattern that I created on top of the yellow color block in black micron, and I'm going to repeat it up here in white gel pen on top of the black color block. This space is not as big, so I won't be filling as much space, but you'll see how the general pattern looks the same. Now you're going to continue drawing on top of your own color blocked sketchbook spread, with your own set of patterns. I've just about completed my spread, and at this point I'm just going in and adding the finest detail at the end and making adjustments so everything is exactly how I want it. One thing I realized as I was drawing, is that I wanted to fill in some of the triangle pattern that I had drawn over some of the color blocked areas, and that that is much easier to do with a brush pen, or a thicker micron than it is with an O5 micron. So I've grabbed my brush pen, and I'm going to start filling in some of the areas in black. You can see here I attempted to fill in with the finer tipped micron, didn't fill in so well, so I'm gonna go over that area with this brush pen, and you can see how much more opaque that black looks. You want to use a really light touch when you're using a brush pen, because if you push down too hard, it will bleed onto the page. It's almost like a paint brush that way. Fill in some areas here. The remaining triangles here, I think I'm just going to fill in with some more stripes. I don't know about you, but when I'm working in pattern, I have the tendency to want to go in and finesse every little detail. And while that's really fun, at some point you just have to stop and call it done. And that's important because it's also really easy to overwork a piece of art. Even in your sketch book. I wanted to show you also a variation in my personal sketch book of color blocking and drawing over it. In this spread I actually used koi brush pens, but you could also use watercolor. There's no space around the color blocks, which is another way to approach it. And then in each of the blocks, I used a different pattern, and in this case, I only used three different patterns. You need at least three, to differentiate and create beautiful spread. Now I encourage you to open up a new blank spread in your sketch book, create your own unique color palette, and layer over that with your own set of unique markings.

Chapter 4 - Gel Pen Drawings on Colored Paper

Part 4 Overview

- Welcome back. For this class, we're going to work outside of the sketchbook. Your sketchbook is a great place to develop your voice and find your style. But ultimately, you wanna move outside of the sketchbook, and create things on canvas or paper that you can frame, sell or give away. Although you can play around with the techniques that I'm going to show you today, in your sketchbook, we're going to be working on colored backgrounds with gel pen. The first project we're going to do today is decorating the outside of a small craft paper sketchbook. And then, we're going to play around with a Japanese-inspired wave pattern in white gel pen on black paper. A few years ago, I got a package from my favorite pen company, Sakura of America. They sent me some gel pens. I opened them up, and promptly put most of them in a drawer. I sent the other half to my 15-year old niece, because I thought, "Gel pens are for teenagers." And then, a few months later, I was playing around in my sketchbook, and I decided to open up a pack. And I discovered the magic of gel pens. They are not just for teenagers, and they are not just for decorating your binder or notebook in school. These pens make fabulous patterns on paper, and great art. These days, gel

pens are an integral part of my repertoire. (funky music)

Materials

- For this class you're going to need a brown craft paper notebook, they also sometimes come in blue or black or other dark colors and any of those are also fine. I love this series by Scout Books, these are my favorite little notebooks. You'll also need one or two colored gel pens that will show up on whatever color paper your notebook is, plus one white gel pen, and then we're going to be working on black paper. Strathmore makes this really great nine by 12 black paper that I really love. It's going to be really helpful for you to have a little bit of white paint, it can be watercolor from a tube, gouache, or acrylic white.

