

HT306

WATERCOLOR

Walter Foster

HOW TO  
DRAW &  
PAINT

# Realistic Painting

*Learn to paint step by step*



Making stencils ■ Using an airbrush  
Replicating textures ■ Creating realism

BY DANIEL K. TENNANT



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Digital edition: 978-1-6105-9871-2  
Softcover edition: 978-1-6005-8124-3



# Realistic Painting

There is a deep fascination with artwork that looks true to life. The aspiring painter often wonders how other artists are able to create works that are so persuasive. This book will show you step by step how these lifelike effects are achieved. Although other mediums can be used to achieve similar effects, I prefer gouache, or opaque watercolor. Gouache allows you to apply light colors over a darker underpainting—a method not possible with some mediums such as transparent watercolors. I also will show you how to work from photographs and use an airbrush to create amazingly detailed paintings. With practice, you will be able to build on your newly acquired skills and develop your own techniques for creating images with striking realism. —Daniel K. Tennant

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# MATERIALS AND TOOLS

*For optimum results,* always buy the best materials and tools you can afford. Inferior materials will make the project more difficult, which can be discouraging, and higher-quality materials will last longer.



**GATHERING SUPPLIES** Before painting, make sure you have all your basic supplies. Keep a bucket of water and a roll of paper towels on hand to rinse and dry your brushes between colors.

## GOUACHE

Gouache is opaque watercolor (for more information, see page 6). For the best results, use high-quality, professional-grade paints, and select only those colors that are considered permanent. (Some pigments are fugitive, meaning that they fade when exposed to sunlight.) I recommend tubes over cakes because they are brighter, easier to mix large quantities of color, and have the best selection of colors.

## BUCKET OF WATER

To ensure bright colors, use a bucket of water to rinse your brushes between colors. I recommend a gallon-sized bucket or can.

## PENCILS

An HB pencil is good for preliminary drawings. HB lead is soft enough to leave a solid drawing, and gouache is not repelled when applied over it.

## ERASERS

Standard rubber or kneaded erasers are good for cleaning up your drawings. The side of a kneaded eraser can be used for erasing large areas, and the eraser can be shaped to a point for erasing small areas.

## CHECKING YOUR COLOR PALETTE

For the lessons in this book, you will need the colors listed below.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> alizarin crimson | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian yellow          | <input type="checkbox"/> ultramarine blue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> burnt sienna     | <input type="checkbox"/> watercolor             | <input type="checkbox"/> violet           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> burnt umber      | <input type="checkbox"/> ivory black            | <input type="checkbox"/> viridian green   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cadmium red      | <input type="checkbox"/> ivory black watercolor | <input type="checkbox"/> yellow ochre     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cadmium yellow   | <input type="checkbox"/> Naples yellow          | <input type="checkbox"/> zinc white       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cerulean blue    | <input type="checkbox"/> permanent white        | (Use zinc white for                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese orange   | <input type="checkbox"/> sap green              | mixing. Permanent                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cobalt blue      | <input type="checkbox"/> sap green watercolor   | white may cause                           |
|   |   | other colors to fade.)                    |

## ILLUSTRATION BOARD

A hot-pressed (smooth) surface is recommended over a textured surface. It allows you to create your own textures, and it also provides for the greatest amount of detail. The heavier the ply of the board, the better. (Four-ply is recommended.) Another option is museum board, which comes in an eight-ply weight. (Also see page 3.)

## BRUSHES

I recommend only using red sable/synthetic hair watercolor brushes and a large flat watercolor brush for large areas. One of each standard size—00, 0, 1, 2, 4, and 6—should be sufficient. (I most often use a #2 brush.) A long-haired rigger brush is good for making thin lines. The large flat watercolor brush is excellent for laying in backgrounds quickly and smoothly and for covering large areas.



**BUYING BRUSHES** Good brushes are expensive, but if you wash them thoroughly after each painting session, they should last a long while. Rinse the brushes in cool or lukewarm (never hot) water, and lather them lightly with mild soap. Rinse them again, and then shape the hairs so that they dry with a sharp point.



**SELECTING A PALETTE** Whichever palette you choose should have enough wells to hold all your paint colors and a spacious flat area for mixing. Always place your colors in the same order on your palette to avoid wasting time searching for your desired color while painting.

## PALETTES

There are many types of palettes available. My favorite is a china slant tile, which is made from baked ceramic and has 10 paint wells. It is portable, easy to clean, and has plenty of room for color mixing. A damp sponge laid over the entire tile will keep the paint wet for at least 24 hours. On extremely hot days, the sponge should be saturated with water. Other palette options include an enamel butcher's tray or a piece of plate glass or Plexiglas with toned paper placed underneath to help gauge colors.

Because gouache dries quickly, squeeze out only those colors that you will need in the next hour or so. (You can also drip some water from an eyedropper over the paints to keep them moist.) I keep white and black at opposite ends of the palette so they don't get mixed into the colors. I often mix up tints and shades of colors as well. For example, I might have light blue, blue, dark blue, black, and white on the palette when painting grapes. The fewer colors mixed, the brighter the paint—and the painting—will remain.



**THINNERS** You can thin gouache with water and acrylic medium for a more waterproof paint, improving the flow of the colors. Adding gum arabic to water slows the drying time of gouache, maintains the darks, and adds luminosity to dried colors.

### THINNERS

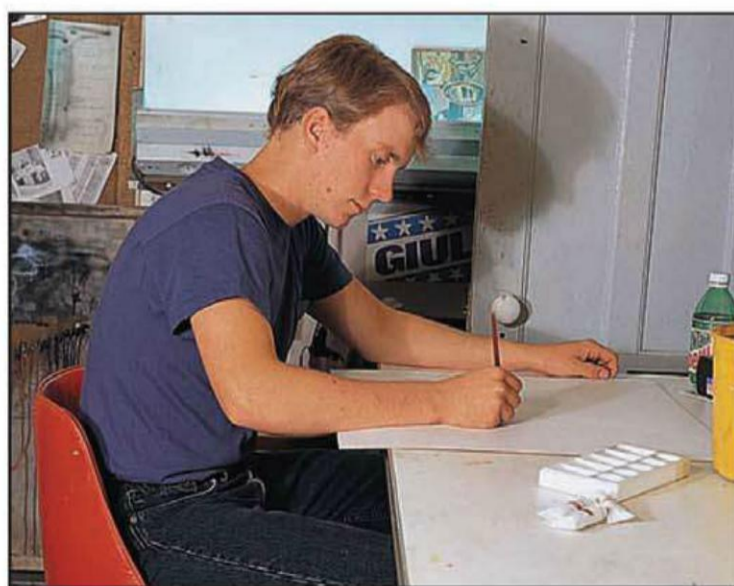
The only dilutant needed for gouache is water. Tap water is fine if it is free from chemicals or other additives. Some artists prefer to use distilled water. If desired, add one drop of ox gall to every two ounces of water. Ox gall is a pale, odorless wetting agent that slows the drying time, allowing for softer blending. With ox gall, the paint flows more evenly and does not puddle.

### WORK SURFACE

When painting, you must have a secure platform for the painting surface. You can paint on an easel or table, but I use a vertical standing easel because it slants slightly forward at the top, so paint does not drip onto the painting. It also allows me to step away from the painting and view it from a distance or view the painting reflected in a mirror, which gives me information I could not see otherwise. An easel prevents distortion due to the foreshortening that occurs when drawing on a table.



**USING A MAULSTICK** My maulstick attaches to a nail (a screw eye is on the end) at the top of the easel so I can swing it to any position. You can also wrap the tip in a soft cloth so it can be placed on the painting when you are working on a larger surface.



**TABLE** A table is easier on your arms because it allows you to rest them on the painting. Keep a sheet of tracing paper under your painting arm so oils from your skin don't damage the painting.

### MAULSTICK

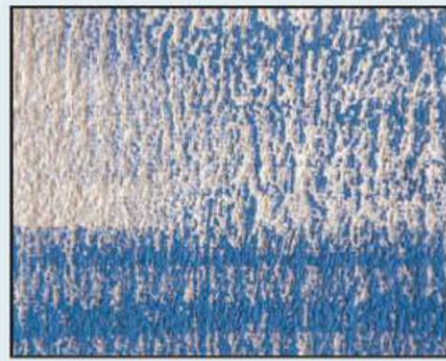
A maulstick is a long, lightweight wood or aluminum dowel used by painters as a rest for the hand while working. The maulstick steadies the painting hand and keeps it away from the painting surface. It can also be used as a guide for painting straight lines.

## PAINTING SURFACES

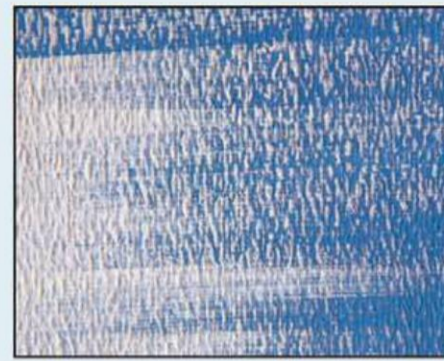
There are many surfaces from which to choose when painting with gouache, depending on the effect you want to achieve. An important point to remember is that gouache must be applied to a sturdy support. Paper that is too thin and flimsy will cause the paint to crack.

Gouache can be painted on gesso panel if traditional gesso is used. (I suggest staying away from acrylic gesso.) Illustration boards, museum mounting boards, and heavy drawing or watercolor papers (140-pound or heavier) are highly recommended. The most popular surface is hot-pressed, which is smooth. You can also buy cold-pressed (light tooth) or rough (heavy tooth) surfaces. Hot-pressed surfaces let you create your own textures, whereas textured surfaces already dictate to some degree the look of your painting. For highly realistic paintings, a hot-pressed surface is superior.

Gouache has strong covering ability. By painting on toned surfaces, some artists let small areas of the toned support show through to create an overall color harmony. Toulouse-Lautrec often used this effect with his beautiful gouache paintings of Parisian life in the late 1800s.



**ROUGH** Rough watercolor paper tends to exaggerate airbrush spray.



**COLD-PRESSED** Cold-pressed watercolor paper has less texture and allows for drybrush techniques.



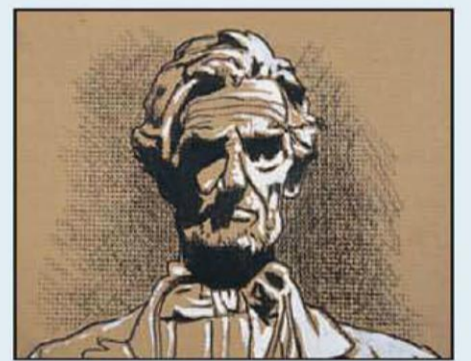
**HOT-PRESSED** Hot-pressed watercolor paper allows for the greatest detail.



**KID-FINISH BOARD** A kid-finish illustration board offers smoothness with a slight tooth. It allows for both dry-brush techniques and excellent detail.



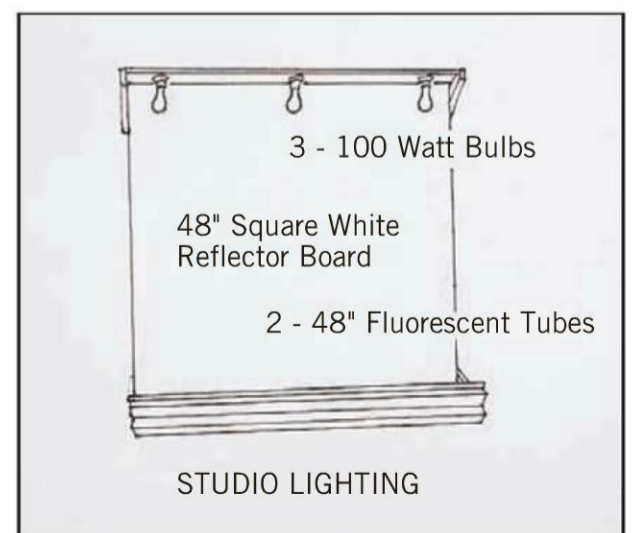
**SMOOTH BOARD** A smooth (hot-pressed) illustration board is the best surface for achieving precise detail. The plate-finish surface feels like an eggshell.



**TONED BOARD** Toned illustration board can be an integral part of the painting. It also works well with charcoal highlighted with white gouache.

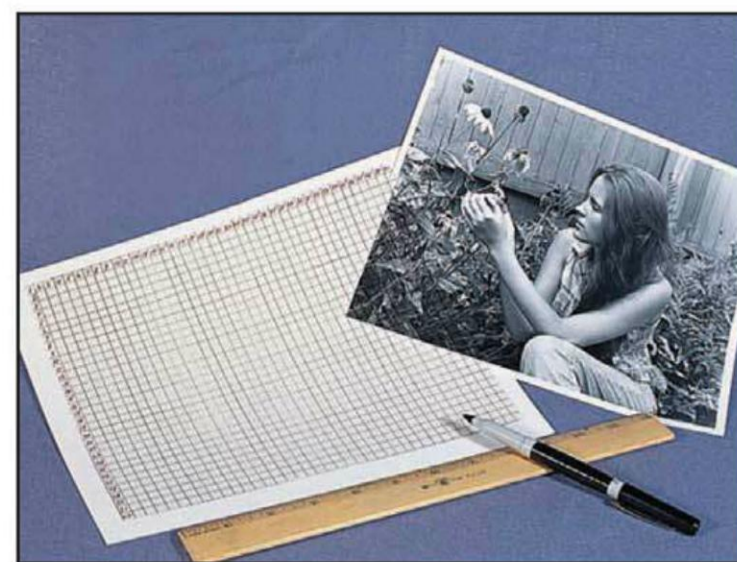
## LIGHTING

The best light is that which simulates daylight. There are many color-balanced lights that will do this. Because I am left handed, I have a row of three bulbs and a row of fluorescent tubes placed behind my right shoulder so my hand doesn't create a shadow when I paint. The bulbs are attached to a white reflector board to create soft, indirect lighting.

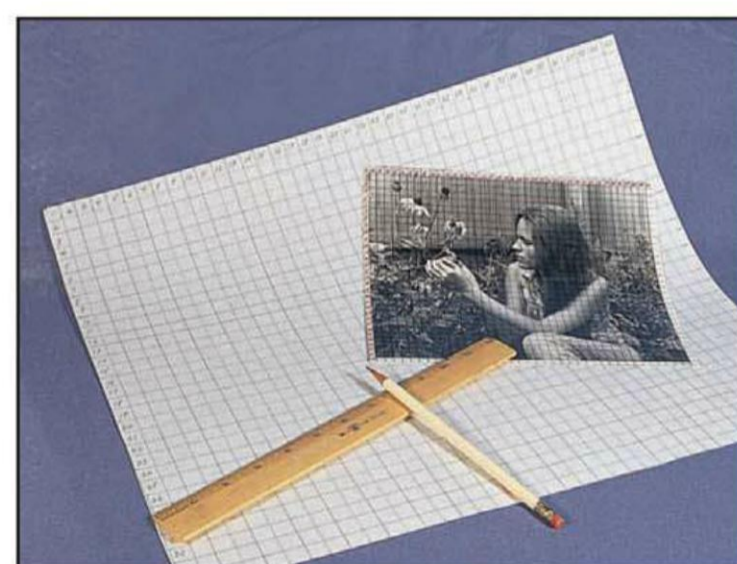


# CREATING THE DRAWING

*Painting is much easier* when you have done the proper groundwork. I never start a piece until I am absolutely sure of what I intend to do with each square inch of the painting surface. I recommend that you begin with a complete drawing of your subject. Try to get as much information in the pencil drawing as possible, and then transfer the drawing to the painting surface. Important: Be sure to keep your final drawing until the painting is complete.



**1** Place a piece of acetate over the photograph (or a photocopy), and then use a ruler and a fine-tipped marker to draw a 1/2" grid over the photograph.



**2** Use an HB pencil to lightly draw a 1" grid on the drawing paper. It should have the same number of squares as the grid on the original. The squares can be the same size or reduced or enlarged to the desired size.



**3** Lightly draw the image from each square of the original in the squares on the paper. If desired, number the columns and rows of both grids. The numbers make it easier to draw in the corresponding squares.

## TRANSFERRING THE DRAWING

After the drawing is completed on drawing paper, you can transfer it to the painting support. An easy way to do this is with tracing paper.



**STEP ONE** Place the tracing paper over the drawing. Either hold the paper in place or tape it to the drawing board. Carefully trace the entire drawing with an HB pencil. Note: The lead of an HB pencil is soft, so it is important to keep your hand from smudging the drawing.



**STEP TWO** Turn the tracing paper over and trace over the lines again. (Note: A light table makes tracing much easier. If you don't have one, you can tape the drawing to a window.) Now you should have a pencil drawing on both sides of the tracing paper. Then turn the tracing paper over and tape it to your painting support (they should be the same size).



**STEP THREE** Retrace the entire drawing with a colored pencil to transfer the graphite on the back of the paper to the painting surface. The colored pencil enables you to see which lines you have already traced over. If you are interrupted, you'll be able to see where you stopped.



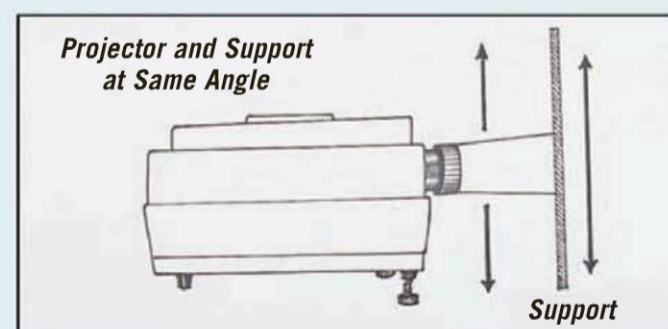
**PENCIL DRAWING** I always work out the drawing on drawing paper first, because erasures can damage the painting surface.

### THE GRID SYSTEM

The grid system is also effective for transferring drawings or photographs to a painting surface. Artists throughout history have used the grid system to accurately duplicate an image in a painting. This system can also be used to enlarge or reduce the image. For example, if you have a photograph that you would like to duplicate, but want to paint it twice as large, you can use the grid system to draw the subject at 200 percent.

## PROJECTION

Another way to transfer an image is to project it onto the painting surface and then lightly trace over it with an HB pencil. There are three different devices that can be used for projection: (1) the opaque projector, which can project an opaque image, such as a photograph or drawing; (2) the overhead transparency projector, which works well with black, white, or inked drawings transferred to acetate on a copy machine; and (3) the slide projector.



**PROJECTOR ANGLE** Ensure that the angle of the projector is parallel to the angle of the support to avoid distorting the image. The projected image's edges should be parallel to the support's edges.

# HANDLING DARKS AND LIGHTS

*One of the advantages* of gouache is its unique covering power—but the paint needs to be controlled carefully so that you don't lose the drawing beneath it. There are a number of effective ways to do this.

## DRAWING DARK OVER LIGHT

One way to keep a drawing from being lost when painted over with gouache is to first paint the background and then use the tracing paper method (see page 4) to transfer the drawing onto the completed background.

For example, if you are painting a farm scene, you could paint the sky and then redraw the buildings over the sky you've painted. You could also paint around the buildings. (To paint around a tree, however, is impractical.) Another approach is to ink over the drawing and paint over it with light washes. This way, you can still see the drawing through the paint. Thinned acrylics can also be used to define the drawing. Generally, I paint around things, but if I cover the drawing, I redefine it by using the tracing paper method.



