

painting a watercolor landscape with wet-on-wet technique

WITH HELEN DEALTRY

MATERIALS:

- 5 watercolor inks—Indian inks are used for this demonstration, but you can use permanent or water-based inks
 - blue
 - yellow
 - red
 - black
 - white
- 1 small round brush—approx. size 8
- 1 sponge brush—size 1"
- 1 pad of watercolor paper
- 1-2 jars for water
- 1-3 sheets of paper towel
- 1 palette (or a plate)
- 1 drawing board
- 1 roll of masking tape
- 1 pad of scratch paper

PREP YOUR SPACE

1. Tape your paper to the drawing board using masking tape. Run tape all around the paper and smooth down tape leaving no gaps or air bubbles.
2. Arrange your landscape inspiration in front of you. Use imagery from a book, a photo from your phone, or even work from a memory.
3. Set up your palette, brush, water jars, and paper towel within your dominant hand's reach. Add in a pea-sized blob of each ink color onto your palette. Leave a little space between them so you can mix more colors in the spaces. Take a little of each of your colors and add to a new place on your palette. Using a pipette or your brush, add some water to dilute it into a lighter wash color.

PAINT YOUR SKY

4. Wet your sponge brush and lay down an area of water towards the top of your paper, covering about one-third of the paper.
5. Mix blue ink with water to create a "sky" color. Dip your sponge brush into the color and add to the watery area you laid down. Dab off some of the color while it is still wet by scrunching up a paper towel and dabbing it on the blue area. Pulling off color will reveal lighter areas for your clouds. Alternatively, add in white ink on top of the blue for clouds.

PAINT YOUR HORIZON

6. Mix blue with a little red and a tiny bit of black to make a soft gray. Add this color on top of the sky area at the horizon line to make hills/mountains in the distance.
7. Dip your round brush into black ink and dab onto the lower portion on top of the mountains as indications of trees in the distance. Mix yellow and blue to create green and add green trees. Mix red and white to make a pink color and add pink blossom trees. Allow colors to merge and blur.
8. Dip your brush into black and add a thin horizontal line just under your wet section. Paint little dashes as an indication of tree trunks or a fenceline. Feel free to add in buildings or anything else you'd like into your landscape painting. Allow what you've done to dry.

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PAINT YOUR FOREGROUND

- 9. Using your sponge brush again, lay down an area of water for the lower two-thirds of the paper.
- 10. Paint a soft green or various green tones to the wet layer using your sponge brush.
- 11. Add some details into the foreground. Add some yellow into your green and paint some grassy, gestural marks to the bottom of your landscape. Continue to add new colors and marks that hint to flowers and plants. These really can just be tiny dots of color. Every mark you lay down will all react differently depending on how wet or dry your paper still is.

FINISH YOUR PIECE

- 12. Lean into letting your paint and marks move and merge on your wet paper—that’s where the magic happens! Wait for this layer to dry and add in some cleaner marks on top if you feel it needs it, or leave it as a soft and dreamy looking image.