

# Mixed Media Watercolor

## Week 2

### Watercolor and Ink



Another mixed media approach to watercolor painting is to use a black (or very dark neutral) background with light and mid-value transparent colors. The strong darks create strong value contrasts and can make your colors “pop”.

This approach also contrasts transparent pigments (your colors) with the opacity of india ink (or with another opaque medium like gouache or acrylic, or you could even try using a permanent black felt tip pen). For our practice piece, we will use india ink.

### To Plan or Not to Plan, That is the Question

You can begin this exercise with a planned image (simplify your drawing so that it has strong, simple shapes, similar to “White Patterns” by Dorothy Watkeys-Barberis (above), or with an unplanned wet-into-wet underpainting like the one I started with in “Sunflower with Pig” (below).

If you want pure whites as part of your design, you may want to mask them first, with either liquid frisket (masking fluid) or with removeable tape (Blue painters tape works well for this).

Using light to mid-value colors, do your underpainting and let it dry completely. Then, using india ink and a synthetic watercolor brush, Paint over areas of the background that are to be dark. In the case of the wet in wet beginning, you may want to sketch in a design on the dry underpainting so that you know where the shapes are that you want to paint around. Begin at the top of the paper and work down and across until you’re finished -- you don’t want to drag your hand through an area of wet ink by accident.

Remember to wash your brush thoroughly when finished, using soap, to get out all the ink. If it dries in your brush it’s nearly impossible to remove.



*“Sunflower with Pig” © Ellen Fountain*

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There are other ways to combine watercolor and permanent, waterproof ink. A very traditional method is the line and wash approach brought into prominence by the English watercolor-ists in the late 1800's—early 1900's.

This approach requires drawing skills, as the bulk of the painting is done in ink, building the value structure through drawing, crosshatching or stippling.

When this ink drawing is finished and completely dry, thin veils of color are applied to it wet-in-wet, so that the color softly blends and “escapes” the forms.

There are many variations of this basic “colored drawing”. One of my favorites is to use a permanent, waterproof extra fine-point felt tip pen (Sanford “Sharpie” or Faber-Castell PITT artist pens are two of my favorite brands) to do a drawing but in a much simpler way (more like contour drawing), and then use my watercolor to fill in the remainder of the shapes and forms in a more controlled way (on dry paper). These felt tip pens come in a variety of colors besides basic black. I particularly like the sepia and sanguine colors made by Faber-Castell, as they give a softer effect. An example is the small painting below, part of a half dozen painted during a trip to Maui, Hawaii in a small (approximately 5x7”) Arches watercolor pad.

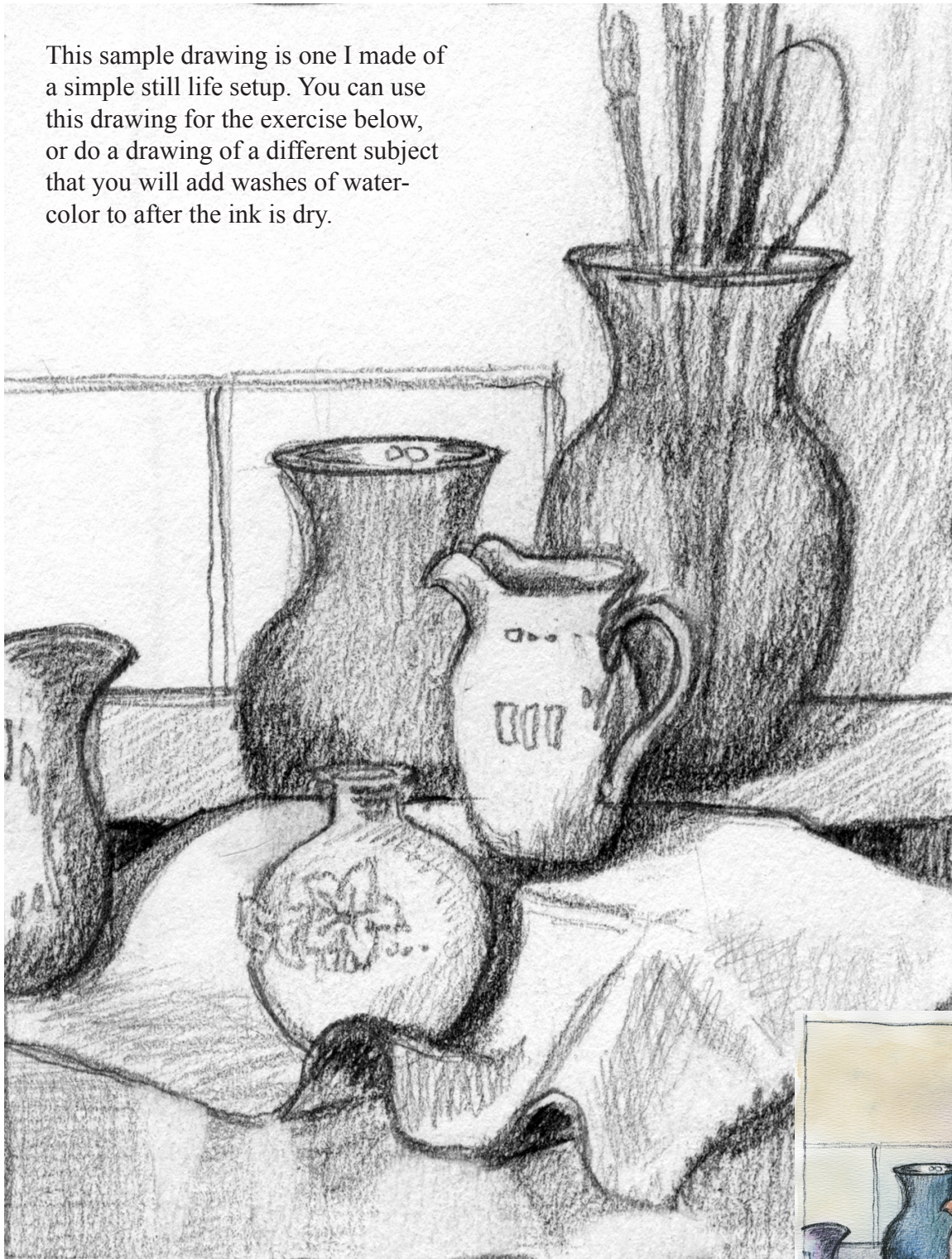


*Atop Haleakala, Maui  
watercolor and ink  
© Ellen Fountain*



## Mixed Media Watercolor

This sample drawing is one I made of a simple still life setup. You can use this drawing for the exercise below, or do a drawing of a different subject that you will add washes of watercolor to after the ink is dry.



Do an ink drawing on watercolor paper with waterproof india ink or a permanent black extra fine Sharpie marker. Do any needed shading to establish form. Then use watercolor washes to “tint” your ink drawing. You can work wet-into-wet, or wet on dry for harder edges.