**STEP ONE** In this farm scene, I paint the sky and ground with ivory black gouache and zinc white gouache mixed together in various tints. The snow is pure white zinc gouache painted over a slightly moist foreground.



**STEP TWO** Then I use the tracing paper method (see page 4) to transfer the building and trees from my pencil drawing onto the completed background.

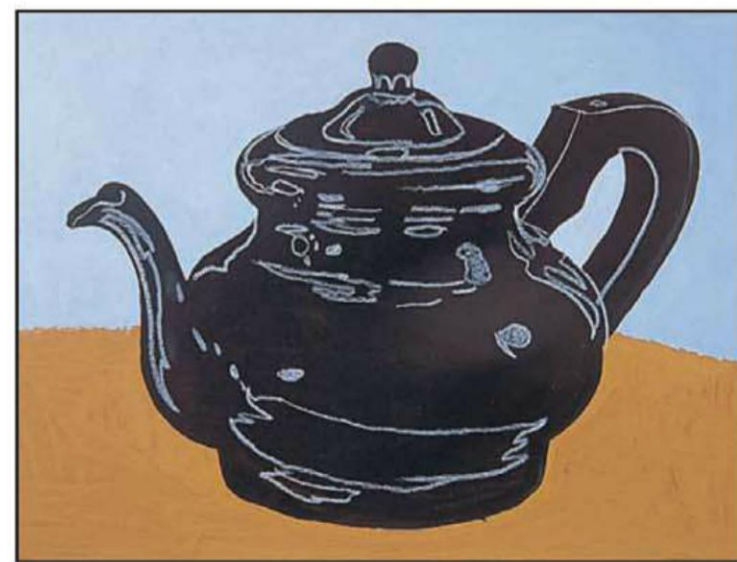
## DRAWING LIGHT OVER DARK

Gouache is great for working from dark to light colors. For example, when painting silver objects, I paint them pure black, then dark gray, light gray, lightest gray, and finally, pure white. To those who have never used gouache, it may seem strange to paint in this order, but this is the easiest and most effective way to use gouache.

When painting an object completely black, you'll lose the drawing underneath, but this is not a problem. You can use the tracing paper method to retrace the drawing; however, you will coat the back of the drawing with light-colored chalk or pastel or white charcoal. The lighter color will transfer onto the dark gouache underpainting, restoring the original drawing in full detail. (Note the importance of keeping the final drawing until the painting is finished.)



**STEP ONE** First I block in the background and table with a cobalt blue gouache and zinc white gouache mixture. For the table I use a mixture of yellow ochre, burnt sienna, and zinc white gouache. Then I paint the teapot with a solid layer of ivory black.

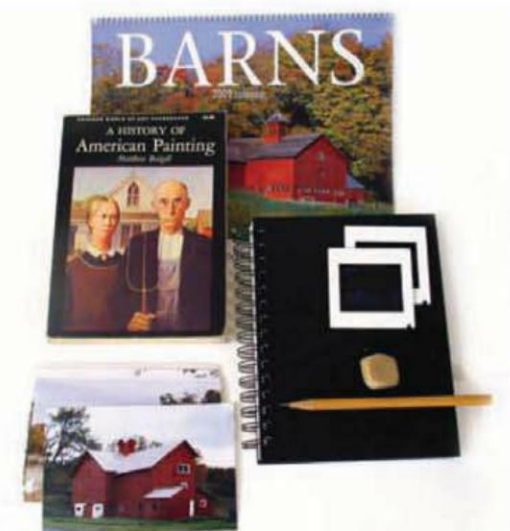


**STEP TWO** Now I transfer the teapot details from my original drawing onto the black underpainting, using a coat of white pastel on the back of my tracing paper.

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

As mentioned previously, photos are used as references for lifelike paintings. There are many sources that can provide ideas: postcards, catalogs, travel brochures, family photos, magazine ads, art books, calendars, movie still frames, art shows, posters, and your own imagination.

Invest in props that you will use over and over, such as a drape, vase, bowl, or table. Also, buy a good 35mm camera or digital camera and learn how to use it. Carry a small sketchbook and always be on the prowl for new material. When you see a potential subject, ask yourself how you would paint it. Try painting it in your head. Training your artist's eye is a lifelong habit that gets easier with practice.



# GOUACHE

*Gouache*, a French term meaning “opaque,” is simply opaque watercolor paint. Its brightness comes from the color itself—unlike transparent watercolor, which gets its brilliance from the reflective qualities of the paper. Gouache can be used thinly, like transparent watercolors, but it is generally used as a matte, opaque paint. Gouache provides an actual paint layer, while transparent watercolor is a stain. Often referred to as “body color,” the film of gouache appears thicker than it really is.

## WHAT IT IS

Gouache is made from pigment, binder (usually gum arabic), wetting agents, other minor additives, and a preservative. More pigment is used in making gouache than in transparent watercolors, which makes them opaque. An opaque extender (aluminum hydrate, blanc fixe, or precipitated chalk) is also added to the pigments to increase their opacity and improve the handling qualities. Precipitated chalk is added to some of the duller pigments to brighten them. It is best to use professional-grade paints; cheaper paints are made from inferior ingredients, tend to crack, and are less permanent than high-grade paints.

Of all the mediums available, there is nothing that compares with the opacity, quick drying time, and ability to achieve minute detail of gouache. In addition, gouache paintings do not yellow over time.



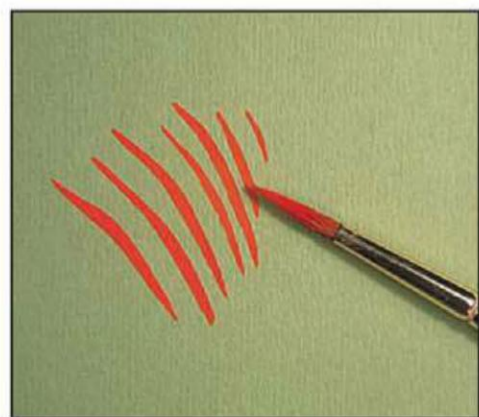
**PAINT CHOICES** Gouache is available in tubes and cakes, but cakes are neither as bright nor as practical as the tube colors.

## HOW TO USE GOUACHE

Remember this phrase: “Dark colors dry lighter, light colors dry darker.” Gouache changes as it dries, so take into account the slight color shift. Also, it is good practice to always mix extra paint; this way, it will be ready when you need it. (Gouache can be stored for several weeks. Baby food jars make perfect containers.)



**PAINT CONSISTENCY** The proper consistency for gouache is similar to heavy cream; the paint should brush out easily and appear opaque.



**LOADING PAINT** Load the tip of the brush—rather than the entire head—with paint. This helps to create fine lines and gives you greater control.



**BRUSHES** Use the proper brush for the proper job—large brushes for large areas, medium brushes for medium areas, and small brushes for small areas.

## THINGS TO AVOID

*Overdiluted gouache*—Generally, gouache is meant to be used opaquely.

*Flimsy surfaces*—A painting surface that buckles, bends, or is too thin can cause the paint to chip and crack.

*Dirty rinse water for brushes*—Keeping the water clean will maximize the brilliance of your paints.

*Designer colors*—Pigments with fancy names, such as “peacock blue” or “Bengal rose,” were used originally for design work. They were not meant to be permanent. Stick to traditional colors and don’t use fugitive colors (those that fade in light).

*Cheap brands of paint*—Poor-quality gouache will shift dramatically from the wet to the dry state. Artist-grade paints will last longer.

*Worn brushes*—For quality brush strokes and clean lines, use brushes that are in good condition.

*Cheap brushes*—These are bad from the start and will cause much frustration. Always buy the best brushes that you can afford.

*Overexposure*—Avoid displaying your paintings in direct sunlight or under fluorescent lighting. Ultra-violet (UV) light will cause some colors to fade.



**HEAVY GOUACHE** Gouache applied too thickly may crack. Use it in a creamy fashion—not in thick, heavy layers.



**OVERDILUTED GOUACHE** Applied too thinly, gouache will run, creating drips and other unwanted effects.



# GOUACHE PAINTING TECHNIQUES

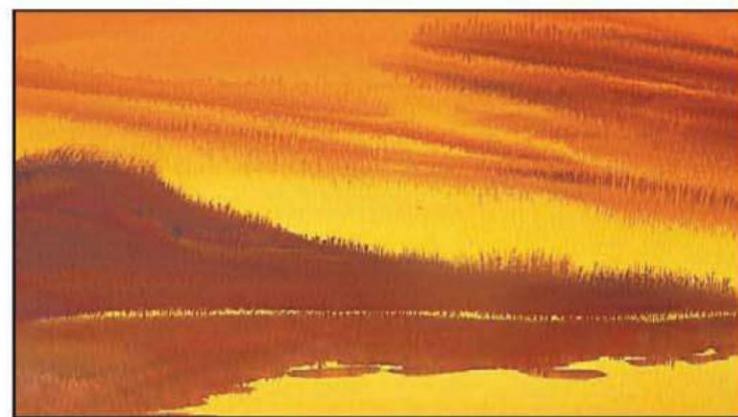
Gouache can be used in many different ways and can be manipulated to produce various effects. Great artists who have used gouache include Dürer, Van Gogh, Poussin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Miró, Rouault, and Shahn.



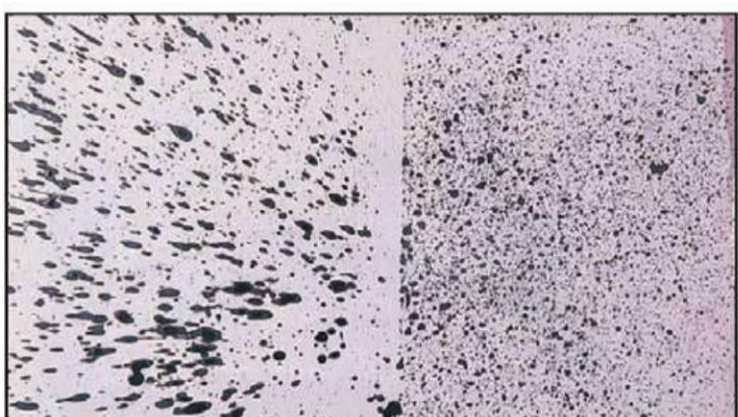
**SOLID COLOR** Applied evenly with a large brush, gouache is perfect for creating straight, flat areas of color. Adding ox gall to the diluent water will help to achieve a perfect surface.



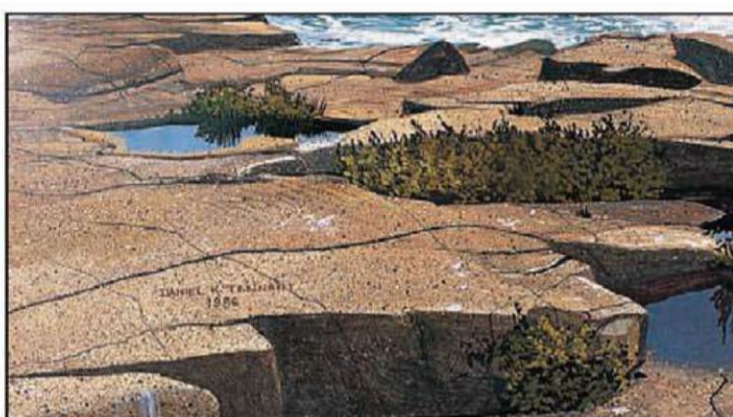
**GRADATIONS** Gouache can be applied with a large flat watercolor brush to create subtle, beautiful gradations (or blends of one color into another). This yellow-red combination was done with a large, soft-hair brush.



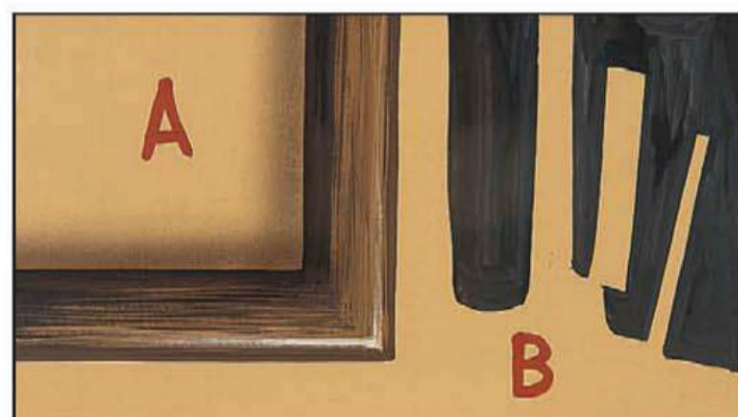
**WASHES** Although gouache was not made to be used in thin washes, this can be an effective technique. When thinned, some of the more transparent pigments will rival transparent watercolors.



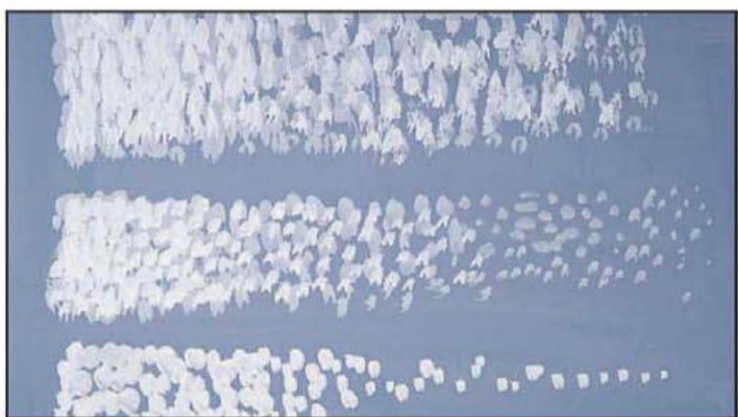
**SPATTERING** Spattering can be done with a bristle brush (left) or a toothbrush (right). Load the brush with gouache, shake it to get rid of excess paint, and then pull back the bristles with your fingers. Spattering creates texture on surfaces such as rock, wood, or ceramic.



**SPATTERING EXAMPLE** In this area of the painting, spattering was used in a highly realistic manner. The foreground rocks were speckled with different colors. The spattering technique made them very persuasive. As with any painting technique, don't overdo it or it will look gimmicky.



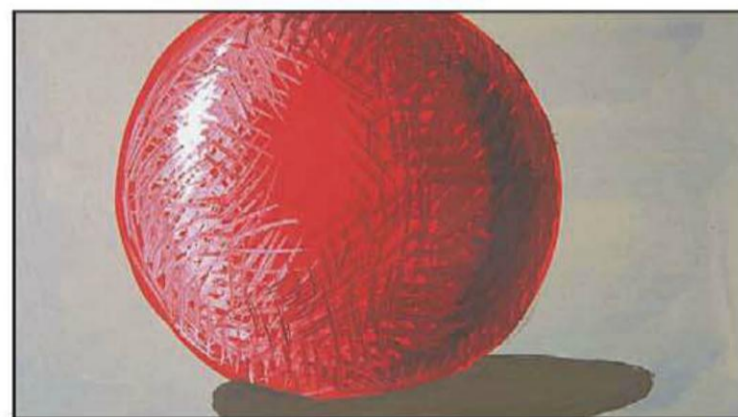
**MASKING** Masking an area with drafting tape is an excellent technique for creating straight lines. Side A shows a picture frame painted using tape along the edges. Side B shows the negative spaces created by placing tape, painting the background, and then removing the tape.



**STIPPLING** Stippling means to apply the paint with dots or light touches of the brush. This adds texture and interest while still allowing the underpainting to show through.



**STIPPLING EXAMPLE** Stippling can be used to create the illusion of carpet and textured book binding. The black book was painted black, and then dark gray was stippled over the black. Light gray was stippled over the dark gray, and then final highlights of white were stippled.



**CROSSHATCHING** Crosshatching is a good way to blend gouache because it dries quickly. Load the very tip of the brush with paint, wipe off the excess, and then apply the paint in light strokes, weaving (warp and woof) with vertical, horizontal, and diagonal strokes.



**LINES** When using a fully loaded rigger brush on hot-pressed illustration board, the brush glides along, making thin, opaque stroke lines. The rigger works well for painting wood grains, grasses, telephone wire, barbed wire fencing, or anything that requires a long, fine line.



**DRYBRUSHING 1** The drybrush technique is somewhat self-explanatory. Load a red sable brush with paint, and then squeeze it until it is almost dry. Spread the hairs of the brush as you squeeze it. This creates the same effect as using a very small brush to make parallel lines.



**DRYBRUSHING 2** Drybrushing with a larger brush gives the same effect as the red sable but on a larger scale. This technique is helpful for painting foregrounds with weeds and grasses. It also works well for dried weeds in winter scenes and texture on wood and cloth.

# THE AIRBRUSH

*There are four essential* elements for airbrushing—an airbrush, air hose, compressor, and paint.

Your budget will dictate your selections. Keep in mind that when properly cared for, good-quality supplies will last a lifetime.

The airbrush is a small pen-sized tool that uses compressed air to spray paint. It was invented in 1893 by Charles Burdick, whose original intention was to use it for watercolor painting. It became popular, however, for photo retouching and, for many years, continued to be used mainly in the graphic arts field. Only in the past 40 years has the airbrush entered into a new major role as a tool for the fine artist. The airbrush is an excellent tool for artists who want to expand their working capabilities. It extends the possibilities and effects of any medium that can be sprayed through it. There are some effects—such as fog, controlled spattering, delicate blendings, glazes with watercolor—that would be impossible to achieve without the airbrush.



**AIRBRUSHES** (A) *Oscillating model*—provides the finest spray; (B) *Side cup, double-action model*—allows for quick color changes; (C) *Large, gravity-fed cup model*—holds a lot of paint; (D) *Gravity-fed model*—has a very fine spray.

## SINGLE ACTION VS. DOUBLE ACTION

Single action and double action describe the trigger controls of the airbrush. An airbrush is either one or the other (except for the oscillating type, which is in a category by itself). With a single-action model, both air and paint come out when you press down on the trigger. The paint spray is changed by adjusting the screw on the back of the handle (on some models). You have to stop painting to adjust the amount of spray. With a double-action model, when you push down on the trigger you get air, and by pushing down and pulling back, you get air and paint. The farther back you pull, the more paint you get. The double-action airbrush is preferred because it provides more control.

## EXTERNAL MIX VS. INTERNAL MIX

With an external-mix airbrush, air and paint are mixed (atomization) outside the body of the airbrush. With an internal-mix model, they are mixed inside the body. The internal mix is recommended because it creates a much finer spray and does not create large dots of paint. The external-mix models have a grittier spray. In general, less-expensive hobby airbrushes are external mix. All professional, double-action airbrushes are internal mix.

## HOW TO START AIRBRUSHING

The airbrush should be advanced enough that you can grow into it. Again, a double-action, internal-mix model is recommended. The air hose is necessary to give pressure to the airbrush. Purchase whatever type is recommended for your airbrush and compressor. The compressor is the most important consideration. You will airbrush at 20–30 pounds per square inch (PSI). PSI is the pressure at which air flows through the airbrush. If the pressure is too high, the paint will be hard to control; if too weak, the paint will hardly come out. A good compressor will have a pressure regulator that automatically keeps the air pressure constant. For paint, you will use thinned gouache. It should be the consistency of milk—or slightly heavier. If it is too thick, it will come out in spatters; if too thin, it will run.

