

## TRICIA'S GENERAL WATERCOLOR PAINTING TIPS

1. The basic process of painting in watercolor involves mixing paint and water in different amounts and applying it to white paper. These applications of paint are generally called washes.
2. If you want a color to be lighter you can add more water to the paint so that the white of the paper will show through the color and make it appear lighter.
3. Conversely if you want the paint to be darker you must use less water so that the color of the paint will obscure more of the paper.
4. Always mix the paint with the water in the palette before using it, don't take it straight from the paint well or tube to the paper.
5. Mix up a puddle of paint in the palette and remember to blot your brush on the sponge after you swish it in the water to clean it. The brush goes from the water via the sponge to the paint mixture on the palette and then directly on to the paper.
6. Watercolor paint will stay where you put it on dry paper, but on wet paper or next to another wet color, it will tend to bleed into the wet areas.
7. Save the white areas in your images as the white paper, either by painting around them or using a resist.
8. Watercolor dries lighter than the color puddle that you see on the palette, the more water you add to the color, the lighter it will dry. One way to see how the color might appear when it is dry is to drag the brush through the puddle on the palette and observe the trail left behind the brush. This trail color is a good indication of how the color mixture will look in the painting when it is dry.
9. Another way to ensure that your paint is the correct tone after it has dried is to always aim to make it a little darker than you think it should be on the palette.
10. Painting will be easier and colors will look fresher if you always work with moist paints. (Squeeze a good layer of paint, ¼" thick layer at least, into each of the palette wells to start, level it, and allow it to dry uncovered for about a week until it is dry and firm to the touch). Then re-wet each of the paints either with a small spray bottle or sprinkle water on to each well with the brush before you use them. If you are painting every day you can also keep your moist sponge in the covered palette. Top up the colors with fresh tube paint as needed.
11. Do not over mix colors on the palette. They just need to be pulled together and blended. It is not necessary to keep stirring the mix.
12. Mix no more than two colors together on the palette to avoid muddy color mixes. Mix other colors in on the paper.
13. In watercolor we generally paint from light to dark and cover the largest areas of the paper as soon as possible with washes, then the next largest areas, then the smaller areas and finally the details. The first colors that you put on the paper will always appear darker than they really are because your eye is comparing them with the large white area, so you will want to get the larger washes on to the paper as soon as you can so that you can clearly see that you are painting the correct color tones.
14. You can play with the paint on the paper as much as you wish while it is still wet, by moving it around or adding in more colors etc, but as soon as it starts to dry, STEP AWAY FROM THE PAPER and wait until it is completely dry before adding more wet paint.
15. You can go back and make many corrections to your painting after it is dry.