

THE NEW ACRYLICS

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I first dipped a brush into acrylic paint in 1967, and was not thrilled. Both the paints and I have changed for the better, and now we're inseparable. This course will be an introduction to a fascinating, versatile, enduring, and non-toxic fine art medium. Jan van Eyck would be beside himself with joy and amazement!

No special drawing or painting skills will be needed, and all materials will be supplied.

Session 1 Painting slowly: Shmoo I "Acrylics dry too fast!" We've all heard that canard. Fast drying is relative, and today's tube paints, by and large, won't harden on your brush before you can hit the canvas (We're not in 1967 anymore). For a thorough explanation of factors that control drying time, see p. 82 in your textbook. In this session we will be using relatively slow-drying paints, Golden's Open line. Using Golden Open acrylics, practice making smooth blends from dark to light while getting a feel for the paint, which is a bit softer-bodied than regular tube acrylics. We will also take advantage of the fact that Water Is The Enemy, except when you make a boo-boo. Lift out sections of paint with a damp sponge. Get ready to amaze your oil-painting friends

Gessoed canvas panel The canvas panels we will be using come with one coat of cheap gesso, and often have uncoated spots. The Open acrylics perform best on a good, solid and even, ground, so I have given these panels an additional coat of Liquitex gesso.

Creative Mark Powercryl flat brush I especially like this brand, which is carried by Jerry's. They are often on sale: sign up for Jerry's mailing list, or come to the Art of the Carolinas trade show for the best deals.

Golden Open paints and medium This line of paint is formulated to allow plenty of open time for blending, a quality that oil paints deliver. Drying time is not something we have covered in depth, although you will have experienced many variations in the course of our exercises. For a better explanation, please consult the textbook, or go to <http://justpaint.org/archive/jp27article4.php>

Make-up sponge A handy tool for blending. Some find it easier to use than a brush. I suggest getting comfortable with both.

I have used the term "isolation coat" incorrectly. What we want to do is to take every opportunity to add transparent/translucent layers; this builds oil-like luminosity. The correct term is "brush on more transparent medium whenever possible".

We will alter and enrich the base colors with glazes (any transparent color in any slow-drying medium, such as Open Medium, Open Gel, or Acrylic Glazing Medium). We may use alizarin crimson, ultramarine blue, sap green, qna gold, or others.

For maximum richness, I would add another layer of transparent medium, then more glazes, medium, glazes, ending with medium. The painting should be varnished when fully cured—information here: <http://justpaint.org/archive/jp2article1.php>

Painting quickly: Landscape with Tree and Beast Using regular acrylics, lay in a sky and simple landscape. Practice scumbling to create clouds and a tree. Apply an isolation coat. On the pear painting, apply an isolation coat, and practice altering hues with glazes. Materials: Heavy body and Fluid acrylics, Soft Gel Gloss, Acrylic glazing liquid, Open medium

The landscape with tree and beast uses regular (Heavy Body, tube colors, Matisse Structure, etc.) paints. We are using opaque colors because we want to focus on techniques other than dealing with brush strokes in the background. Upon this background, we will scumble (apply an opaque color with a dry brush) clouds. Using a semitransparent color (sap green hue), we will paint a simple tree, then mix that color with some red to give a brown for the tree trunk and beast. The tree and beast depend upon controlled brush strokes. Be not dismayed: controlling your brush strokes takes lots of practice. We will further enrich the landscape with glazes: ultramarine blue for the highest sky, sap green and quinacridone nickel azo gold for the ground, and a mixed violet for shadows.

Painting in the dark: Pouring Create a poured acrylic painting. *Liquitex Pouring Medium, or Golden GAC 500, tinted with fluid acrylics or airbrush colors, acrylic inks, or Golden High Flow colors. Lots of inspiration on YouTube, and some links on our web site to get you started.*

Lift a printed image with Soft Gel Gloss. *This technique can be used with any printed or photocopied image. There are alternate ways to do this: again, YouTube will help. Glue the image down with Soft Gel Gloss. We will also use SGG as a glue in the mixed media piece. Enrich and modify your poured painting with colored glazes.*

Painting loosely: Shmoo II Create an impasto painting using a palette knife (another pear). Heavy Body Acrylics. Again, practice is the key. There are all sorts of shapes and sizes of palette knives, so experiment to find your favorites.

You can alter the texture and transparency by adding Heavy Body or Extra Heavy Body gels to your colors, or by adding any of the Molding Pastes (although they have the effect of tinting the colors). To reduce the weight of the painting, use Light Molding Paste, which contains glass microbubbles instead of marble dust.

Begin a mixed-media collage: A Difficult Adolescence *Apply a base layer of Molding Paste tinted with fluid Yellow Ochre, with a palette knife, add some texture. Let dry. Add more texture with stencils and more Molding Paste, Liquitex Glass Bead Gel, rice paper/leaf skeleton, Heavy Body Gel tinted with interference color Crayolas or watercolor pencils, glitter, etc. Let dry. Apply a wash (fluid paint thinned with water), move it around, blot, etc, let dry. Develop and unify the surface with glazes and dry-brushed Iridescent Gold.*

Begin abstract forest drip/texture painting. *The background is Iridescent Gold. Glop on dirty violet tube paint, and begin working into that with more and more water. Tip up and let run, mist on more*

water, until you are satisfied. This layer will represent background trees. Let dry. Apply Crackle Paste to represent leaves of foreground trees. The thicker the paste, the larger the cracked texture. I wouldn't go thicker than a quarter on this piece. Apply Absorbent Ground for the ground plane, and add texture by dropping it on the carpet. Squeeze AG to represent foreground tree trunks. Let dry. Drip watery colors onto the leaf and ground areas, and along the trunks. Adjust background trees with dirty violet if necessary. Let dry. You may want to intensify the colors, as they will soak in and dry lighter, like watercolor. Finish the CP and AG with a generous coat of Matte Medium to prevent surface marring (in an ideal world). YouTube videos by Chris Cozen will give you many more ideas on mixed media surfaces.

I apologize for having to squeeze in more than two pieces per session, and hope this handout will help clarify what we have done, and with what products. Don't neglect the resources on our web site. Please email or call me with any questions.