## COMPRESSORS AND AIR SOURCES

Compressors are the most popular sources of air power. Run by small motors that range from 1/16- to 1/2-horse power, they run either “silently” or continuously. A silent compressor has a storage tank; when it reaches the proper PSI, it shuts off. You can spray in silence until the pressure drops and the motor has to maintain the pressure. The smaller, continuous-running compressors are noisy and not as powerful. The silent compressor is the most expensive model but highly recommended for a lifetime of use. Some of the larger compressors are oil free, which are maintenance free and also highly recommended.

Another type of air source is the CO<sub>2</sub> tank. These are large tanks of compressed carbon dioxide. They last for quite a while but eventually have to be refilled. They can be refilled at scuba or party supply shops. Many art studios prefer CO<sub>2</sub> tanks because they are so quiet.

The third option—but not a practical one—is the “canned air” sold at art stores. Canned air is quite expensive for what you get. The pressure in one can of air will probably not last long enough for one major project.



**RESPIRATORS** You must protect your lungs while airbrushing. Paint can ricochet off the support and become airborne. Hence, the necessity of a respirator. A respirator fits over your mouth and nose and filters out minute particles of paint. There are different kinds of filters available. The more expensive types have charcoal filters and filtering pads so they are especially safe.

## PREPARING THE PAINT

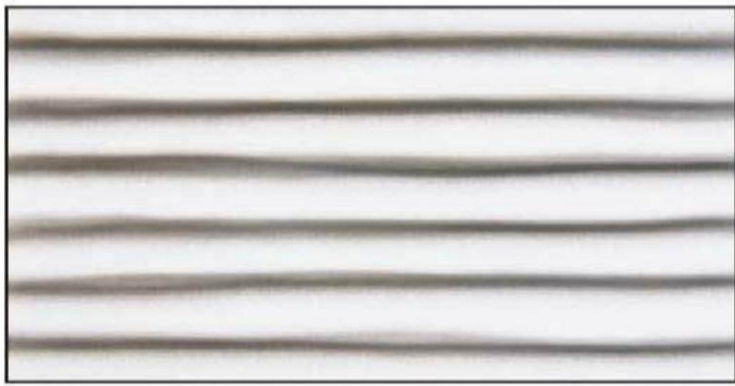
Gouache should have the consistency of milk, or slightly heavier, to flow smoothly through the airbrush. To test for the proper thickness, use the “drip technique.” Load a brush full of paint, and watch how the paint drips off the brush. It should drip at a steady rate—not a rapid “drip-drip-drip” like water, nor a slow drip like pudding. After a few tries, you will be able to tell if the paint is too thin or thick simply by the sound of the dripping.

If gouache dries in the airbrush, simply fill the color holder with warm water, let it sit for 5 minutes, and then blow the water out. If bits of gouache do not dissolve readily, use a toothpick to ream them out. Don't use anything metallic because it can scratch the airbrush.



## AIRBRUSHING EXERCISES

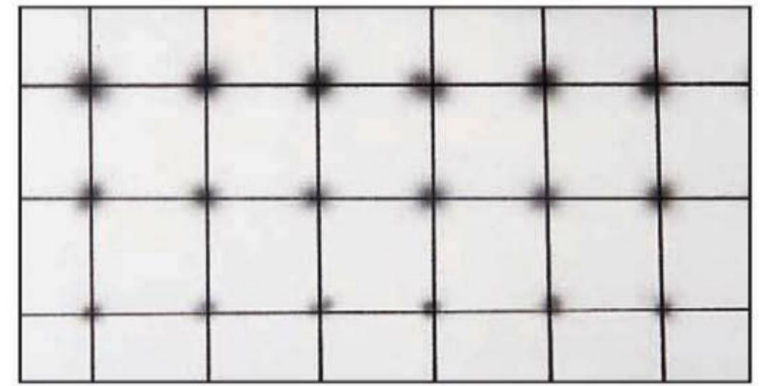
Using the airbrush is not difficult, but it requires practice to master. Each of these exercises is designed for a specific skill. Practice each exercise daily and you will become proficient.



**PARALLEL LINES** Practicing parallel lines freehand is important for line control. Practice the motion of keeping the lines from touching each other and making them consistent in thickness.



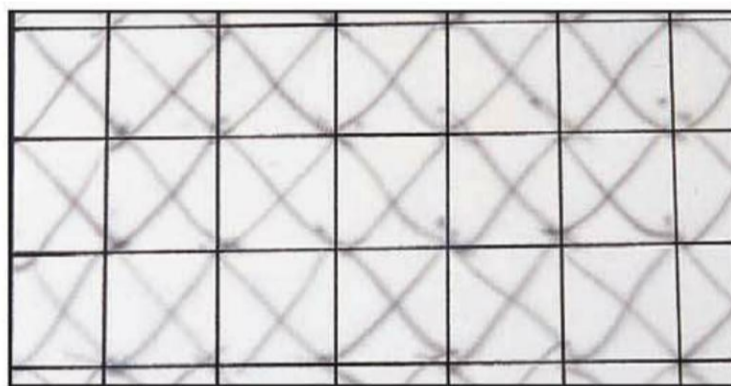
**VARYING LINES** In this exercise, begin spraying the line while holding the tool close to the paper. As you continue, gradually pull the airbrush farther away, creating a thicker, softer line.



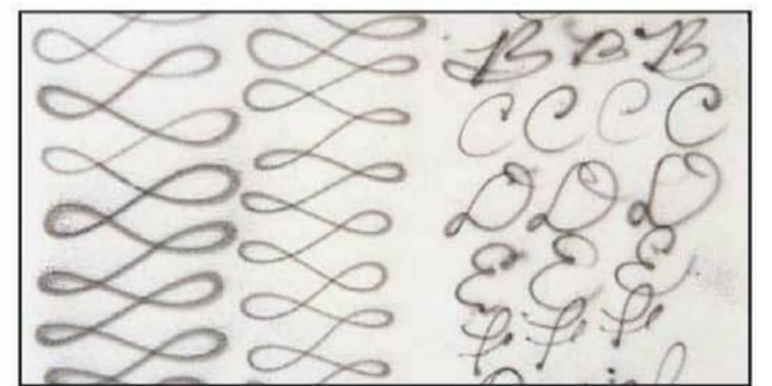
**VARYING DOTS** The farther away the airbrush is from the paper, the larger the spray. Make large dots at the top, medium dots in the middle, and small dots at the bottom.



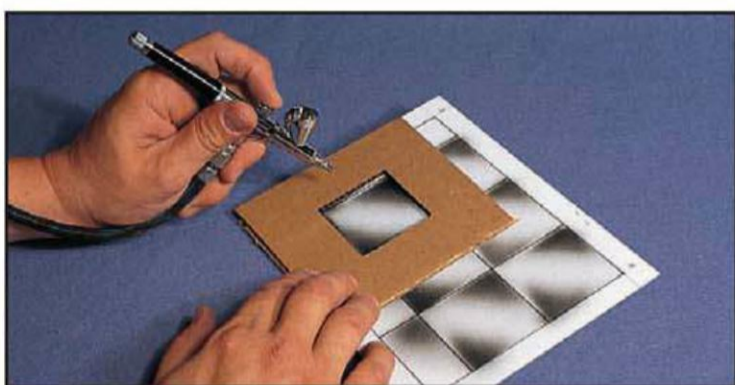
**CONSISTENT DOTS** Try making dots of the same size at each intersection of the grid. When you can make the same-sized dots, you will know that you have good control of the airbrush.



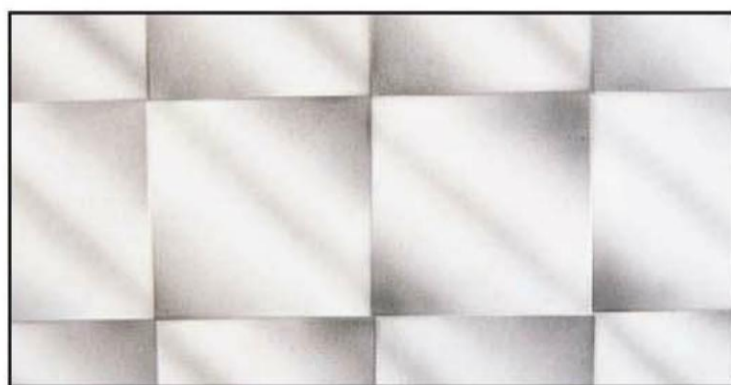
**MAKING XS** Making Xs across the paper will test your eye-hand coordination and ability to make even straight lines with a quick stop. Remember, the end result is not as important as testing the capabilities of the airbrush.



**CURLICUES AND CURSIVE WRITING** Making curlicues and writing in cursive are good techniques for developing coordination. Smooth, curved lines require good airbrush control.



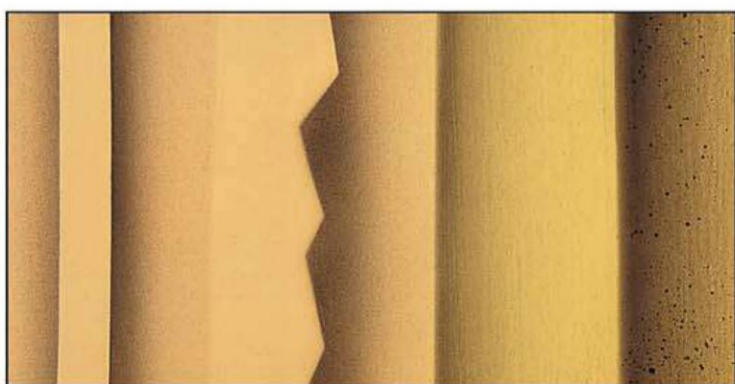
**METALLIC EFFECT 1** To create a metallic effect, first cut a 2" square stencil out of cardboard. Then place the stencil over the paper and spray black gouache at a diagonal in two opposite corners.



**METALLIC EFFECT 2** There should be a light strip of plain paper left in the middle of each square. When you are finished with the exercise, the paper should look like a panel of metallic squares.



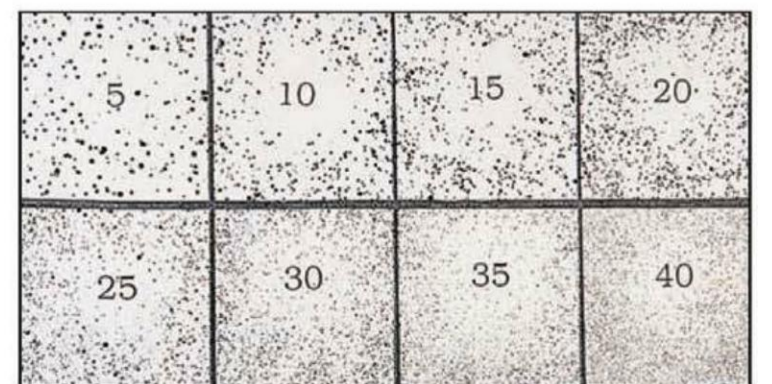
**GRADUATED COLOR** Spraying a graduated color from top to bottom—or vice versa—is a technique used to create backgrounds, skies, or anything that requires gradual blending.



**HARD EDGES** Create hard edges by placing various objects directly on the paper. Here, drafting tape, a piece of paper, a ruler, and a piece of cardboard have been used to create hard edges.



**SOFT EDGES** You can achieve soft edges by spraying over items that are elevated off the paper. The overspray softens the edges. Use paper, rulers, cardboard, or cotton to create soft edges.

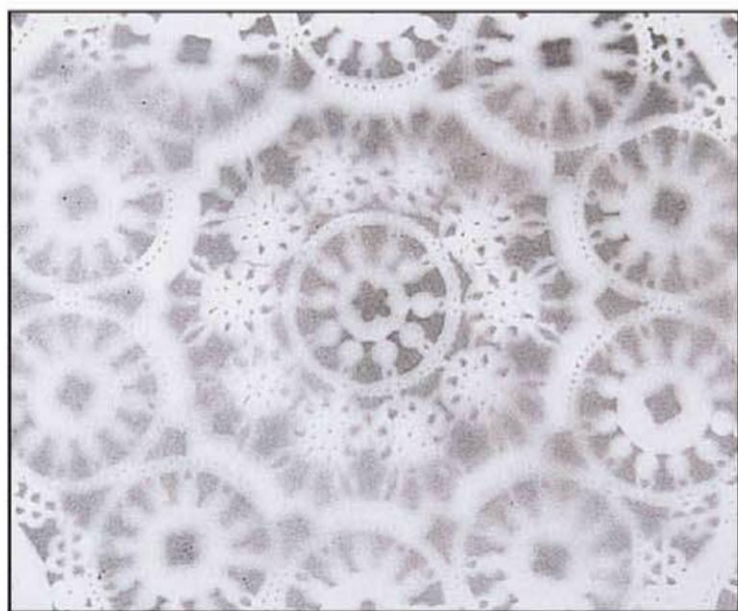
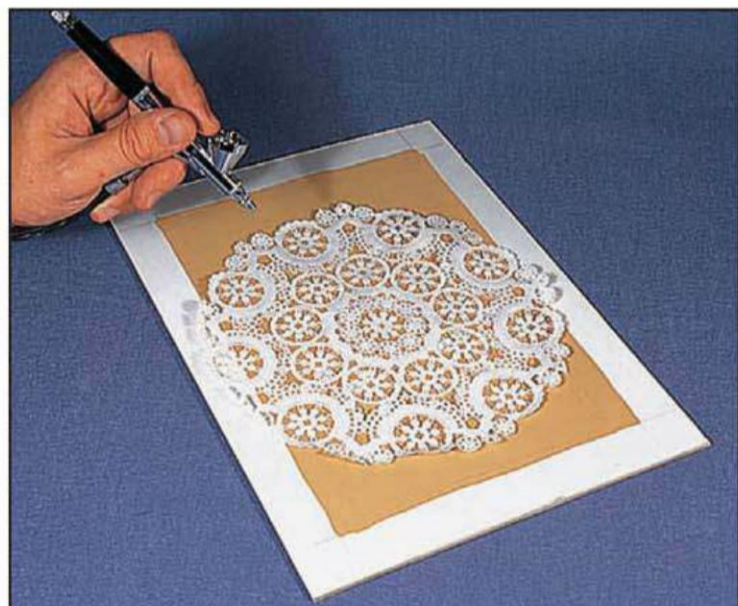


**SPATTERING** The dot size of the spray depends on the PSI setting. The lower the pressure, the larger the dot pattern. Note: This effect can only be done with airbrushes that have a spatter capability.

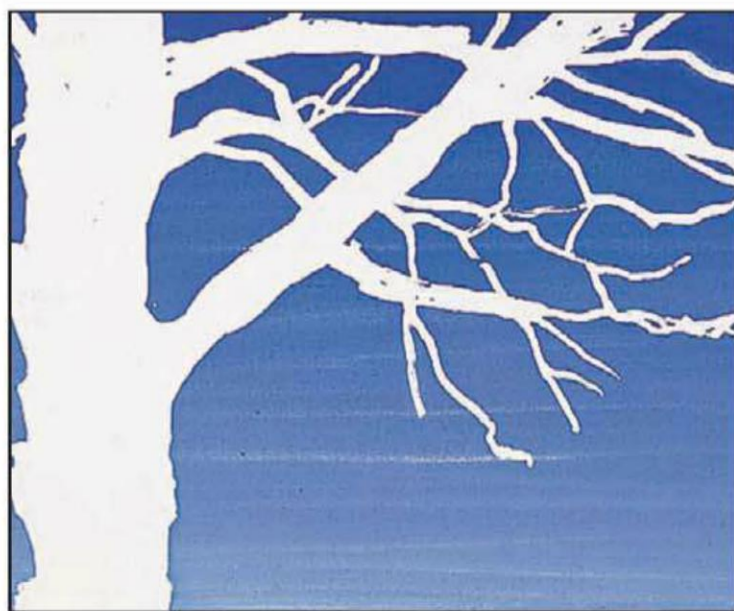
# STENCILING

*There are two ways* to paint with an airbrush—freehand or with stencils. Each method provides a different look. Freehand techniques are excellent for producing soft shadows, mellow gradations, and soft, fine lines. Stencils work well for items that have hard edges, straight lines, or areas where precision is required.

**STENCIL FILM** Stencils provide complete control of the spray; there is no guesswork with this technique. There are various types of stenciling material and different ways of using them. Here, a piece of frosted stencil film has been laid over a painting in progress, and the stencil is being cut out with a very sharp art knife. (For more information on making a stencil, see page 26.)



**USING EVERYDAY OBJECTS** Ordinary objects can also be used as stencils, such as a piece of lace or a cloth doily. First lay the object flat on the support. Spray directly down at the cloth. Wait for the paint to dry, and then lift the object off the support.



**APPLYING MASKING FLUID** Apply liquid masking fluid with a soaped brush. When the fluid is dry, you can paint over it. When the paint is dry, remove the masking fluid by rubbing it. Wherever the fluid was applied, the paper will be intact and untouched.

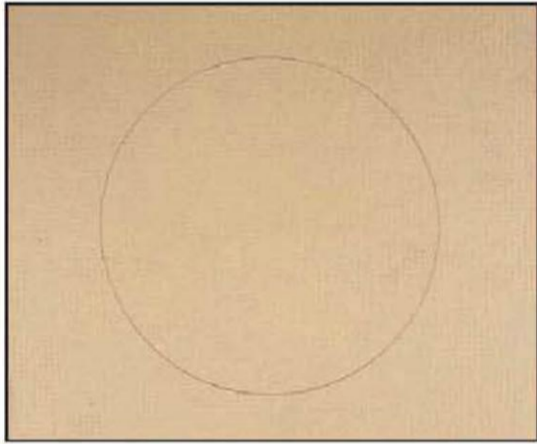


**CREATING PATTERNS** Use torn paper patterns to create unusual images. The farther away the paper is from the painting, the softer the pattern. The closer it is, the crisper the edges. Stencils can be made from tape, paper, cotton, or cardboard.

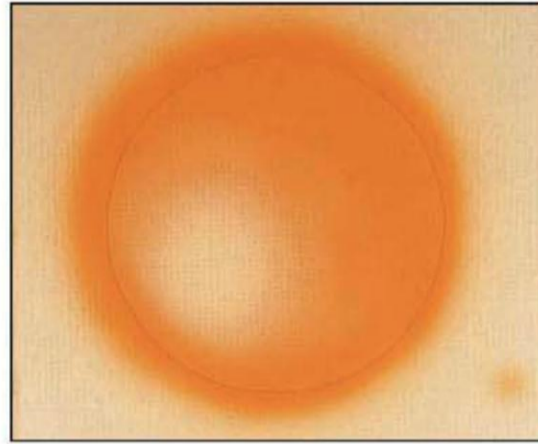
# AIRBRUSHING BASIC FORMS

*The four basic forms*—sphere, cylinder, cube, and cone—have been recognized as the four elements (singular or combined) that make up almost anything an artist draws or paints. Being able to render these forms with an airbrush (on illustration board) helps in creating more advanced objects, such as an apple, orange, house, box, or fence post.

