

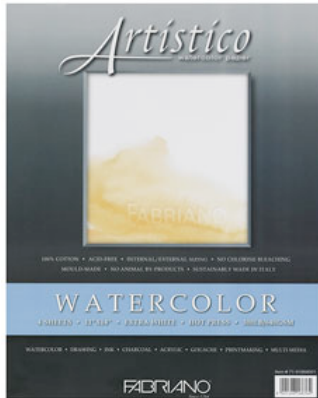


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## MINDY LIGHTHIPE'S BOLD WATERCOLOR TECHNIQUE

### Let's Start with Supplies!

**Watercolor Paper-** Fabriano Artistico 300lb Soft Press. It is an extra thick, absorbent, high quality paper. It is available at most online art stores. It comes in Soft, Hot & Cold Press surfaces, in sheets 22" x 30", 16" x 20", & 11" x 14".



When purchasing it on the Internet most companies require a 10 sheet minimum for the large sheets. The smaller sheets come in 2 & 4 sheet packs. I do not recommend watercolor paper that is less than

300 lb as it buckles with this technique. Fabriano is the only company that produces a soft pressed paper. This allows a fair amount of detail and is easy to work with, especially for beginners. I like this texture of paper because it is in between the smooth compressed surface of the hot press and the bumpy

surface of the cold press paper. All 3 surfaces are acceptable for this technique, so you may want to experiment.

**Watercolor Paints-** I primarily use Daniel Smith watercolors which can only be purchased online at:

<http://www.DanielSmith.com>

They offer 250+ shades. I recommend the following colors;

1. Ultramarine blue
2. Cerulean blue.
3. Permanent yellow deep
4. Hansa yellow light
5. Permanent red
6. Quinacridone rose
7. Yellow ochre
8. Burnt sienna
9. Pthalo blue

Other high quality watercolor paints are from manufacturers: Winsor Newton, M. Graham, da Vinci, Holbein, and Cheap Joe's Journey watercolors. I **do not recommend** Cotman or Grumbacher. These watercolors are "student grade", and do not contain high-quality pigments. They are filled with binders. Limit your paints to 6-15 colors. This keeps down expenses and helps you understand color theory better.

**Watercolor Brushes** – I use synthetic Loew Cornell watercolor brushes. I like them because they are much stiffer and easier to control than expensive, natural bristle brushes. I recommend the following:

**Ultra Round– #7020:** Size 10 or 12.



**Chisel Brush- #3450:** Size 4 or 6. This brush is used to lift fine lines and other small details.



**Rake brush– #3120:** Size 1/4" This brush is used to create fur and texture in watercolor & gouache paintings.



**Spotter brush–#7650:** Size 0 and 3/0. I use the spotter brush for fine detail.



I purchase my Loew Cornell brushes at :  
<http://www.hofcraft.com>

**The most important thing on this list is the watercolor paper.** Beginners often purchase inexpensive paper to save money and because they feel they are not good enough to paint on the “good stuff”. I would rather see artists spend money on good quality paper than expensive brushes or paints.

**Other Supplies-** There are more supplies you can purchase. Here is a brief list:

1. Paper Towels
2. Containers for water
3. Watercolor Palette- Something with multiple wells to put paint in.
4. Spray bottle for misting and rehydrating watercolors
5. Masonite or portable drawing board
6. Repositionable Artist Tape
7. Eye Dropper
8. Tracing Paper or Tracing Vellum

**Let's Get Started!**

## **Drawing & Transferring**

1. Draw or sketch the elements of your composition on tracing paper.
2. Refine the drawing and composition making sure that there are no drawing errors.
3. Transfer the drawing onto watercolor paper. There are various methods of transferring the drawing but note: A light box will not work with 300 lb paper.
4. Refine the drawing on with a 2H pencil and add any small details. Make sure the drawing has precise clean lines. Minimize erasing on watercolor paper as it tends to roughen the surface and cause damage to the paper.
5. Use a kneaded eraser to lift/blot the tone of the pencil so the line is visible but not too dark.