Using gel pens on a kraft paper notebook

- We're going to adorn this notebook with a repeat of the same, basic, floral shape. I'm only gonna use two colors: this sort of neon orange, which will translate more pink on the craft paper, and a white gel pen. But you can really use any color you want. So the flower shape we're going to draw is sort of a long, half circle. And it takes a few minutes to color in with gel pen 'cause the tip is rather fine, but it's not so bad. So you want to color as you draw the shapes. We're gonna draw the stems and the leaves after we lay down all of the flower shapes, and they're all going to look mostly the same, and you want to vary the sizes. Don't worry too much about filling all of the space with the gel pen; you can go back over it later. You'll notice that these flowers, when you first lay them down with the ink, they look dark, and then they dry much lighter. It almost looks like chalk, and they really begin to pop off of the craft paper. I may go back in with this pink and add some more later, but for now I'm gonna put it down and pick up my white pen. Now I'm going to lay down the same exact flower design, which we will add detail to after we get the basic shapes down. These will be in white, alternating in white, and again, I am sort of imagining a garden where are flowers are at different heights and sizes. And you wanna use your eye to help you judge what the composition should be. You can even layer some so that some of the flowers are actually sitting behind some of the others, like I'm doing here. When you color in with a gel pen, it doesn't look entirely opaque. In fact, you can actually see the texture of the pen on the paper, but I really like the texture and how it looks. So I don't mind it so much. So I'm gonna stop there, and now I'm going to start my stems and leaves, and for the pink flowers, I'm going to use the white for the stem and the leaves, and for the white flowers, I'm going to use the pink for the stem and the leaves. The base of our flower garden is right down here at the bottom. We can always go back and add more flower shapes later if we feel like there aren't enough. I'm gonna add the leaves last, I've decided. Get the stems laid down first. So we have white stems on all of the pink flowers, and now we're gonna pick up the pink pen and put pink stems on all of the white flowers. And you'll see already, even without adding the leaves yet, the space is starting to fill up. So I wanna look for the flowers that are sort of the most in the foreground, and it looks like this white flower is, so let's start by putting leaves on him. Oopsie, I just made a small mistake, but there really are no mistakes. I'm starting to put pink leaves on a white stem, but that's okay. To make it look more intentional, maybe I'll put some white leaves on this pink stem. Originally I was gonna make the stems and the leaves the same color, but sometimes quote mistakes are your happy accidents. And this still looks cute. I'm going to back in over some of these flower shapes that have mostly dried and put another layer of gel pen over them. When you're coloring in solid with gel pen, it helps to go over the area in another direction. Now that I finished the overall composition with the flower shapes, stems, and leaves, I wanna go in and see if there

isn't anything that I might want to add to make it more complete. I have this area right here, which feels a little empty, but I sort of like the negative space there. Instead of adding another flower here, I think what I'm going to do is actually make this white flower a little bit taller. When you see negative space on your canvas or paper or in your sketchbook, it might be your tendency to want to fill it in. But what I encourage you to do is play with the negative space, and use it to make your composition even stronger. Now that I've got my composition exactly how I want it, I'm going to go in and lay in some detail over the flower shapes. Let's start with the white gel pen on the pink flowers. You can make whatever designs you want on your flowers. I'm going to a combination of stripes and dots. When you're laying gel pen over gel pen, best to make sure your base layer is completely dry first. I'm repeating the same design on every flower. You've probably heard me say a lot in this class: approach drawing with a light touch. The harder you press down on your gel pens or your micron pens, the more room there is for error. If you go in with a light touch, sometimes the ink actually flows more freely. Now that I've layered the white details on the pink flowers, I'm going to pick up the pink pen and lay details down on the white flowers. I love how the pink gel pen pops on top of the white gel pen. The very last step is to go in and fill in any little holes in your drawing. So, I'm noticing that some of these leaves are not completely filled in or are a little bit messy, so I'm gonna go in and fill them in. This design is deceptive; it looks rather intricate, but really it's really simple. We have the same basic shapes repeated over and over, so the flower shape with the same exact design on it and the stem and leaves. Super simple, repeating the same thing in only two colors, and yet, so beautiful and interesting looking. I made a couple of other notebooks, and I love these because you can give them away as gifts or make them for yourself. These two have geometric patterns on them. This is a scallop shape with circles. This one is a triangle pattern that I made that has little white dots, and these are all also made with different color gel pens. You can really have a lot of fun with gel pens on these cute little scout books, which also come in a larger size.

Using white gel pens on black paper

- I'm going to teach you a totally new pattern. We're going to use white gel pen on black paper and make a Japanese inspired wave pattern to fill almost an entire page. While this pattern once it's finished can look really complicated, it's actually pretty easy to create once you get into the flow. So, I usually start in the bottom left-hand corner. Again, you might want to start in the right-hand corner especially if you are left-handed, and I start by making either a backwards S or a forwards S or some kind of wave-like pattern and basically you're just going to be building out in different directions, a wave or a series of waves. This is meant to sort of mimic what's going on on the inside, underneath the ocean. There are no rules for this pattern technique except to make sure that none of your lines are straight and that you repeat the same motion or the same wave pattern a few different times. I'll show you what I mean by that. So, you can see here I made this wave mark and then I repeated it several times down, not all the way across but maybe one, two, three, four, five, six times. You might want to do a few more or a few less. This one is going this direction and only includes one curve. You can have some that are complete circles or spirals like this. You can make them start and end wherever you like. If you've got some negative space here you can just fill that in. This is really just a very free form. It might feel slightly uncomfortable to some of you when you're first starting out. I'm gonna take this line right here and connect it here. This is really great practice for free form drawing. Eventually, this entire bottom three quarters is going to be filled, so you have to be really inventive about how you fill it. So, I'm mimicking the bottom part of this wave