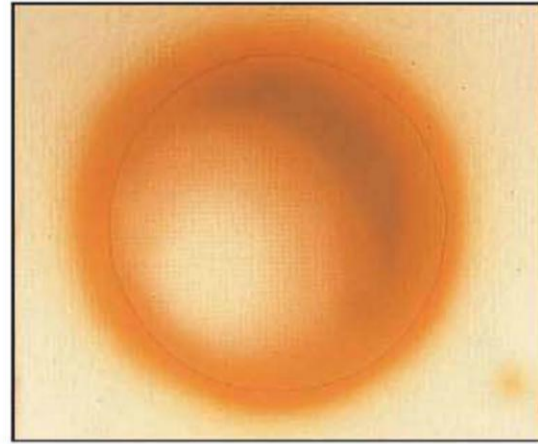
## SPHERE



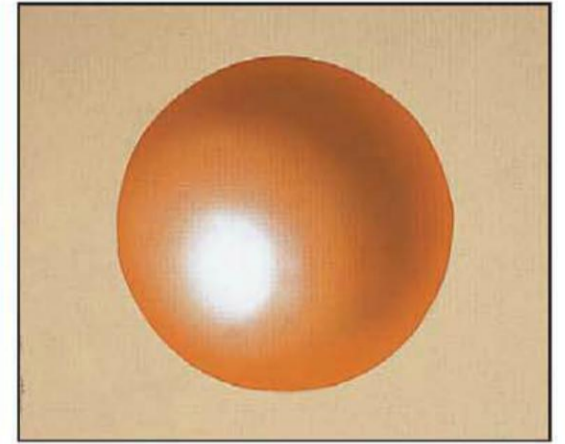
**1** Draw a circle in pencil, overlay it with stenciling film, and then cut with a craft knife.



**2** Remove the center of the stencil and spray the edges and right side with any color you like.

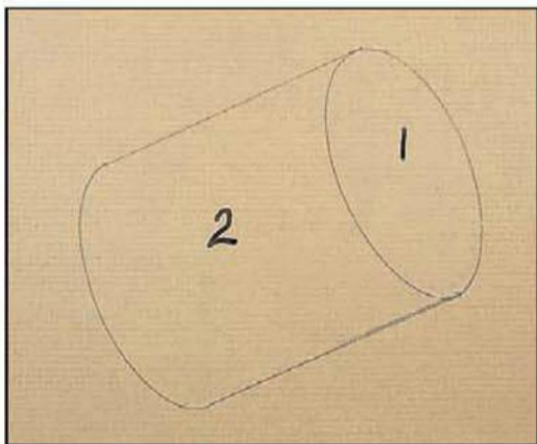


**3** Spray the right-hand side of the sphere to create shading with ivory black gouache.

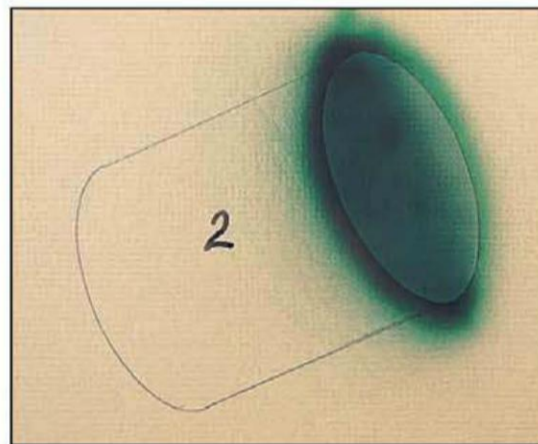


**4** Spray a permanent white gouache highlight to add interest and shape. Then remove the stencil.

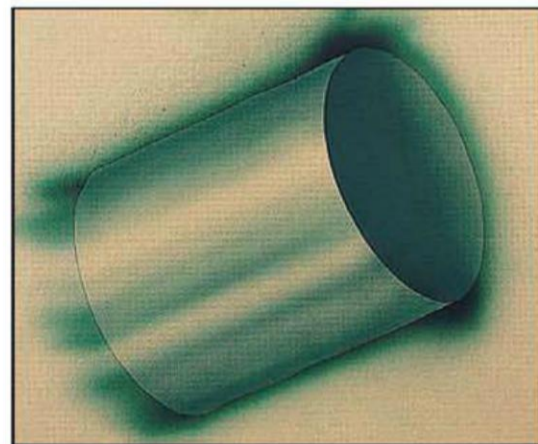
## CYLINDER



**1** Draw the cylinder. Lay stenciling film over the cylinder, and then make and number two cutouts.



**2** Remove the first cutout and spray at the top.

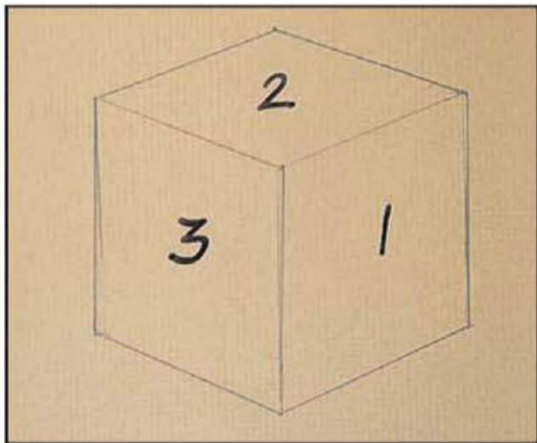


**3** Remove the second cutout and spray the side of the cylinder.

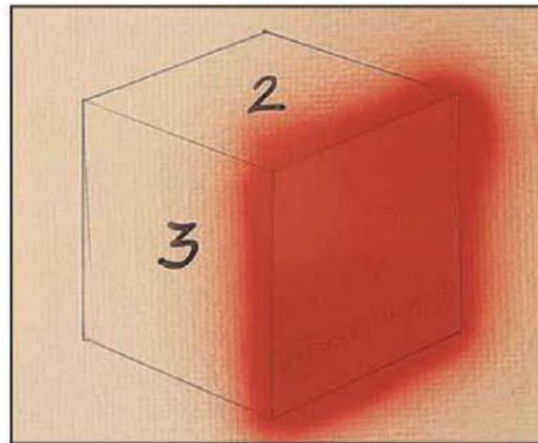


**4** Add permanent white gouache highlights on the side of the cylinder, and then remove the stencil.

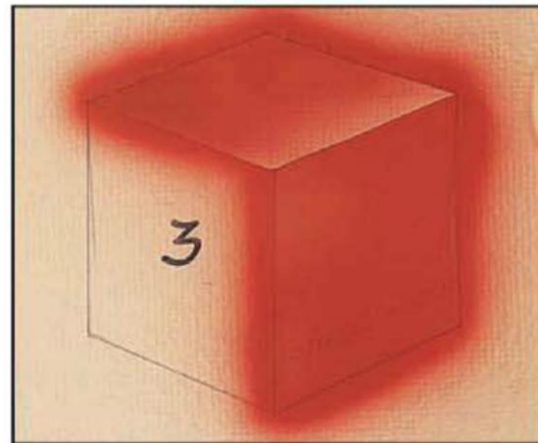
## CUBE



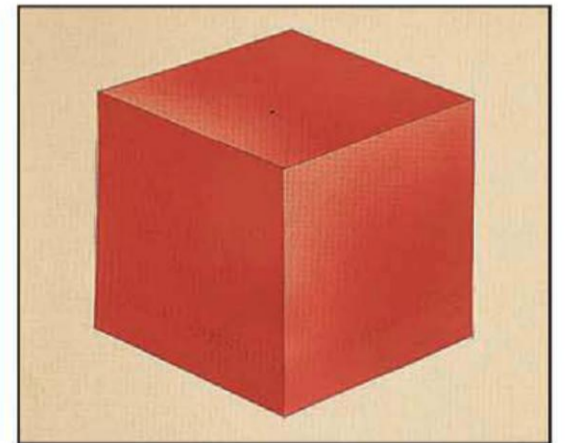
**1** Draw the cube and overlay it with stenciling film. Then make cutouts and number them in the order they will be sprayed.



**2** Remove the first cutout, and then airbrush that side of the cube.

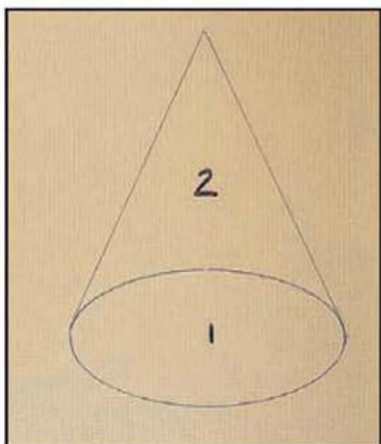


**3** Remove the second cutout; then spray the first and second cutouts, creating two degrees of darkness.

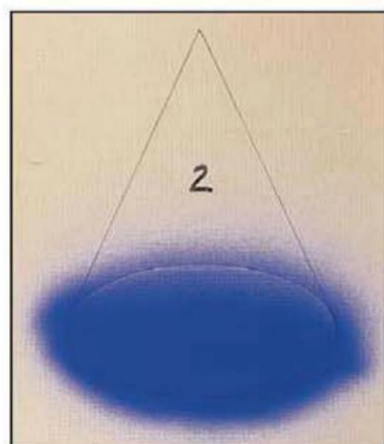


**4** Spray the third cutout lightly, creating a cube that appears to be three-dimensional. Remove the stencil.

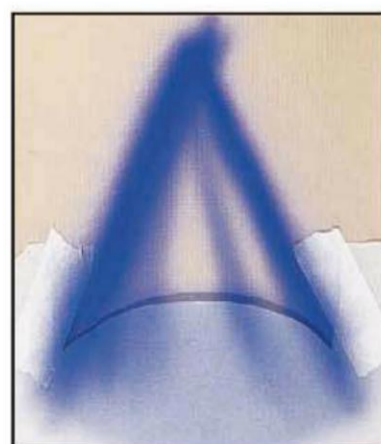
## CONE



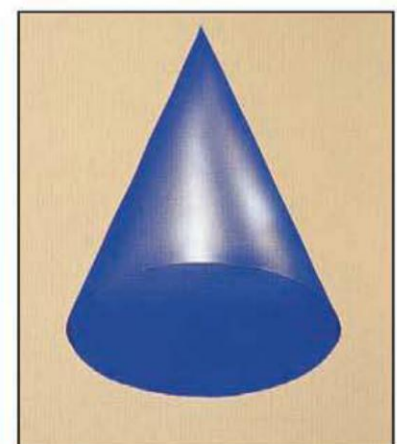
**1** Draw the cone. Place stenciling film over the board and make two cutouts on the cone.



**2** Remove the cutout at the bottom and spray that area. When dry, replace the stencil.



**3** Remove the stencil on the side and spray that area.



**4** Add permanent white gouache highlights to the side of the cone, and then remove the stenciling film.

# PAINTING DIFFERENT TEXTURES

*Increase the realism* of your paintings and create visual interest by including a variety of textures, patterns, and surfaces in your compositions.

## HOW TO PAINT WALLPAPER WITH CAST SHADOWS



**1** Paint the background with yellow ochre and zinc white. At this point, it is pointless to draw the design of the wallpaper because it will be covered with gouache.



**2** Draw the design of the wallpaper over the background. You can use the slide projection method (see page 4) or create your own design.

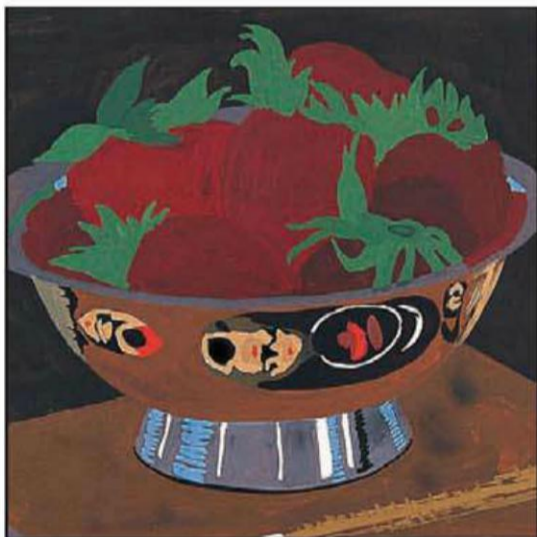


**3** Paint the pattern with the desired colors. Gouache is superb for making wallpaper in a painting, because it was once used for surface-pattern design work.



**4** Airbrush a light shadow of a plant over the design with black watercolor. Using watercolor instead of gouache allows the wallpaper to show through the shadow.

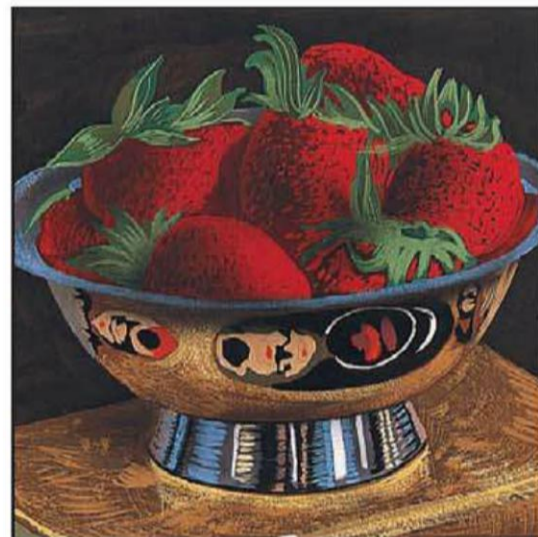
## HOW TO PAINT SILVER



**1** Establish the basic light and dark patterns by leaving the white of the board for the brightest highlights and applying dark gouache—alizarin crimson, burnt umber, and ivory black—in the background with a brush. The bowl is placed on top of a book, which is reflected in the silver.



**2** Apply the middle tones and some lighter tones of burnt sienna and yellow ochre, cobalt blue and zinc white, define the strawberries with cadmium red light. Then lighten the book, leaves, and underside of the bowl with yellow ochre and permanent green light.



**3** Using ivory black watercolor, airbrush shadows on the strawberries and on the left and underside of the bowl. Note that the foreground objects are reflected in the silver bowl.



**4** Airbrush white highlights onto the silver bowl. Then paint the highlights on the strawberries with a #1 brush using permanent white gouache.

## HOW TO PAINT AN APPLE AND A STRAWBERRY



**1** The first step in any painting is to complete the underpainting. Paint the apple and strawberry with their local colors—the strawberry is straight cadmium red, the apple is yellow ochre and some permanent green light in areas. The lighter areas of the apple are cadmium yellow mixed with zinc white. (These colors will be lightened as the painting progresses.)



**2** Isolate the apple with a stencil. Airbrush the red patches with cadmium red gouache and then the shadows with ivory black watercolor.



**3** Apply the shadows on the strawberry and the cast shadows from the fruit with the airbrush and ivory black watercolor. Then remove the stencil and use strong, directional lighting from the left to create a three-dimensional feeling. Airbrush ivory black watercolor over the shaded areas.

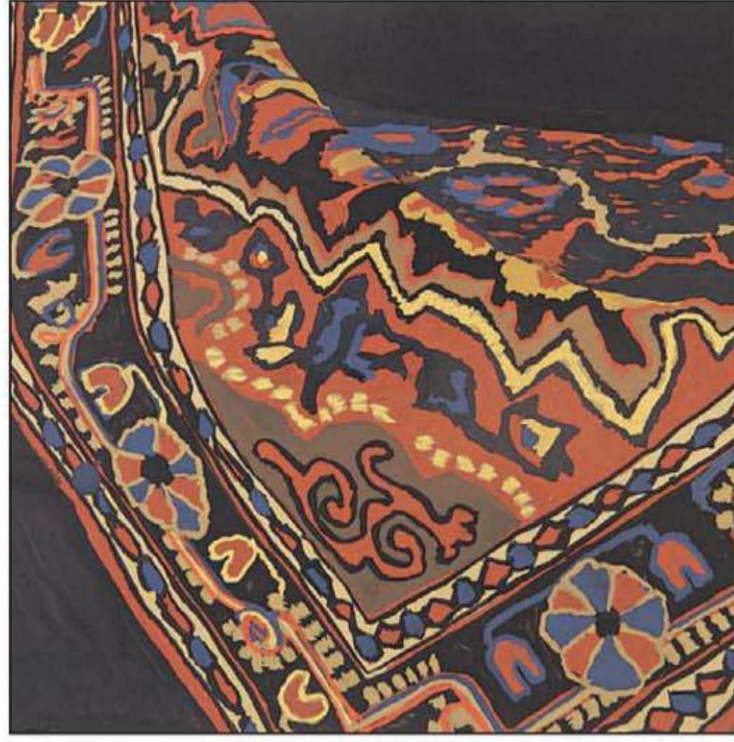


**4** Establish the highlights and add finishing touches. Add a stem to the apple with ivory black, permanent green, light yellow ochre, and zinc white gouache. Then define the seeds on the strawberry with yellow ochre and ivory black. Apply pure permanent white gouache to the centers of each highlight to make them as white as possible.

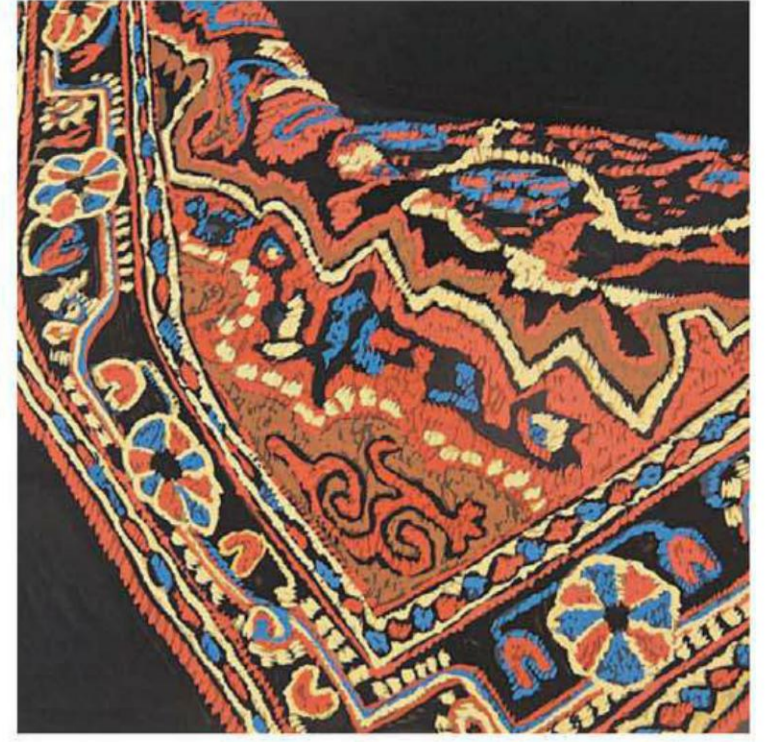
## HOW TO PAINT A PERSIAN RUG



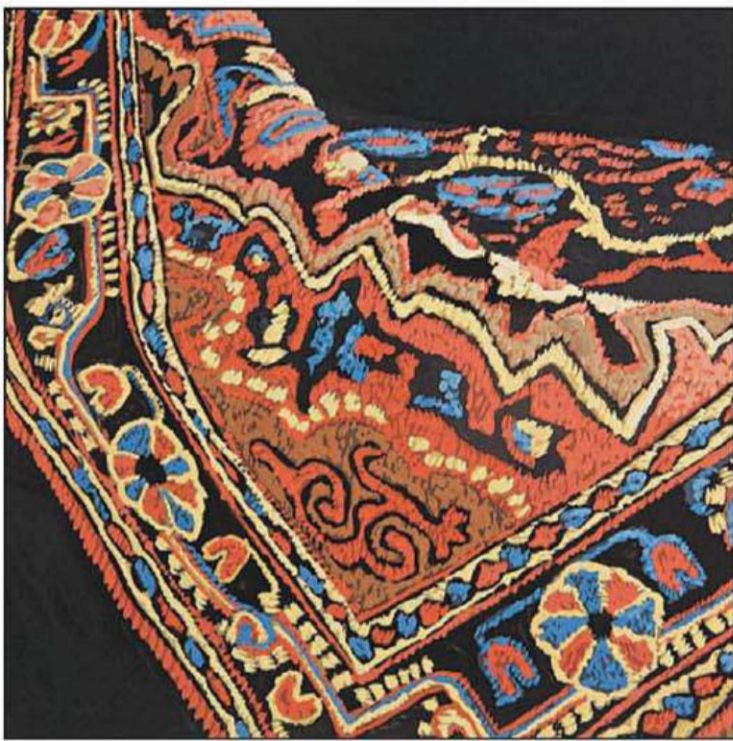
**1** With an HB pencil, sketch the drawing on illustration board. Be sure to make the design accurate and complete. With realistic paintings, the key to an exact likeness is to observe the small details, such as subtle shading, textures, details, and surfaces.



