

3-Day Watercolor Workshop
“Let’s Start with Middle Value”
Irena Roman

“Of the original phenomena, light is the most enthralling.” Leonardo da Vinci

“What I wanted to do was to paint sunlight on the side of a house.”
Edward Hopper

“In order for the light to shine so brightly, the darkness must be present.”
Sir Francis Bacon

“Paint your picture by means of the lights. Lights define texture and color – shadows define form.” Howard Pyle

“Light first, value second, color third.” Linda Walker, wildlife artist

Light. Why is it so essential in our paintings?

Light is energy! It makes all things visible, creates form, shape and volume. Color and texture are revealed and by it. It determines mood and character. It helps us to direct viewers to what we want them to see. It unifies our subject matter compositionally.

Just about anything can be magically transformed from ordinary to *magnificent* when a single dramatic light source is employed. When the light catches something as common as let’s say a white bowl so that it creates surface highlights and a lush cast shadow, it’s instantly elevated into the emotional realm, no longer a lowly cereal bowl we wouldn’t take a second look at.

Watercolor is it the perfect painting medium to communicate illumination. It’s transparent so when you glaze one color over another the light of the paper still shines through.

And when pigment is mixed with water and poured directly on the paper that light quality can be intensified

On the other end of the spectrum shadows can be created from lush and powerful dark pigments that retain translucency, color and life.

Workshop Schedule

Thursday, June 25th

AM

Slide show of my work and step-by-step process.

Warm-up experimental paint pouring.

PM

Create a value study of the still life, choosing whatever area(s) you'd like to focus on.

Begin your painting by creating a "camouflage style" drawing on your watercolor paper.

Apply masking fluid to highlights and other areas that need to remain white.

Using your value breakdown as a guide, begin mixing the color(s) for your background wash in cups.

Friday, June 26th

AM

If not already completed yesterday afternoon, begin mixing the color(s) for your background wash in cups, using your value breakdown as a guide.

Begin your painting by pouring a wet-on-wet background wash. Repeat if necessary.

Remove masking fluid when dry/completed.

PM

PowerPoint show of artists who masterfully utilize wet-on-wet washes.

Begin painting still life objects.

Friday, June 27th

AM + PM

Work on painting until final afternoon critiqu

Properties of Watercolor Pigments

Even though watercolor is a transparent medium, not all colors are created equally!

Some pigments are more opaque than others, some stain the paper and others will lift if they're re-wet. Some have a tendency to granulate on your paper.

The more transparent the pigment, the brighter and more luminous the painting will be because the white of the paper is maximized.

Each category of paint flows slightly differently onto the watercolor paper.

The paint dries lighter (sometimes a *lot* lighter) after applying a wash, so you don't always end up with the intensity you're expecting.

Painting an opaque color over a transparent color will yield a different effect than painting a transparent color over an opaque color. If you put down a swash of Cadmium Yellow, which is opaque and paint Windsor Blue, which is transparent over the swash, you'll get a different look than if you paint New Gamboge (transparent) over the Windsor Blue.

High Intensity Opaque Colors

Cadmium Yellow	Very Opaque		May slightly stain
		the paper	
Cadmium Orange	Very Opaque		May slightly stain
		the paper	
Cadmium Red	Very Opaque		May slightly stain
		the paper	
Vermillion	Opaque		May slightly stain
		the paper	
Cerulean Blue	Very Opaque		May slightly stain
		the paper	
Cobalt Blue	Opaque, Slightly Transparent		May slightly stain
		the paper	

None of these colors contain any black pigment.

High Intensity Transparent Colors

New Gamboge	Transparent	May slightly stain the paper
Windsor Red	Slightly Opaque	Will slightly stain the paper
Alizarin Crimson	Transparent	Will stain the paper
Winsor Blue	Transparent	Will stain the paper
Winsor Green	Transparent	Will stain the paper
French Ultramarine	Slightly Opaque	May slightly stain the paper

None of these colors contain any black pigment.

Low Intensity Opaque Colors

Yellow Ochre	Opaque	May slightly stain the paper
Raw Sienna	Opaque	Will stain the paper
Raw Umber	Opaque	May slightly stain the paper
Burnt Sienna	Partially Opaque	May slightly stain the paper
Burnt Umber	Opaque	May slightly stain the paper

These colors contain a slight to high amount of black pigment.

Low Intensity Transparent Colors

Brown Madder	Transparent	Will stain the paper
Indigo	Transparent	Will stain the paper
Payne's Gray	Transparent	Will stain the paper
Permanent Sap Green	Transparent	Will stain the paper

These colors contain a medium amount of black pigment.

Granulating or Sedimentary Pigments

Granulation is the effect given by some pigments such as cerulean blue, French ultramarine, manganese blue, raw sienna and others, when granules of pigment settle into the indentations of the paper, producing a grainy or coarse look.

Granulating colors allow for the creation of textural washes, and show up best on rough papers. Granulation mediums can be added to non-granulating colors to create the effect.

Lightfastness

When you buy a tube of watercolor paint, the label will have a number on it that rates its lightfastness quality- how permanent or transient that color will be over time.

The continuous pressure of light, which can destroy their integrity over time, affects watercolor paints. If the pigment is completely organic, the chances are it will be more likely to fade. Inorganic pigments tend to darken over time. “Permanent” pigments are mostly synthetic. (Not all paints marked permanent really are.)

Avoiding “student grade” paints and purchasing the most expensive colors you can find should help avoid fading issues.

And it’s always a good idea to frame your watercolors with UV Plexiglas.