and then I'm creating a new wave over here. You can make the space between your lines a little tighter or you can make it looser, that part is up to you, or you can alternate tightness and looseness. And again, hold your pen fairly lightly. Go slowly. There should be no rushing in your drawing. You'll see here this curve that I made was a little bit wonky compared to the rest of them, and that's okay. This is going to look cool no matter if your curves are crooked or perfect. I'm drawing really intuitively right now and because I draw all the time, making lines that are flowing in and out of each other comes really easily to me, so this may feel a little overwhelming and even difficult for you and if that's the case, I recommend stopping and taking a look at what you're drawing and stepping back and saying oh, most of my lines are flowing this way, maybe I should have a few that go this way and be really thoughtful about what you're drawing while you're drawing it. Notice that I'm alternating the direction of my waves. Some are going down, some are going to the left, some are going to the right. There's a lot of energy and movement already. I'm even closing some lines, like this is kind of like a kidney bean shape that I made and I'm going to fill that in. This really is your chance to go really free form. You can start and end and connect the lines really anywhere. The idea here is not to copy what I'm doing, but just to get the idea for what I'm trying to achieve and then try to achieve the same thing yourself. There's no intersecting lines. You'll also notice that. So, I'm not overlapping. Each line has its own separate space. Certain lines meet in certain places but there are no intersecting lines, so that's probably another rule that I forgot to mention earlier. The reason that gel pens are so great for this kind of drawing is that they flow really smoothly on the surface of your paper. Notice I started this line here and I brought it down and connected it to a wave that I drew maybe five minutes ago, so we're playing with the space in interesting ways and going back and working with existing lines until the space is filled up. Now you're going to go ahead and fill up your page to about three quarters. I have already completed most of another spread which you can see here, and you'll notice that I made the top sort of look like the surface by creating some wave shapes that were jutting out. I'm going to add one more wave coming out of the surface right here, just to show you how I've done it. So, I'm working off of an existing line. I'm trying to mimic this sort of wave shape or motion as I've already done here, and notice that I'm not going straight across. I've got my waves in a sort of swooping motion. Yours could look like this or go down or go up, but I'm encouraging you to just think about movement and motion instead of a straight line. The final step is to add your moon. You can draw your own circle freehand if you're comfortable doing that, but that's really hard for a lot of people so I recommend finding a cup or a glass that obviously has a circle top and laying it down and tracing around it. I'd like my moon to hover behind the top waves and not be completely separate. You can do yours however you want, so I think I'd like my moon to go here and so I'm going to draw around the cup but not over the portion where there are waves, only on top because I don't want to draw a circle over my wave drawing. This is really important. So, when I pull the cup away you can see I've only drawn from this point over to this point and I'm only going to fill in around the waves that I've drawn. You can fill in with a white gel pen much like we did with the floral shapes on the cover of the notebooks, but for a space this large I recommend using some opaque white paint and that's what we're gonna use right now. So, I've got some in my palette. I'm taking my flathead brush and mixing in a little bit of water. I don't want this to be super wet. It's watercolor so it's easily thinned out. I'm just mixing in a little water here and then I'm gonna do a little test area here to see how it lays on. This is looking pretty thin. I want it to be somewhat transparent, but I want to add a little bit more paint pigment in here so that it looks a little thicker. That's a little better. You can always go in with another layer and I'm gonna take the edge of my brush and make sure that I'm staying inside,

basically inside this white line. This part is the easy part. It's okay you can see the brush strokes. Brush strokes are what add character and texture to your piece, and then I'm gonna go around the top part of this wave. I don't necessarily want my moon to be super flat and opaque because actually moons have some texture and some darker spots in them, but I feel like this needs one more layer of white paint before it's finished. As with the notebooks that we decorated, this is deceptively complex. In reality, we've got one or two shapes that we're just repeating over and over and over and over in only one color, and so it's actually really, really simple design, and yet when you finish it looks really complex and interesting. This combination here looks really great framed in white. As with anything that you frame, make sure that everything is completely dry before you put it behind glass. There are two things I hope you take away from all of these classes, and one of them is that really, drawing in this way that I've been teaching is about basic lines and basic shapes. There's nothing complex about it. We're using lines and shapes in almost everything we're drawing, and so when you look at your drawing as basic lines and basic shapes, it really makes it feel much more manageable and much less intimidating. I also hope you remember that imperfection rules. You may be drawing along and your pen may slip or one side might not match the other side and you think oh my gosh, I've made a mistake, I need to start over, but I really encourage you to embrace those mistakes and work with them, and use the imperfections and wonkiness in your drawings as your own style and what makes your work stand out and what makes your work organic and interesting. (uplifting music)