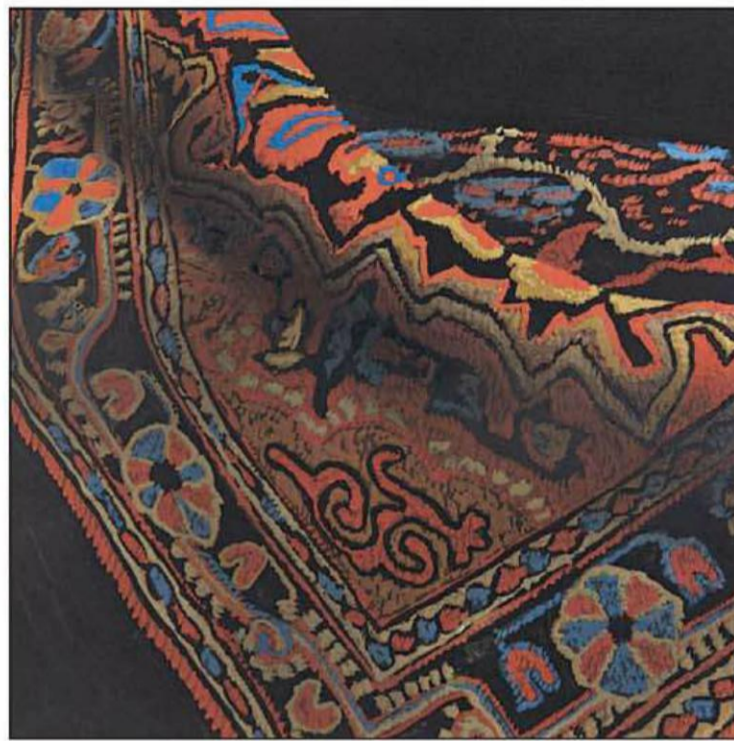
**2** Complete the underpainting with dark colors. Paint the colors of the rug in the same color as in the final painting but much darker in key. This way, light reds can be applied over darker reds, lighter blues over dark blues, and light yellows over darker yellows, allowing the darks to show through and creating an interesting rug texture.



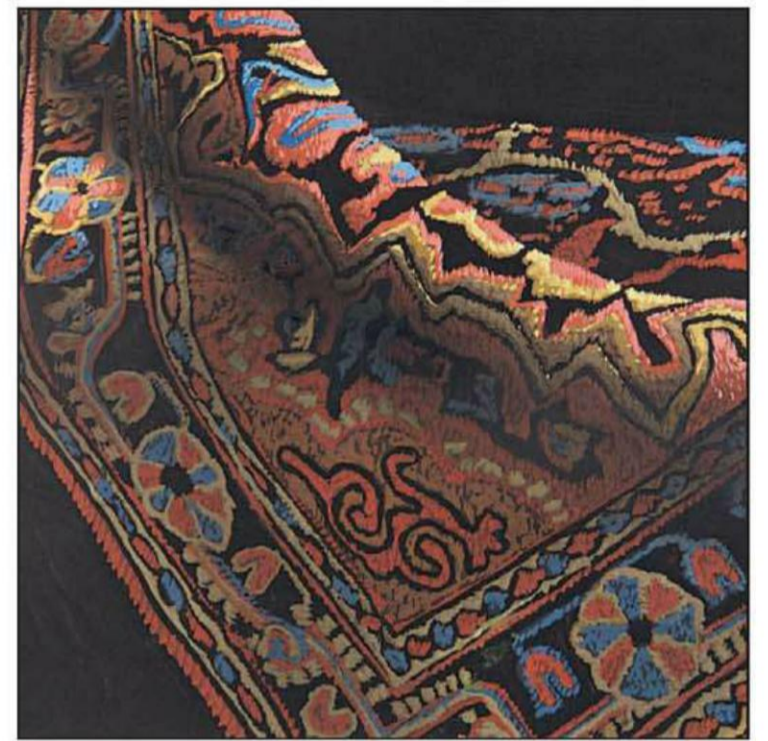
**3** When the underpainting is dry, paint over the same area to establish the medium tones (local colors) of the rug. Apply these tones with a small watercolor brush in hundreds of stippled dots. The paint is a creamy consistency—not too thin or too thick. Gouache is excellent for painting light colors over dark colors because of its inherent opacity.



**4** When the middle tones are dry, apply the lighter tones to create a feeling of light falling on the rug. The light tones also help to create depth. Note: These are not the very lightest tones.



**5** Airbrush ivory black watercolor onto the areas in shadow. Note: It is better to gradually build up the darks in several layers than to spray too quickly and create a glaze of watercolor that is too dark. The watercolor will soak into the gouache and slowly make it darker. Allow time for the paint to be absorbed before applying another glaze—it may already be dark enough.



**6** The final step is the most relaxing and enjoyable. Place the lightest touches on the rug where the direct light hits. To complete the rug study, use a very small watercolor brush and the lightest tints of each color (e.g., pink on red, light blue on blue) to accent the tints along the ridges of the folds. This is the standard approach used for painting tapestry. Paint in a logical, sequential manner.

## HOW TO PAINT WOOD



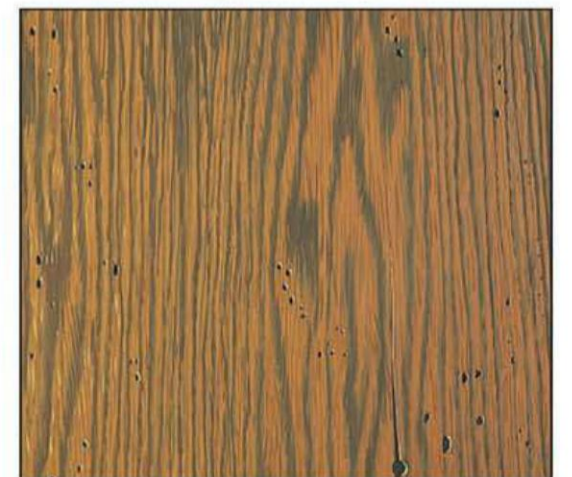
**1** Painting wood is easy, because you can embellish it in many ways and it will still look natural. Lay down the solid tone of the basic wood color with yellow ochre and burnt sienna.



**2** Add the larger grain markings with a watercolor brush in a drybrush manner using yellow ochre mixed with burnt umber and ivory black.



**3** When the wood grain is dry, establish some darker markings—as well as patina in the wood, holes, grain lines, and textures on the surface of the wood—with a mix of burnt umber, black, and a touch of yellow ochre.

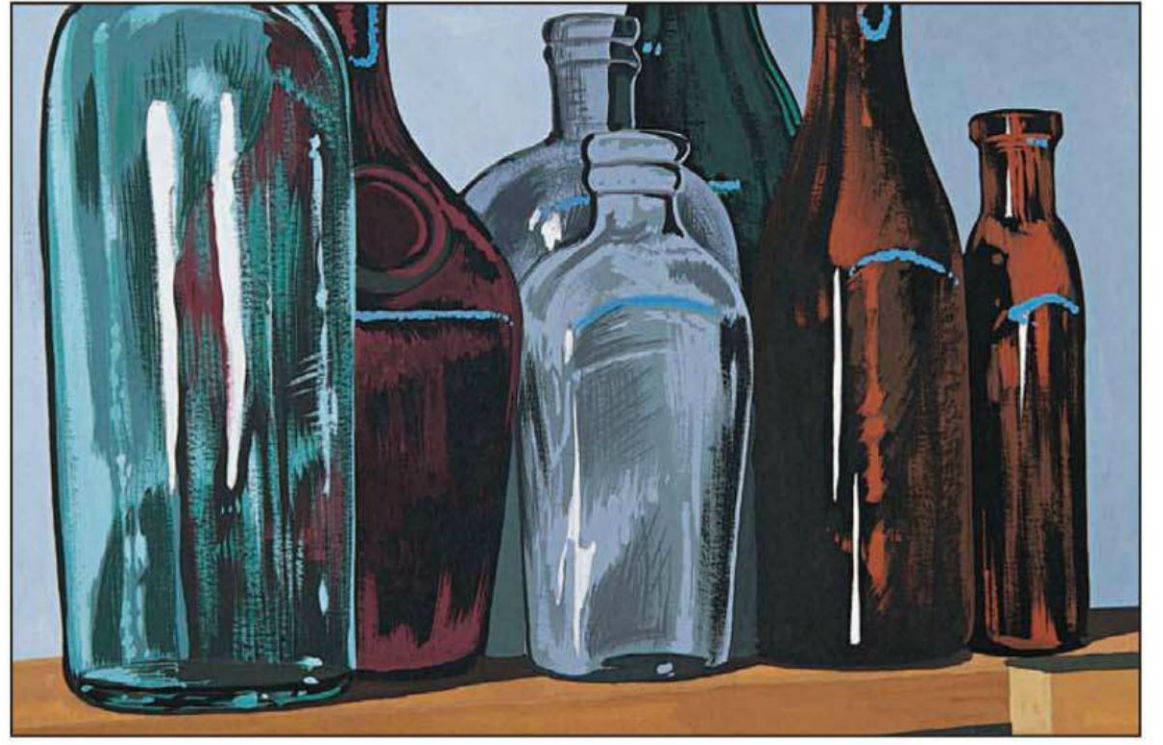


**4** Apply lighter tints to accent the wood and the edges of the hole. If the light is coming from the left, highlight the hole along the right of the rim—and vice versa. Tip: Study different types of wood to see the ways that they grow. Oak is different than pine, which is different than maple, and so forth.

## HOW TO PAINT GLASS



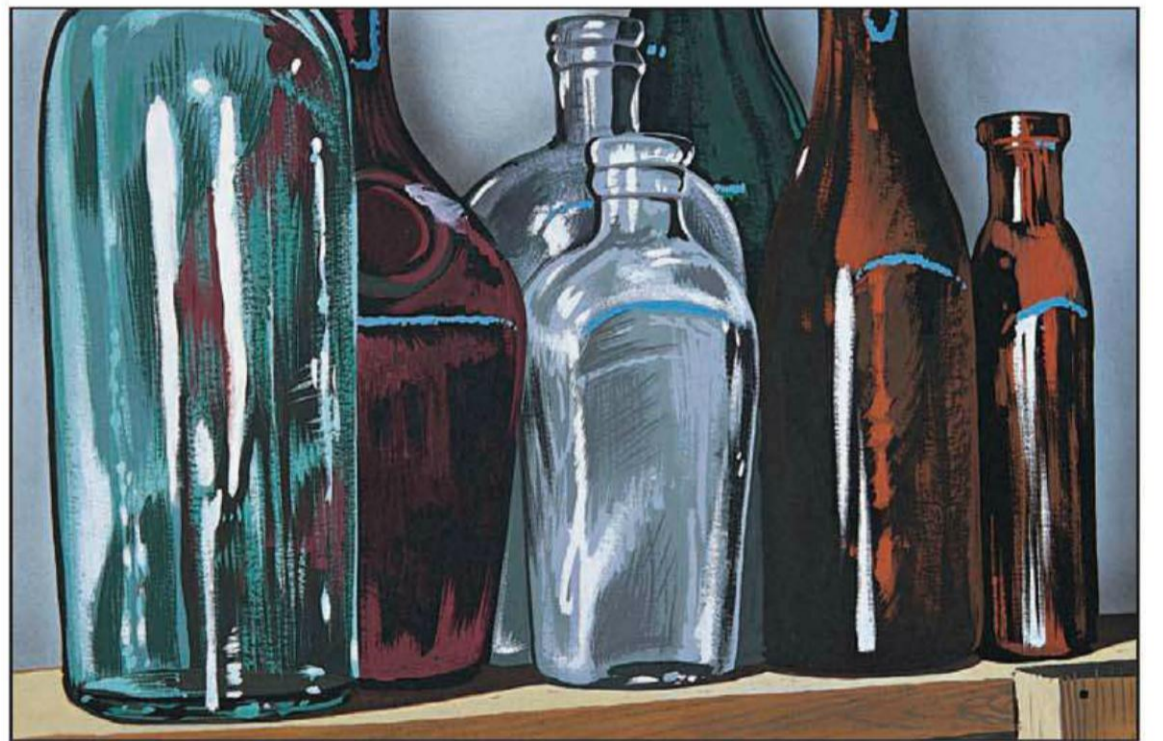
**1** Here, seven different-colored bottles are used to demonstrate the versatility of gouache. Paint the bottles darker than they actually are because they will be lightened later in the painting. Lay the underpainting with straight ivory black, gray-blues, and medium grays.



**2** Use middle-tone colors to define the forms of the bottles. Leave some areas unpainted to serve as bright highlights and to help gauge the colors. Use the drybrush technique to create subtle blending of tones.

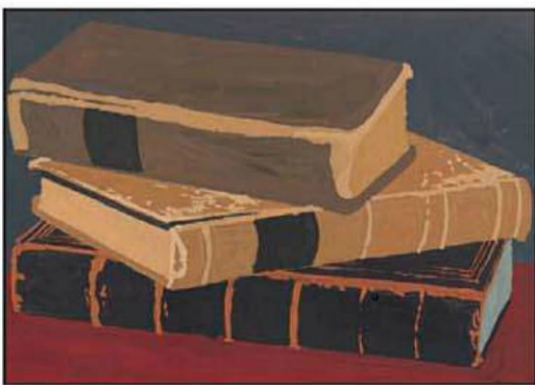


**3** Airbrush the shadows with ivory black watercolor. The shadows cast by the bottles help to create form, depth, and realism.

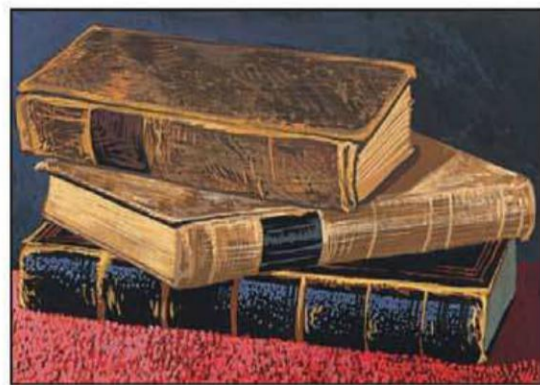


**4** Add highlights with pure permanent white gouache. The condition of the bottle determines the highlight. For example, an old, dusty bottle has soft, blurry highlights, and a new, clean bottle has well-defined, crisp highlights. The key to authenticity is to carefully study the differences among objects.

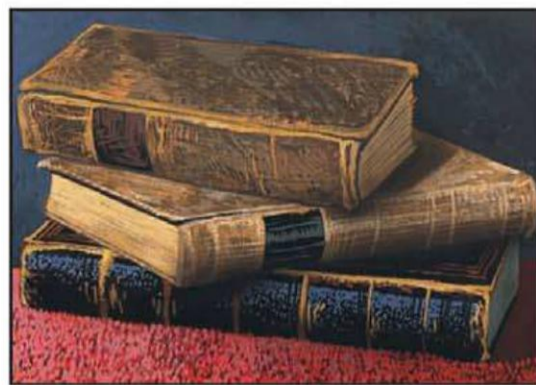
## HOW TO PAINT OLD BOOKS



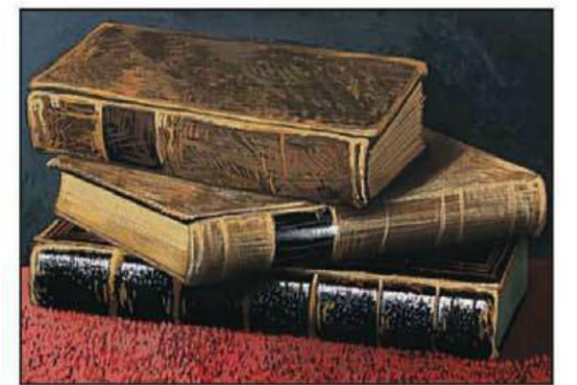
**1** This study demonstrates how gouache can be used to make extremely fine, opaque lines to create the look of worn pages, threadbare bindings, and scuffed surfaces. Paint in the dark values with a brush using ivory black (bottom book), burnt umber and ivory black (top book), and yellow ochre mixed with burnt umber (middle book).



**2** When the dark values are dry, lighten the colors with the same colors as the underpainting tinted with zinc white. Use a brush and yellow ochre and zinc white to create the textures on the spines of the books. Stipple the foreground carpet with cadmium red mixed with zinc white.



**3** Use the airbrush to spray shadows of ivory black watercolor on the books. To ensure spray doesn't fall on unwanted areas, place paper over the books as a stencil.



**4** Highlight the worn bindings using a small watercolor brush and touches of pure permanent white gouache. The pure white highlights add sparkle to the completed still life. Again, notice the technique of working from dark to light, applying highlights last.



# SHADOWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

*Shadows and highlights* add depth, texture, and visual interest to a painting. Make sure to carefully observe objects, their shadows, and their highlights. Consistent shadows and highlights will add credibility to your work. Notice that the closer an object is to a wall or surface on which its shadow falls, the more defined its shadow will be. Highlights also vary depending on the lighting and surface of objects. Use shadows and highlights to capture textures and dramatic contrasts.

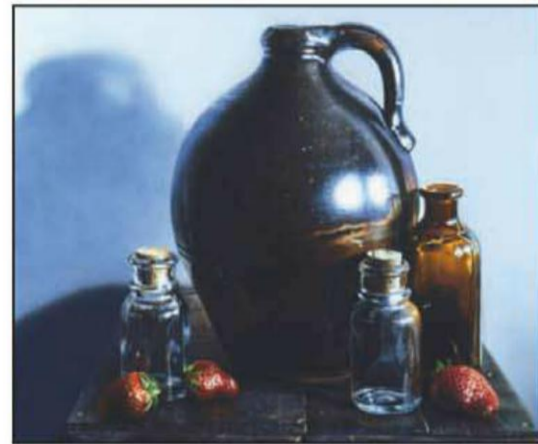
## SOFT-EDGED SHADOWS



Note the soft, elongated shadows cast from the silver compote. The light is coming from the right, creating a cast shadow on the wall. Remember that shadows are always directly opposite the light source. Use the airbrush to render soft cast shadows.



