



Tips & Demos

Watercolor and Watermedia painting tips & demonstrations
by **Ellen A. Fountain, N.W.S.**

These tips and demos pages are copyrighted. However, please feel free to print/download the PDF for your personal use. They are not to be duplicated in any form or reproduced in quantity without my permission. If you have questions or need more information, please e-mail me: elf@fountainstudio.com

Textural Effects for Watercolor Painting

Watercolor is wonderfully versatile, and even though this thin, watery medium can't give you the physical textures possible with acrylic and oil done in an impasto style, the appearance of watercolor can be changed quite easily with additives and other materials to give it a more textural look. The samples below demonstrate some of these effects. Some of these techniques work better with staining pigments, or with pigments that granulate (have sedimentary qualities). Experiment with the pigments you are currently using, and then give these texture effects a try in your next painting!



SALT

Sprinkled into a wet (still shiny) wash of burnt sienna. Note how much the salt "spreads" creating large white blobs.



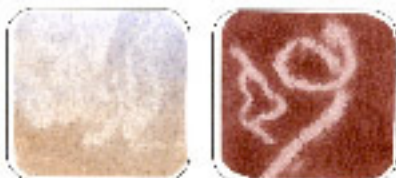
SALT

Sprinkled into a damp wash with a more saturated pigmentation, the salt texture is not as large. Brush off excess when dry.



SALT

In this sample, the wash was barely damp, and the texture from the salt is quite fine. Brush off any remaining salt once the painting is completely dry,



BLOTTING & LIFTING

Crumpled paper towel (left) and twisted facial tissue (right) are used to lift damp color and create texture. This technique can also be used to regain light or white areas in your painting.



ERASING WITH STENCILS

The three pointed shape was cut from acetate, and then an eraser was used to remove color while holding the stencil tightly against the dry painting. You can also use a damp sponge over a stencil to lift color.



SANDING

On a completely dry wash, you can use a light grade of sandpaper to "roughen" the surface and remove color. You should only do this on 140lb. or heavier good watercolor paper, or you may end up with holes!



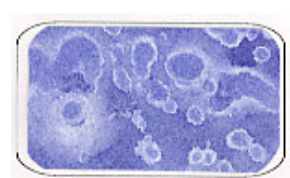
ALCOHOL

Dropped into a damp wash of a single staining pigment. Timing is critical; if the wash is too wet, the alcohol will be diluted too much. If it is too dry, the effect won't work.



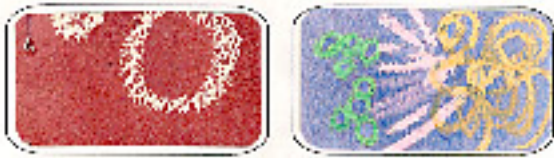
ALCOHOL

Dropped into first wash of gold, then color allowed to dry. Second wash of green applied and alcohol added into this second wash



ALCOHOL

Dropped into a damp wash of a single non-staining pigment. See the first alcohol comment for tips about how damp the wash should be for this effect to work successfully.



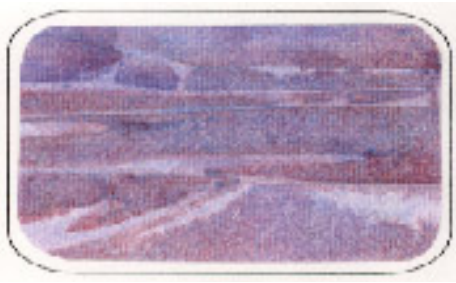
WAX (Paraffin) & CRAYON

Clear wax drawn on white paper or on previously painted and completely dry washes acts as a resist to subsequent washes, and also adds texture as it goes over the rough surface of the watercolor paper.



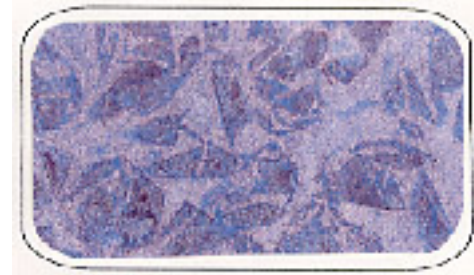
LIQUID FRISKIT (Masking Fluid)

Depending on the brush you use to apply it, the surface of the paper you are using, and when you apply it (on unpainted paper or dry washes of color), liquid friskit can create small details or interesting textures. Remember to remove the dry friskit as soon as possible, because it becomes more difficult to get off the longer it stays on your paper surface.



PLASTIC WRAP, STRETCHED

This is an interesting way to texture land forms, ice or water. Stretch the plastic wrap sideways, forming folds, then lay into a wet wash. Allow to dry. When removed, you'll have a great texture!



PLASTIC WRAP, CRUMPLED

In this sample, the wrap is crumpled and laid into a wet wash, where it is allowed to remain until the wash has dried. When removed, the texture of the crumpled wrap remains.



WAX PAPER, CUT OR TORN INTO SHAPES

Wax paper can provide wonderful textures for rocks, leaves or other natural objects. You can cut or tear it into the shapes you want and lay it into a damp wash. Additional color can be introduced under the edges. Allow to dry and then remove from the painting.



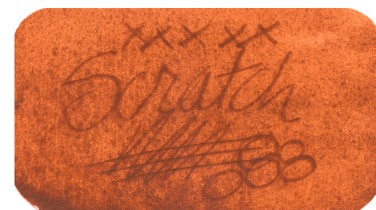
WAX PAPER, CRUMPLED

In this sample, wax paper was just crumpled up, then smoothed out enough to place over a wet wash. Allowed to dry in place, it will leave a nice texture when removed. You can weight it down with a book if you want more of the surface to contact your painting paper.



SCRAPING

Use the angled end of your aquarelle brush, a piece of an old credit card, or even a piece of matboard to scrape paint off the surface of your paper. This needs to be done on a damp, not wet (shiny) wash. If you do it too soon, the paint just runs back into the scraped area.



SCRATCHING

Use the end of your paintbrush, a nail, a paper clip or any other hard object to scratch (make a groove or dent in) your paper while the wash is still quite wet. The pigment will settle in the scratches, drying darker, and giving you interesting textured passages.