## Mixing Color

**Before painting, it is important to mix the colors FIRST!**

1. Start by squeezing out a generous amount of paint into each compartment or well of your palette.
2. Add a few drops of water to each color. The paint should be the consistency of heavy cream. If 2 or more colors are to be mixed together to create a new color, start by mixing in a separate well. Start with the lightest color first and then gradually add the darker colors to the mix.
3. Test a small swatch of paint on a scrap piece of watercolor paper and let dry.
4. If you are starting with a palette that already has a lot of paint in it, use a water bottle and spray the palette to rehydrate the paints.

## Applying Water

1. Select a large round watercolor brush. Use the biggest one possible and still stay within the lines of the drawing.
2. Load the brush up with clean water. Begin to deposit water in the center of the area to be painted.
3. When there is a puddle of water in the center begin to distribute the water outward and evenly towards the edge of the area.
4. It is important for the entire area to have the same moisture content throughout the entire surface area. It should not be damp on the left and wetter on the right. It should be evenly moist in the entire area.
5. Tilt the paper to the side to see if there is too much water. It will puddle toward the tipped edge. The paper should have a shimmer over the surface.

## The 1st Layer of Paint

This watercolor technique works differently than other methods because the paint is applied in a thick layer, working from dark to light.

1. Establish where the darkest parts of the painting are, and drop a heavy amount of paint in this area. Avoid areas where you want to have highlights. The water acts as a vehicle for the paint. It travels across the watery surface. When done properly the result is a graduated wash from dark to light.
2. Let the paint settle into the paper. If the paint is moved around too early, it creates a muddy over worked effect.
3. When the surface of the paper changes from a shimmer to a semi-matte appearance, "sculpt" the area. Paint can be added, moved, pushed or removed at this stage. The moisture level in the brush should always be the same as the paper. If the brush is wetter, a bloom will occur. A bloom is where pigment gathers at the perimeter of the wetter area, leaving a lighter area in the middle. Remove unwanted color with a paper towel to avoid adding paint to other places as you move the paint around.
4. Let the paint dry. Do not over work! It is easy fuss at this point. **Don't touch it! Let it dry.** Go to another section of the painting and repeat the same process.

## **The 2nd Layer of Paint**

1. Evaluate the dry area. Is it too light? Too dark? The wrong color? This is the time to correct and make adjustments.
2. Mix or remix paint to correct the painting.
3. Apply water over the entire section (make sure the paper is dry) in the same manner as before. Do not use as much water as the first layer. Do not press heavily on the surface. Avoid lifting the existing color or disturbing it.
4. Apply color in the area that needs the correction. Sculpt or move the paint as needed.
5. Let the area dry and move to another section.

## **Applying Details & Cleaning up the Edges**

1. For edges that are wobbly, I use the chisel brush to gently remove or clarify the edge. It is important to keep the fibers in brush aligned. I use the brush sideways and slightly moist. Clean brush whenever paint is removed so paint doesn't travel to an unwanted area.
2. Using a small spotter brush apply details using a dry brush technique. The paper is dry and the paint is moist enough to flow paint onto the surface without clumping or being too wet. Test the consistency on a scrap piece of paper.

## **Apply a Glaze**

Glazing is a term used for applying a very thin, transparent wash of watercolor over an existing layer or layers of dry watercolor. The watercolor layers underneath shine through the glaze when applied properly.

1. Use a small cup, baby food jar or similar and place a small amount of transparent watercolor in the bottom. Begin adding water. The paint should be the consistency of tea. You should be able to see through it.
2. Using a large round brush over a DRY surface, gently and quickly apply the glaze mixture over the area in one stroke if possible. The more the color is moved it around the more it may lift the dry layer up. The glaze should sit on top of the surface.
3. Let it dry. Evaluate and reapply if necessary.

These are the basic steps for creating a bold watercolor. Remember to use LOTS of Paint!

**Watch a video of this process on my website at:**

<http://www.botanicalartpainting.com/videos-botanical-art/>