Placing the basket of strawberries further from the wall creates a soft cast shadow on the left background area. The shadow provides a sense of depth and dimension to the painting and contrasts with the hard edges of the basket handle and wicker patterns.



In this painting, the soft background shadow cast by the large jug contrasts with the jug's hard edges. The shadow helps to isolate the objects in the still life from the background and creates a sense of balance in the composition.



This is a dramatic example of soft-edged shadows cast on a background wall. The plant is struck by light from the right, creating a pattern of shadows on the left wall. The shadows help to add dimension, visual interest, space, and design to the painting.

## SHADOWS ON HARD-EDGED OBJECTS



**HARD EDGES** Each apple in this still life is painted with a separate stencil to achieve crisp, hard edges that reinforce the feel of their slick, shiny skin. The shadows are airbrushed on the left of each piece of fruit. Note that some apples have a subtle highlight in the shadowed edge, which is a result of reflected light.



**HIGH-CONTRAST LIGHTING** In high-contrast lighting, the hard edges of the jugs are rendered with an airbrush and ivory black watercolor. The watercolor glaze allows you to see details within the shadows. Use stencils to create hard-edged shadows. A freehand attempt would make the edges soft and misty.

## HIGHLIGHTS



**SUBTLE HIGHLIGHTS** Although the term "highlight" implies a pure white sparkle, a highlight can also be the brightest area. There are instances in painting when the brightest spots will simply be tints of the colors of the object. Too many pure white highlights can be distracting.



**BOLD HIGHLIGHTS** There are times, however, when the purest white available will make the highlights "shout" with importance. Here, the highlights on the ceramic are hard and bold, creating the feeling of hard, baked ceramic that is shiny.



**DIFFUSED HIGHLIGHTS** At other times, highlights will be diffused, soft, and glowing. With the airbrush, the highlights on the apples are sprayed on with permanent white to create the soft glow of the floodlights on the smooth skins. After the initial highlights are applied, the very center of each glow is highlighted with a small brush and pure permanent white.

# THOUGHTS ON PAINTING

*Myths often surround* the painting process—for example: painting is always inspired; accomplished artists find painting easy and always succeed; painting is always fun; good artists only paint when they feel like it; and creating a good painting is unpredictable. Let's dispel some of the myths.

First, an artist does not have to be inspired to paint. A successful painting is predictable and logical, particularly in the realistic style. I have often dragged myself into the studio, not feeling like doing much of anything. But then things start developing and I do feel inspired! Another common experience is “artist's slump.” Sometimes, about halfway through a painting, I feel as if it is a loser and I simply want to heave it—but I force myself to persevere. This is something all artists have to learn to overcome.

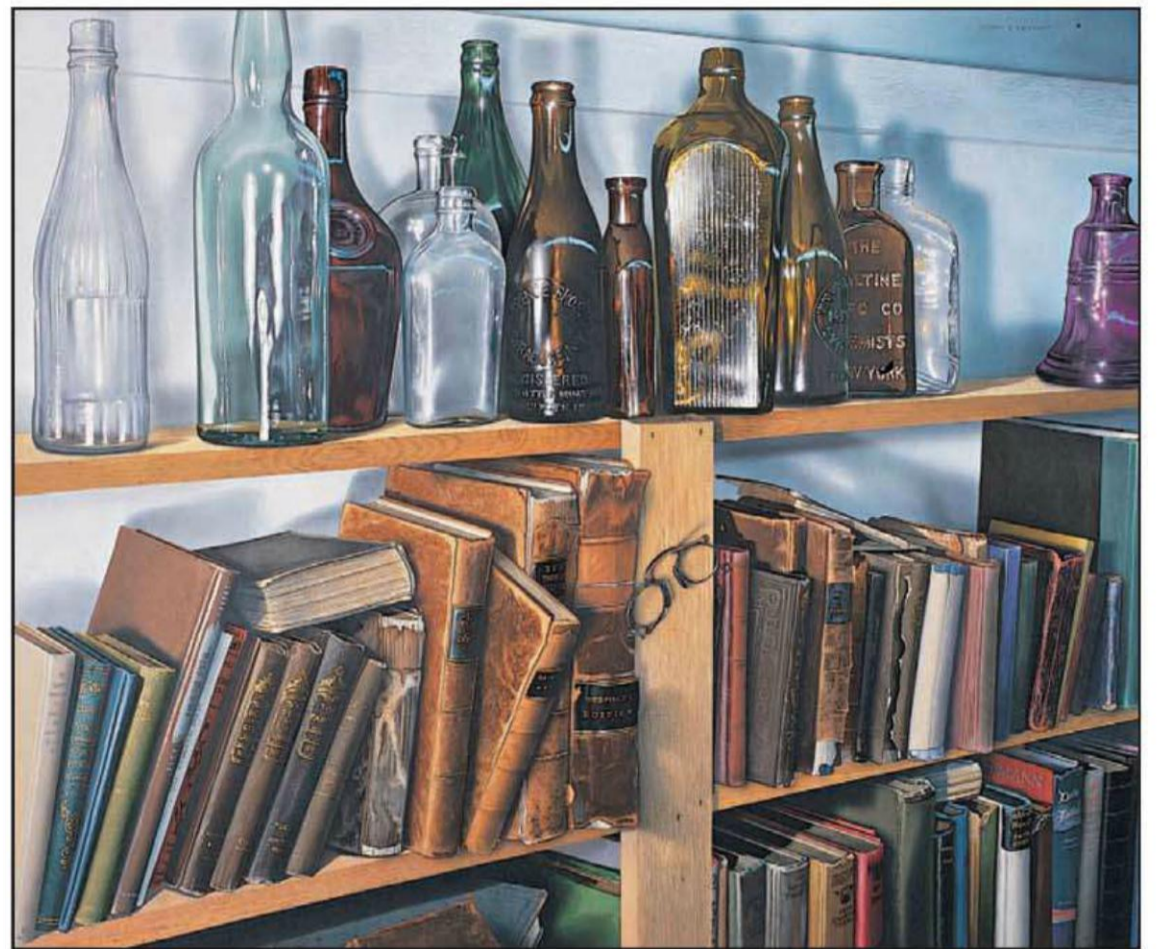
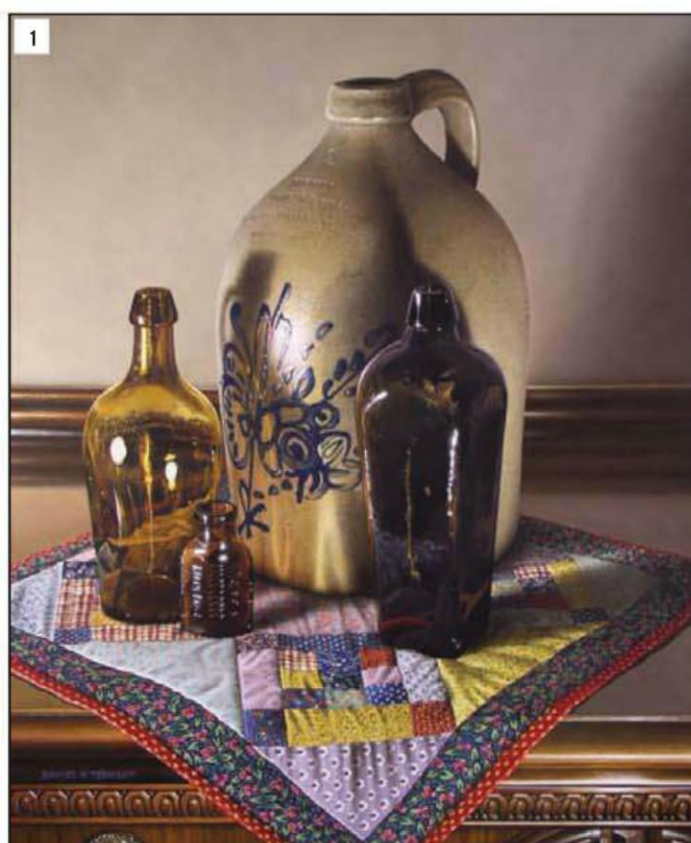
## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

When beginning a realistic painting, keep the following tips in mind: (1) Resolve the drawing—composition, design, and balance—before you pick up a brush. There should be no guesswork; painting has enough challenges without having to worry about the fundamentals. (2) When you get frustrated, put the work away for a few days. Don't throw anything out when you're upset—it could be a mistake. (3) Use a mirror to look at your painting in progress. It gives a completely new view of your work. (4) When painting, find a comfortable place where you can make a mess. (5) Make color charts and keep them handy for mixing colors. These charts are important. One summer I made 1,200 color mixtures and placed them in a notebook for reference. (6) Finally, use this book as a reference for techniques and tips. The order in which you tackle a painting is crucial, so follow the suggestions throughout, and you will succeed.

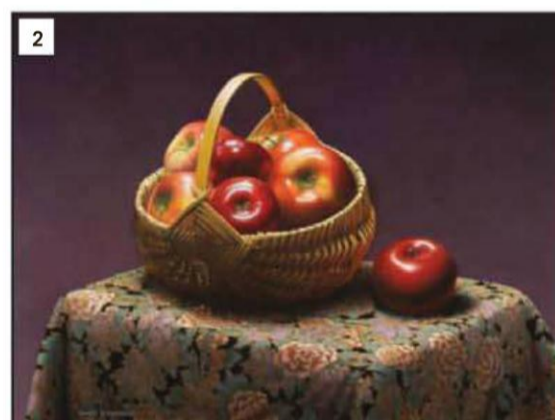
## COMPOSITION

Composition refers simply to the way objects are placed in a painting. When beautifully painted, an unimportant item can become a masterpiece. The same is true of a composition; a truly original composition can turn a good painting into a great painting. Here are some suggestions for improving your composition skills: 1) Study the great masters. Place tracing paper over their work and trace; then examine where they placed items in their paintings. 2) Try overlapping objects. 3) Place some objects apart from all others to draw your eye to them. 4) Make some objects bigger and some farther away to create depth. 5) Let shadows and interesting lighting create a mood (under lighting, noon lighting, side lighting, back lighting). These tips can make something commonplace appear exciting and unique. Composition skills improve simply by composing and experimenting. Over time, each artist develops his or her own way of designing a composition.

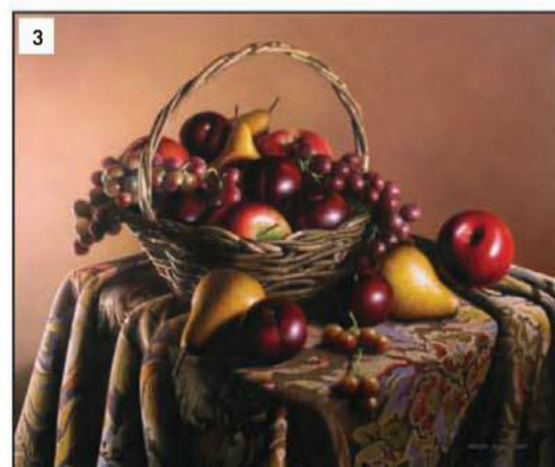
**1** Another example of color harmony is to paint a still life with a limited palette. This painting consists of mainly browns and earth tones, so when you add cool colors, they really stand out. Don't get stuck in the horizontal mode, either. Completing a vertically oriented painting can be a refreshing change. Vertical paintings generally have more tension than horizontal paintings.



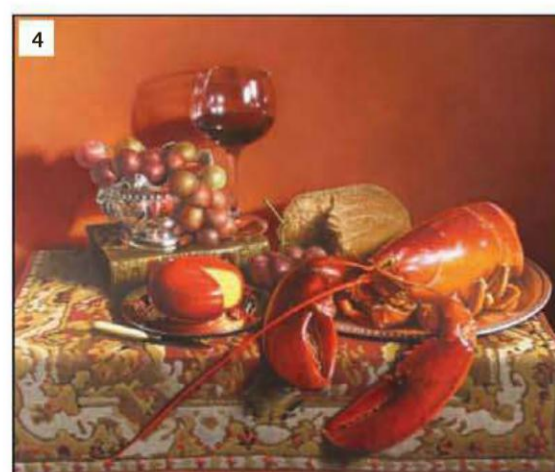
*Still Life in a Bookshop* (40" x 50") gouache on illustration board, private collection



**2** Notice that I placed the basket slightly to the left of center. It's best to avoid placing the main subject in the very center of the painting. This is sometimes called a “bull's eye” type of composition, and it is the weakest design for a work of fine art (although it can work well in advertising).



**3** Here is another example of placing the main subject off center. To balance the large basket, I placed a prominent red apple on the right. Think of your painting as though it is being weighed on a scale. Make sure it is balanced. If you place something on the left, try placing something on the right to counterbalance the “weight” of the object on the left. There are many different ways to compose a picture, but having a sense of balance is an important aspect.



**4** This painting is an example of dramatic lighting. The main light source was placed at right, and the secondary lighting was placed at left. For a more three-dimensional feeling to your work, try bouncing light into the shadows instead of dreary darks. You can have color even in the shadows. You can use a reflector board made out of white cardboard, illustration board, and even aluminum foil stretched over a board to help create colors in the shadows. The high wine glass is balanced by the heavy body of the lobster, and the red cheese wheel adds more balance to the reddish-orange lobster. I also painted a warm background so the painting would have more color harmony.

# PLANNING A PAINTING

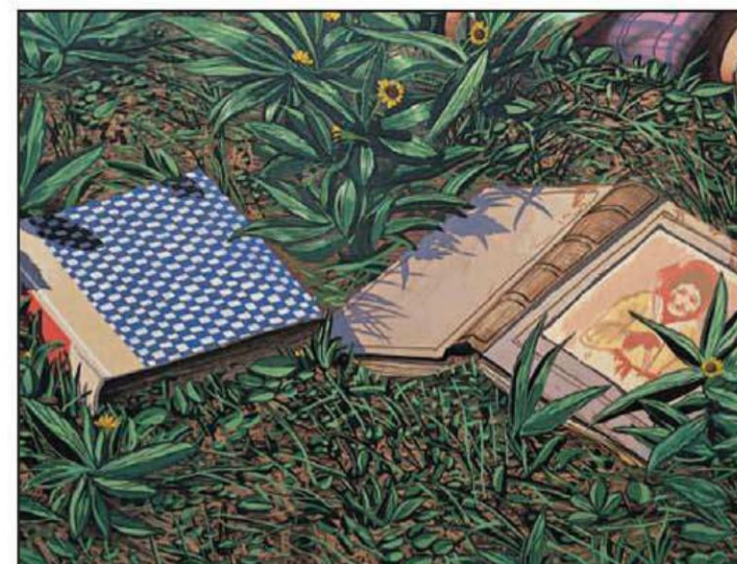
*A logical, sequential method* of painting eliminates guesswork. A painting is done in layers—usually no more than five. Always start with the most distant layer, then the closer layer, and so on, until you reach the layer closest to the viewer.



**BACKGROUND** The background is always painted first, whether it is a still life or landscape. The background establishes the depth of the painting and provides an underpainting over which closer objects are painted. Paint the background in layers—the sky, the farthest hill, the next closer hill, the trees on each hill, and then the field.



**MIDDLE GROUND** When the background is complete, paint the middle ground. Here, the middle ground is the sleeping young woman. The next layer is the foreground, which completes the painting. Paint the plants on the ground rather sharp and pointed in contrast to the woman's soft skin and worn denim shorts.



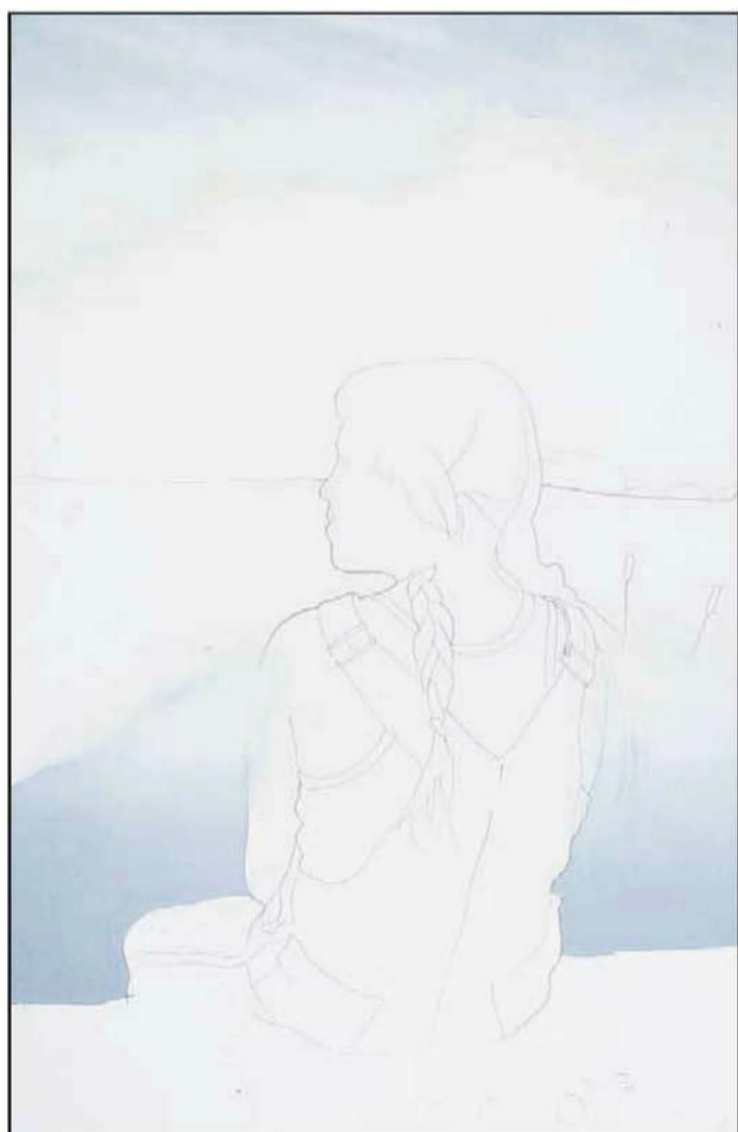
**FOREGROUND** The last step is always to add the final details in the foreground. Paint the detailed books and finish the various plants that grow in front of and around the model. If you remember the painting order—(1) background, (2) middle ground, and (3) foreground—your level of success will increase with each painting.

