

GENERAL WATERCOLOUR EXPERIMENTS

Work in any colours of your choice

FLAT WASH Move a loaded brush from left to right (if right handed), and from top to bottom of an area, moving down, and across the area, picking up the wet paint edge from the last stroke to create an even flat wash. Reload the brush to keep the concentration even. **Good for first washes, skies, large areas**

Then pre-wet the paper and do a flat wash in the moistened area to compare. Safer for skies and allows time for other effects to be added.

GRADUATED WASH Similar to flat wash, only diluting the concentration of paint as you work down or across the area. Apply a good concentration of colour for a couple of strokes then wet the brush in water and continue by picking up the previous wet paint edge to achieve a dark to light colour gradation, adding water to each stroke. **(gives dark to light transition, good for skies and many other functions done on a smaller scale)**

VARIAGATED WASH Start with one colour, then add a different one moving down the area. When applying the second, simply make sure you pick up the wet paint edge from the first, so there is no perceptible hard line join. **Good for graded sky** such as cobalt and a little grey working down to a tint of burnt sienna. Tilting the paper may help them combine.

MASKING FLUID Applied to the paper first, but can be used on paint if diluted. Apply shapes or pattern, rinsing your brush well (or soap coated), and leave the masking to dry. Then paint over to see resist areas. When the paint is dry, remove masking. **Can be useful for holding back forms like foreground fence posts and wire, grasses, stippled or spattered flowers in fields, tree textures – to build texture or simply to protect them from contamination with the wrong colour.** Try a ruling pen, colour shaper as alternative tool.

GLAZING Build up washes of different colours, one on top of the other, allowing each coat to dry first, to see how the colour changes or develops. Try blue over a green wash for example. **Good for warming and cooling effects, visual recession, and colour correction. Generally second wash stage work.**

WET INTO WET

Wet the paper first, then drop in a colour and try moving the paint around with the brush, leaving some areas white - **good for skies where the white forms clouds, or to retain highlights.**

Try a flat wash of colour then while it is still moist drop in more of the same colour (but more concentrated) in certain areas (**good for first wash stage, for varied concentration of the same colour**) or drop in a different colour, to see how it affects the first (**good for first wash tonal variations, multi coloured petals, skies etc**) **NOTE:** The second colour should be of good concentration, not too weak.

LIFTING OFF PAINT for highlights or to make changes

Lay down a flat wash, and while it is still moist apply a clean slightly wet brush to lift off some of the paint. Blotting and dabbing with a piece of paper towel will lift off even more paint. **Good for first wash stages**

Lay down a flat wash and leave to dry, then try lifting off with a wet brush to compare – the resulting shape should be more precise. Try doing this more specifically with a fine brush moulded with the fingers into a chisel shape to see if the line achieved is more crisp. **Good for foreground textures or structures**

DRY-BRUSH for textures and details, high degree of control.

Use a brush with just a little paint on i.e. just moist, not fully wet with paint, achieved by dabbing off the excess onto a rag/towel. The paint should be reasonably concentrated. Dragging and stippling effects for foreground grasses and distant textures such as tree foliage. Try a fan brush if you have one. You can build up the intensity by going into the darker areas again when the first coat is dry. Rolling a brush on its side over some bumpy paper can give you bark textures.

TOOTHBRUSH SPATTERING

Flicking and spattering paint technique, a wide range of uses. **Stippled pebbles, eggs, sand and shingle, wild flowers in fields, general atmosphere, bad weather!** You need a good supply of paint. Dip the brush on the paint and flick downwards. You can mask off the area you don't want the paint to reach using pieces of 'cut-to-shape' scrap paper.

You can build up this spattered texture with different colours. For close-ups such as large stones, cut a stencil 'window' out of some scrap paper, gently tape it down over your stone with removable scotch tape, and have fun!

NOTE: These effects can be done wet into wet or wet on dry.

NOTE: Spattering with water, or even water drops flicked from your finger tips, wet into wet, can also be useful for creating atmospheric backgrounds, especially useful in flower painting.

SALT

Not to be missed! A major technique with watercolour (also used in silk painting), causing **atmospheric spot- flaring**. Sprinkle some ordinary table salt finely into moist paint. The best effects are with strong earthy colours, and blues and purples. NOTE: Lo-salt doesn't work. Sea salt is OK - less control is possible, but worth a try. Leave the wash to dry, then gently brush away the salt. The salt is not meant to stay stuck to the surface.

You can also try adding salt to your paint mix, then applying. The salt should not be dissolved. Gives a more grainy texture.

GRANULATION FLUID Try dribbling this into a watercolour wash to achieve speckled effects. Works best with strong colours.

SPONGING

Prepare some good volume concentrations for this, as the sponge soaks up the paint. Apply with a dabbing motion, wet into wet or wet on dry (more dramatic). You can work from light to dark tones – **good for foreground tree textures**. You can also sponge with masking fluid, in advance of painting – **good for beach textures, rocks**. You tint over the white textures at the end with a unifying wash.

STIPPLING (related to above)

A dry brush technique, using a stippling brush, or hogs hair flat brush, rotating as you go so as not to duplicate the same shapes. Make sure you overlap your stippled areas to make the effect natural. **Good for shingle, distant trees, hedges, distant flower fields, brickwork, stonework**. (Again, you can use masking fluid here in advance of painting).

PAINT RUNS

You can tilt your paper to let wet into wet washes merge together. You can also blow a blob of paint with a straw, wet on dry, to create interesting shapes evoking grasses, foliage. With a bit of practice, you can build up directionally blown runs of different colours around a main subject.

NOTE: A word about **back-runs** - these are caused by a fresh wash being applied into an almost dry wash, or a weak wash running into a strong wash. Sometimes this effect is sought deliberately for interesting texture, creating granulated dried edges. It is very unpredictable, so be ready for anything to happen.

There are many other effects you can add to this list, have fun.