

Introduction to ACRYLIC painting

THE SET UP

Things you need to begin:

- Acrylic paint
- Various paint brushes
- Palette knife
- At least 2 cups of clean water
- A spray bottle with clean water (to spray your paint on the palette and keep it from drying out)
- A dry rag and paper towels (to wipe of your brushes and palette knife)
- Optional: liquid medium (to extend the paint and add fluidity) and/or gel medium (to thicken the paint and add texture)

GLAZING TECHNIQUE

What is it?

Glazing was used by Master artists with oil paint and can be easily achieved with acrylics. A glaze is a thin layer of transparent color which is applied over another dry layer of paint. Repeating this process and layering glazes of paint will give a luminescent quality to your painting. Glazes allow light to pass through each layer and be reflected off the underlying layer.

How do you do it?

- 1) Mix the paint with water or a 50/50 combination of water and liquid medium with a brush or palette knife. (gloss medium will make the paint appear shiny when dry, matte medium will appear dull, just water will also make it appear dull when dry)
- 2) The paint should have a creamy, fluid consistency
- 3) Apply a thin layer of paint to your canvas or paper. Use even, soft strokes to form a smooth layer. (with this technique you do not want visible brush strokes)
- 4) Apply the next thin layer of paint over the dry layer. Building these transparent layers will create depth and luminosity!

**Always begin with the lightest colors and work up to the darkest so that light can pass through the layers and reflect out.

*Do not add white to your paint to lighten the tone or value—white will increase the intensity of the paint and make it opaque and milky.

*Always wait until each layer is dry before painting the next. If the paint is wet, the colors will blend or become muddy, and the glaze effect is lost.

IMPASTO TECHNIQUE

What is it?

Thick paint, heavily applied to the picture plane (canvas, paper, etc) so that it has a rough, uneven texture. Impasto uses the paint thickly, boldly, and in a direct manner –it is not sloppy or haphazard. The impasto technique gives your artwork a vibrant, energetic and expressive quality. (Think Vincent Van Gogh).

How do you do it?

- 1) Use the paint directly out of the tube and load your brush or palette knife.
- 2) Apply heavy, thick and somewhat short brush strokes. Work the brush or knife in all directions so you can see each brush stroke, creating almost a sculptural effect.
- 3) When using two or more colors, have the colors mixed on your palette in advance and have multiple brushes clean and ready. Switch back and forth applying the 2 colors to create thick, swirling effects. (The colors partially blend in a rough manner, but most of each color is still true and defined)
 - Leave the rough stroke, do not blend the paint on the canvas or the impasto effect is lost
 - You can dilute the paint with a dab of water if you want it to be more fluid
 - You can add gel medium to the paint to make it even thicker and retain more marks of the brush. (even more sculptural effects)
 - Let the paint dry and continue to add more layers of impasto brush strokes for an even heavier, expressive feel.

THE CLEAN UP

- Do not wash acrylics down the sink!! They dry as a plastic and will not wash away.
- You can wipe the paint off your palette and throw the paper towel away, or let the paint partially dry on your palette and PEEL it off and throw away.
- Rinse your brushes with water immediately, never leave acrylic on your brushes. You can use a small drop of soap and gently clean the bristles, rinse, reshape the bristles with your fingers and lay flat to dry