*Dreaming* (40" x 60") gouache on museum board, private collection

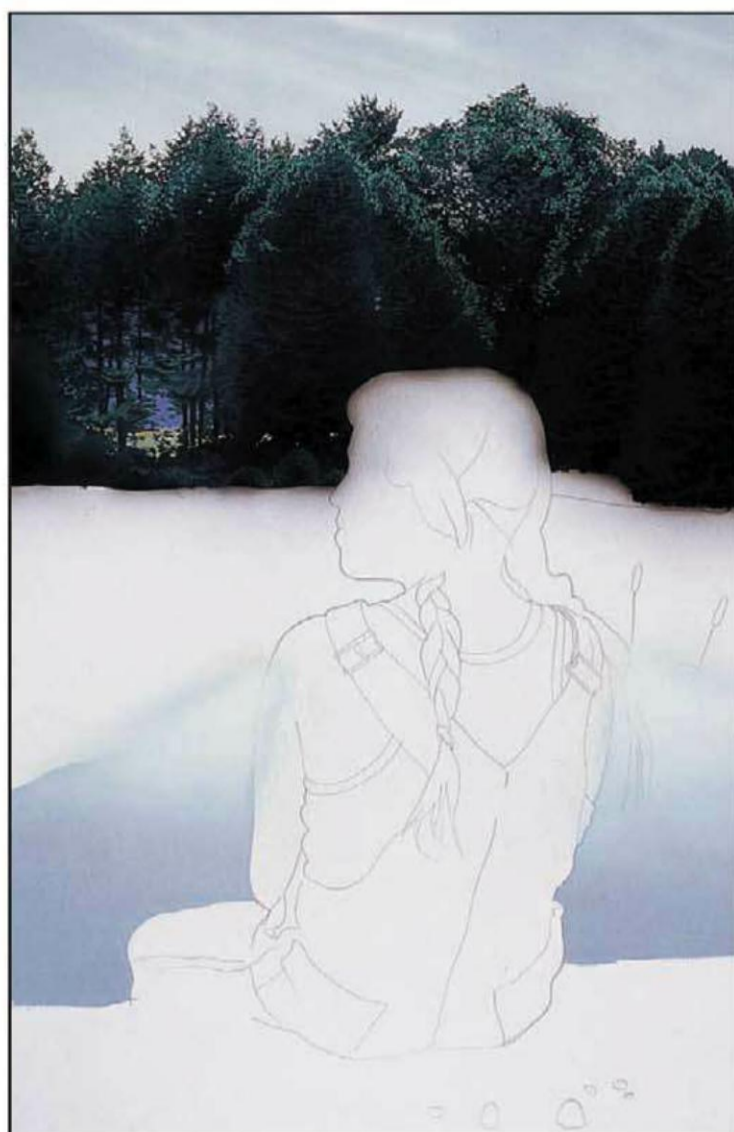


**ECHOING LINES** This large figure painting was meant to symbolize summer. The rolling hills repeat the curvature of the body of the young woman.

# DEMONSTRATION: AUGUST AFTERNOON



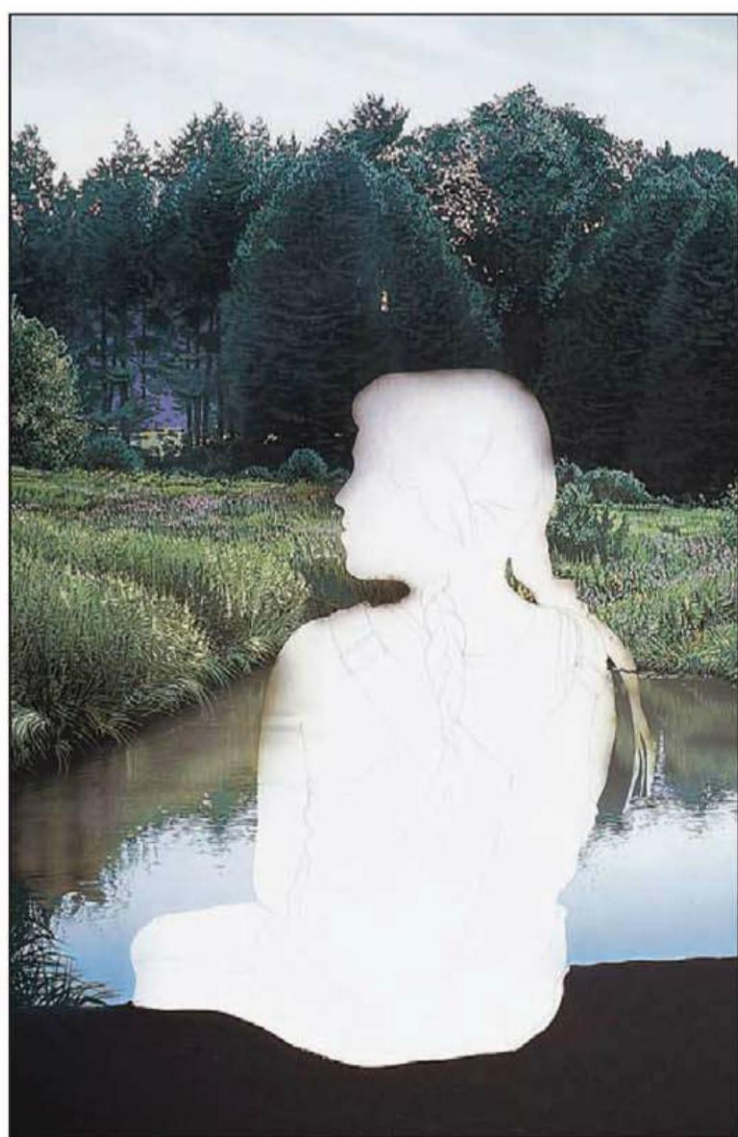
**1** Draw the subject on 30" x 40" illustration board with an HB pencil (an HB makes a dark line that does not smear). Lightly indicate the background trees and work out the details of the young girl. With an airbrush, spray a mixture of cerulean blue, Naples yellow, and zinc white (all gouache) in the sky to achieve an atmospheric effect. Airbrush the reflection of the sky in the water with cerulean blue, zinc white, and cobalt blue.



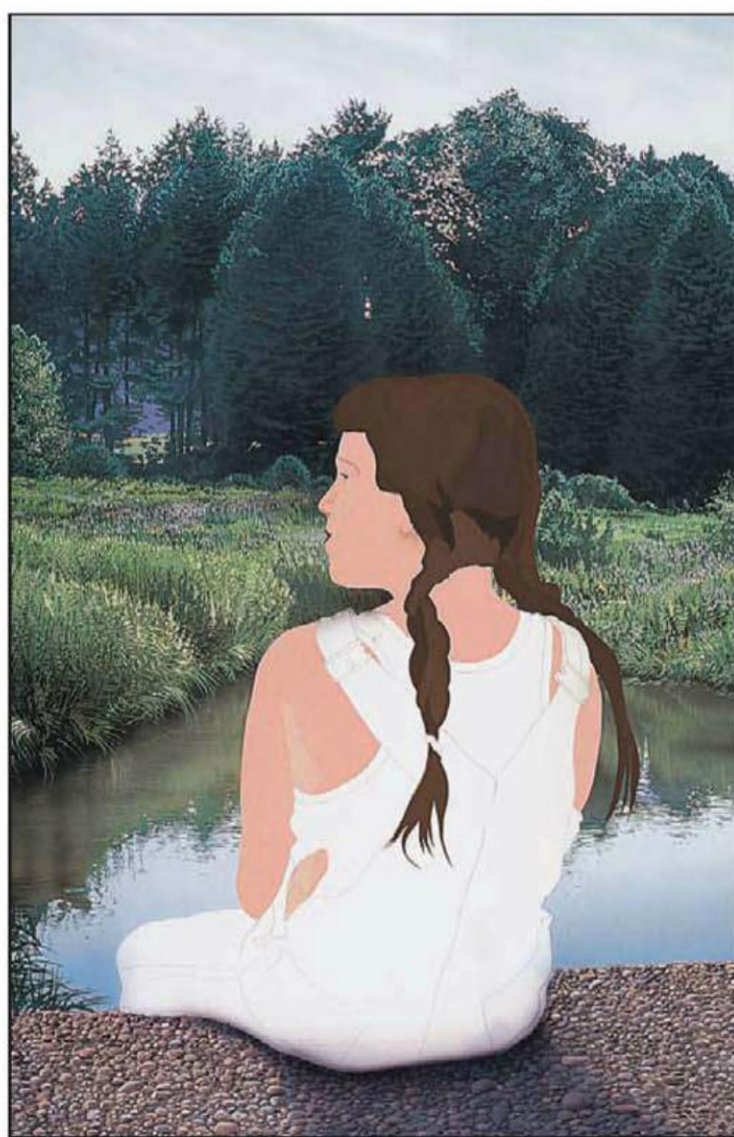
**2** Paint the elements from back to front—that is, paint the objects farthest away first. Paint the background stand of tall pines with viridian green and black gouache to create a deep, cool color. Over this, use a brush to highlight the areas in the trees that are backlit by the sun.



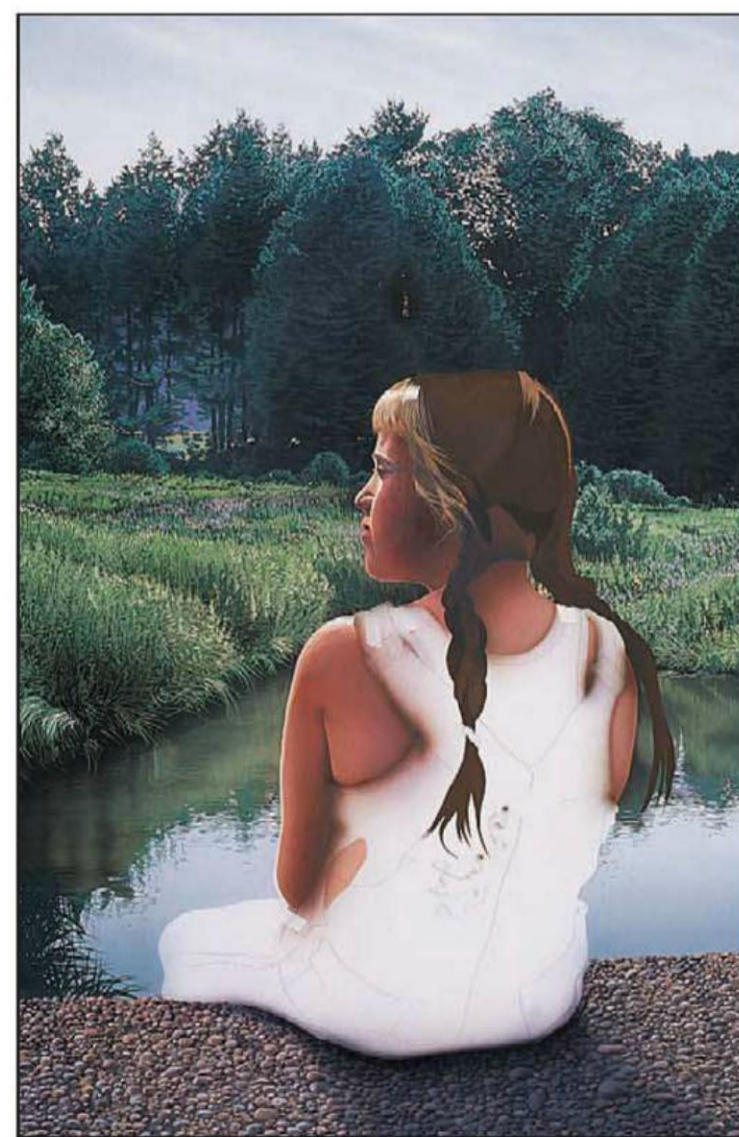
**3** Then paint the middle ground—an overgrown meadow lush with goldenrods, brown-eyed Susans, and grasses—with very dark viridian and ivory black. Then add the reflections of the trees in the stream with a mixture of viridian, cerulean blue, ivory black, and white. Remember: With gouache, it is best to paint from dark to light.



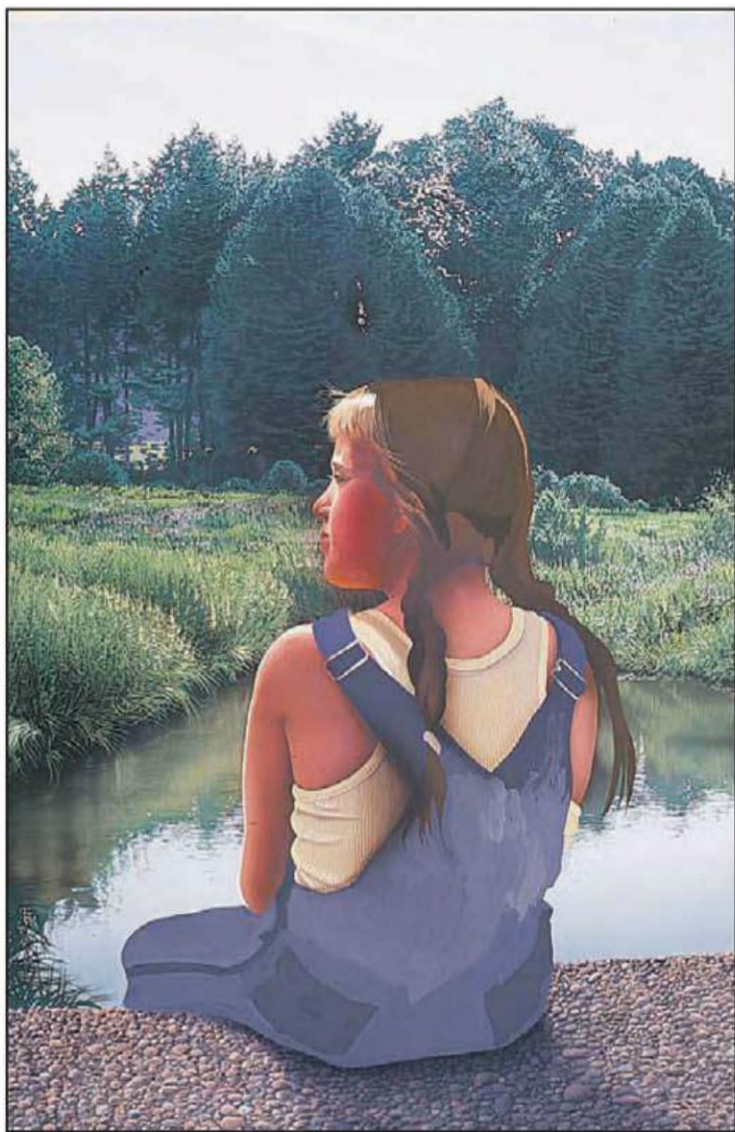
**4** Add highlights of zinc white mixed with cerulean blue and viridian to the background trees and paint the sky behind the trees. Paint the meadow with various shades of yellow ochre mixed with viridian, as well as whites, yellows, and lavenders. Intermittently airbrush over the clumps of weeds in the meadow with transparent glazes of sap green and ivory black watercolor. Then establish the reflections in the water by painting a mixture of viridian, yellow ochre, and ivory black.



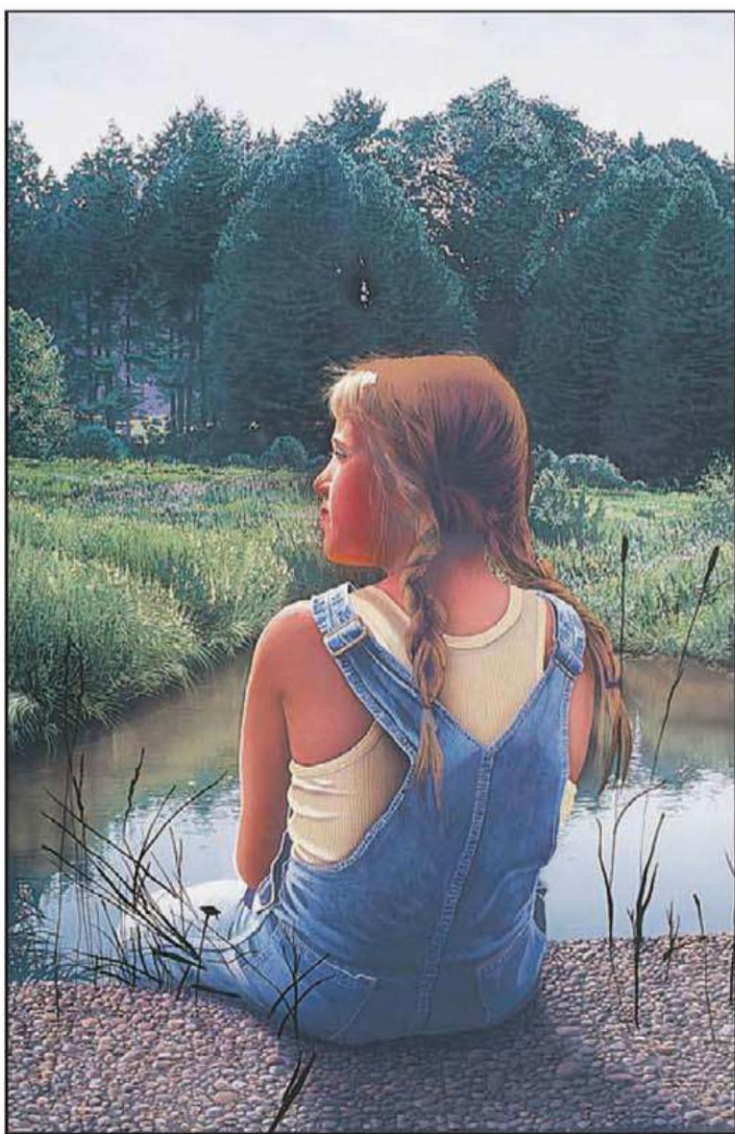
**5** Paint the foreground pebbles with a mixture of burnt umber, cobalt blue, and zinc white. Other pebbles can be ivory black, cobalt blue, and white. With the airbrush and transparent watercolors, paint the cast shadow from the girl. Then lay in the basic flesh tones and darken the hair. The flesh tones are cadmium red, white, and yellow ochre. The hair is burnt sienna and ivory black. Both have been painted with a medium-sized watercolor brush (#4).



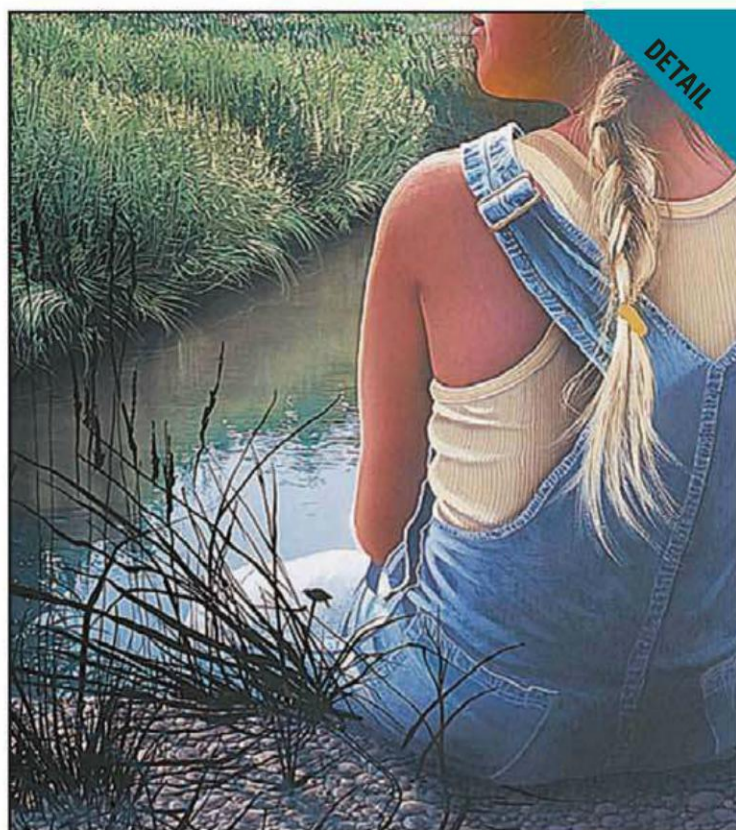
**6** Spend time painting the flesh tones to contrast with the highlights on the face and to create a backlit effect. Apply some pure white to the hair to gauge the values.



**7** Complete the tank top with Naples yellow, zinc white, and yellow. Using a small watercolor brush, create highlights with a lighter tint of the tank top color. Use a rigger to get the weave of the tank top. Then paint the overalls with cobalt blue mixed with ivory black and zinc white.

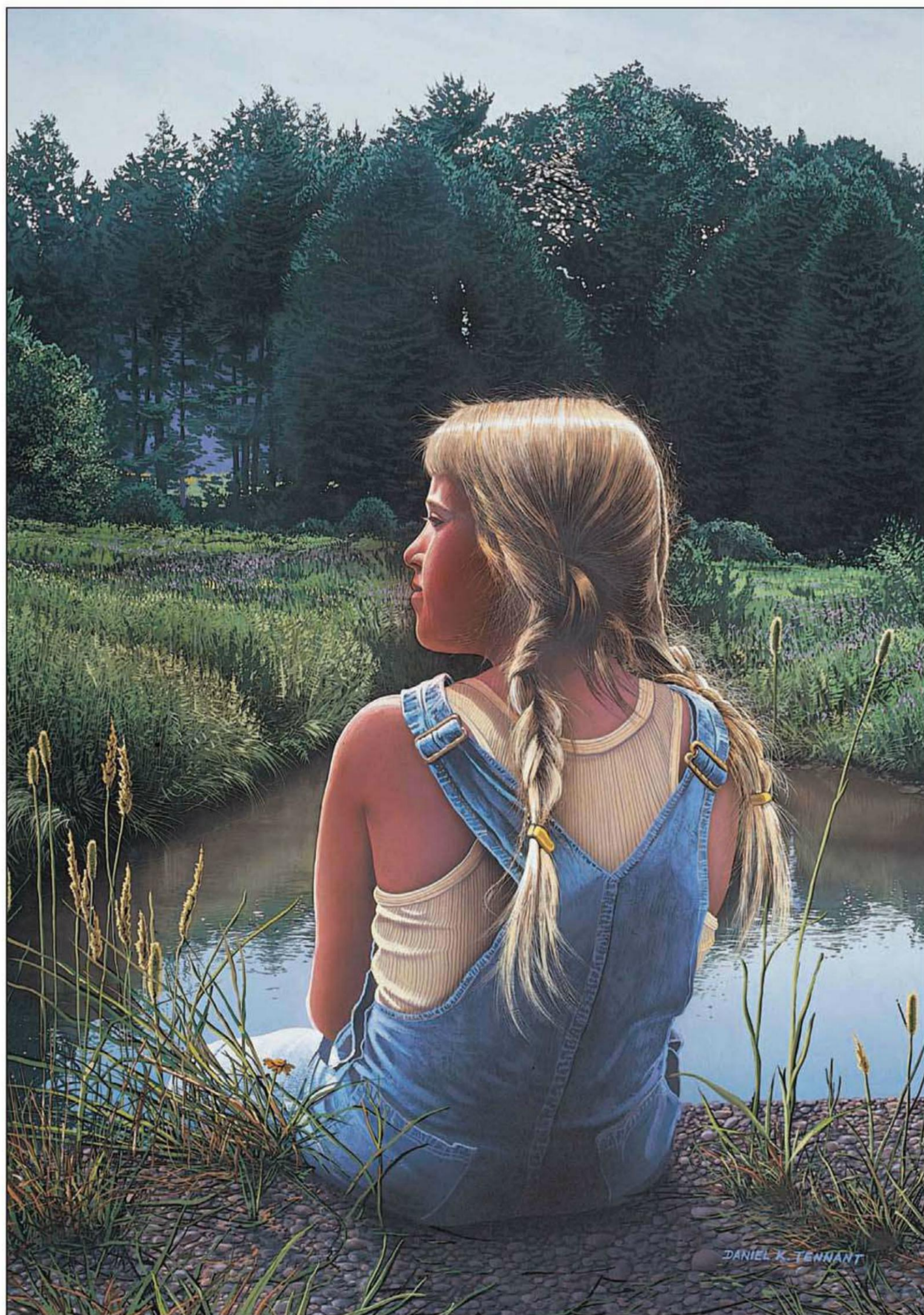


**8** After the overalls are painted, use the airbrush to place shadows on the lower part of the girl's body. Also indicate the grasses where she is sitting. Paint the overalls with different mixtures of cobalt blue, ivory black, and zinc white gouache. Airbrush the shadows on the overalls with ivory black watercolor. For the highlights on the overalls, use a mixture of cobalt blue and zinc white gouache. Paint the pure white highlights on the overalls with zinc white gouache.



**GRASS AND HAIR  
DETAIL** Paint the silhouettes of the grasses in the foreground with straight ivory black. Use a rigger to underpaint the grass with viridian and black, and then highlight the grass with yellow ochre and white. Highlight the hair with a small watercolor brush using Naples yellow, zinc white, and yellow.

**9** After finishing the grasses, tone down the orange of the girl's face by airbrushing violet over the chin area. Then paint the barrettes. Finally, re-establish the pure whites so they appear bright and clean.



*AUGUST AFTERNOON* (30" x 40") gouache on illustration board, private collection

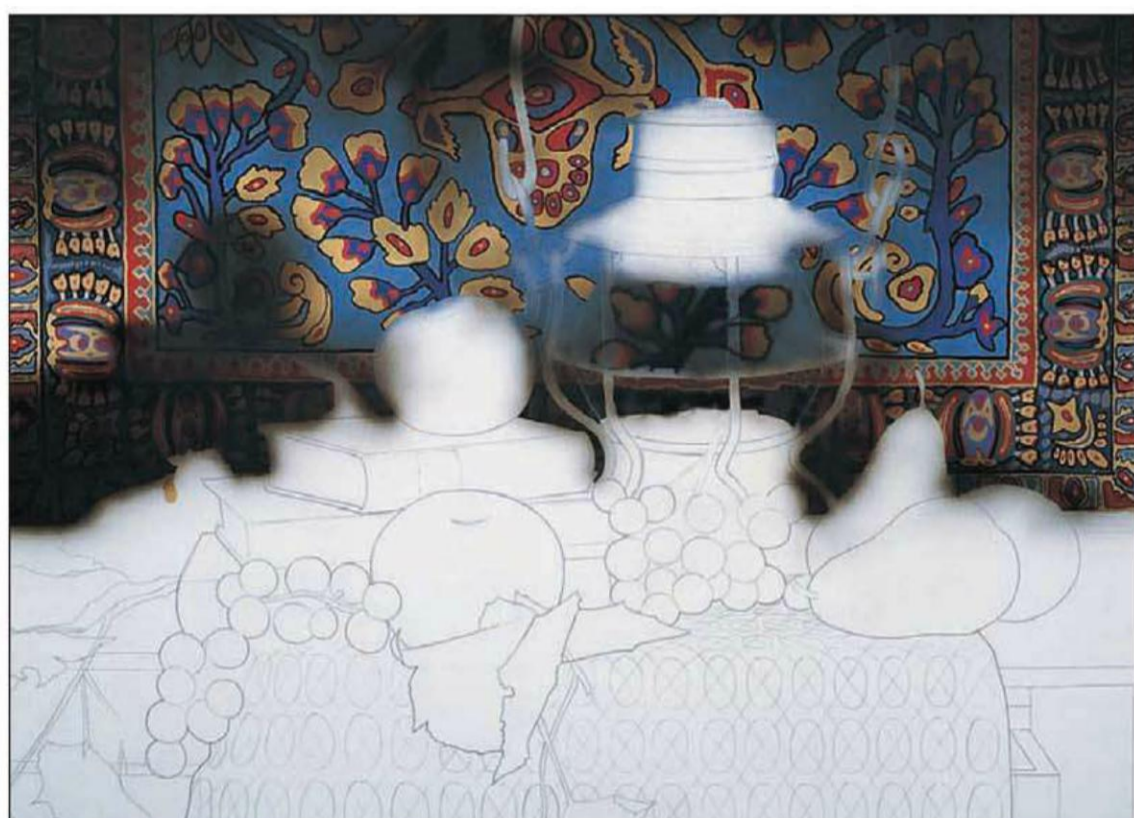
# DEMONSTRATION: *STILL LIFE WITH LANTERN*



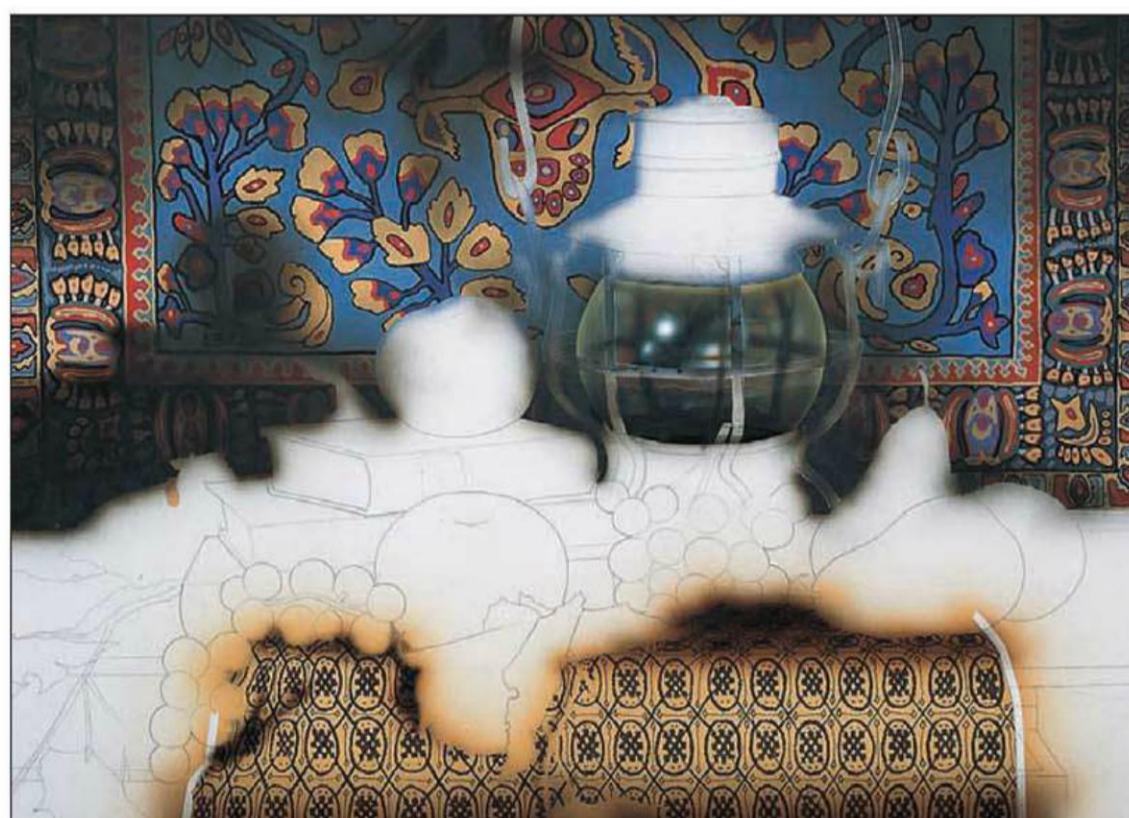
**1** The most important aspect of a successful realistic painting is a strong drawing. Transfer the drawing to hot-pressed illustration board as explained on page 4.



**2** Paint the background with thinned cerulean blue and cobalt blue gouache. Then complete the rug patterns with straight cobalt blue, red, and yellow—all outlined with ivory black—using a small watercolor brush. Note that the rug is flat at this point—it has no shading or highlights. Because gouache is precise, it is being used in a linear manner in this painting.



**3** Airbrush shadows in with a transparent watercolor mix of burnt umber and ivory black. Use watercolor so you can see the detail through the shadows. Shadows should tone down color, but they shouldn't destroy the detail.



**4** Use ivory black, burnt umber, and yellow ochre gouache to airbrush over the globe of the lantern. Then mask off the globe, and airbrush the foreground cloth with a base of Naples yellow gouache and a shade of burnt umber gouache. With a small watercolor brush, paint the pattern on the cloth with a mixture of burnt umber and ivory black gouache. Airbrush a cast shadow over the lower portion of the cloth using ivory black watercolor.

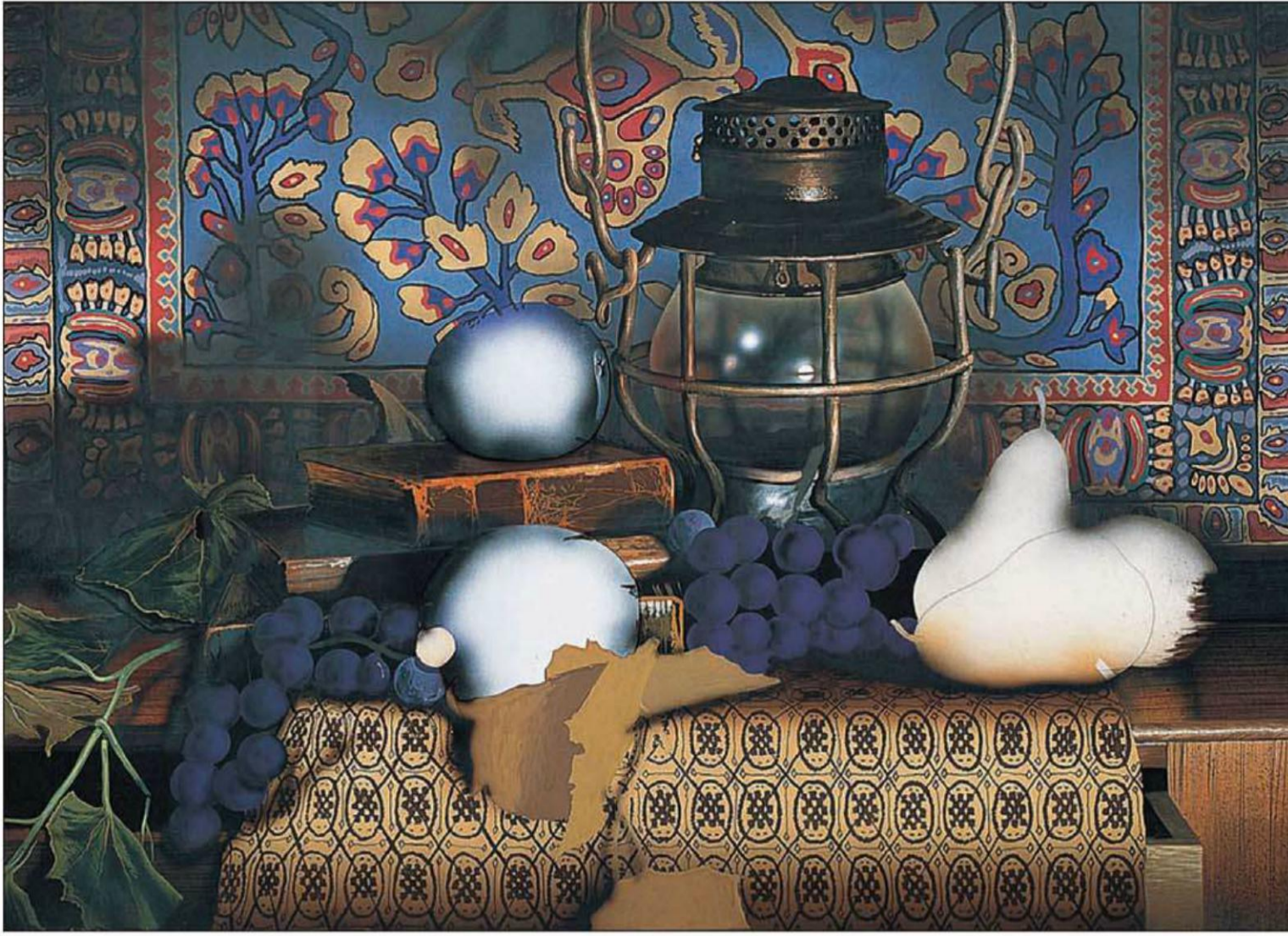


**5** Paint in the basic colors of each object—except for the apples and pears, which are untouched. These basic colors are darker than the objects will remain. Apply gouache with watercolor brushes. The grapes are underpainted with a mixture of cobalt blue and ivory black gouache.

## USING STENCILING FILM



**PAINTING THE APPLE** When spraying with gouache, use stenciling film to isolate the fruit. Next shade and then highlight the fruit. Spray the apple with red gouache, and then spray the left side with ivory black gouache. Paint the speckles, stem, and highlights with a brush. (See "Making a Stencil" on page 26.)

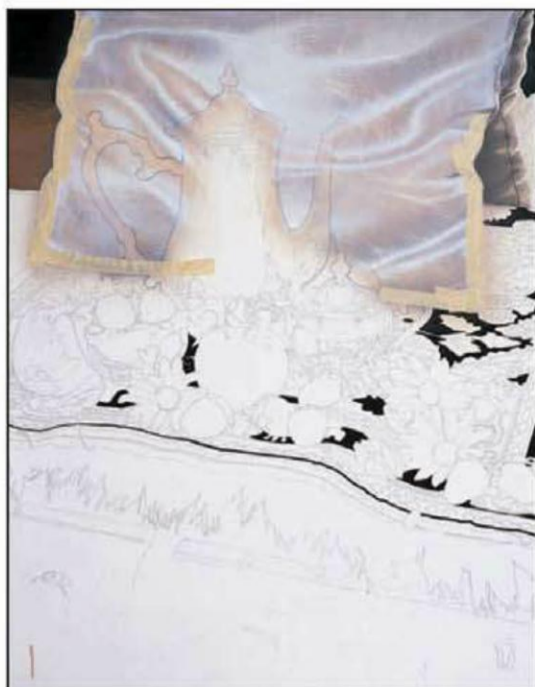


**6** Finish the books and lantern. Then airbrush black watercolor under the upper apple and behind the lower apple. Also airbrush the cast shadows from the pears, and then paint in the leaves and stems. Paint the highlights from the wood over the spattered patina and the lines of the wood grain. Airbrush the grapes to define their outlines. Also airbrush the shadows from the books and leaf shadows in the foreground.



**7** Finally, paint the pears, grapes, and foreground leaves—in that order. Remember: Always work from back to front. This saves a lot of touch-up work and provides a logical, sequential method of painting.

# DEMONSTRATION: STILL LIFE WITH SATIN PILLOW



**1** Use an HB pencil on hot-pressed illustration board to create the detailed drawing. Consider each part of the composition so there will be no guesswork while painting. Next, paint the basic shapes of the pillow with a mixture of Naples yellow, zinc white, and alizarin crimson. Then airbrush in the folds and highlights with tints and shades of the same colors. Paint in some wrinkles with a rigger and scratch out some with a single-edge razor blade. Blacken a few sections of the Persian rug to gauge the colors. Cover the edges of the pillow with drafting tape to prevent the rug colors from bleeding.



**2** Paint the Persian rug with basic colors: light cobalt blue, dusty pink, browns, and off-whites. Outline areas with pure black, and use an airbrush for the cast shadows. Create texture by cross-hatching over the entire rug with transparent watercolors (ultramarine blue and ivory black).



**3** Paint the foreground oak drawers with a mixture of yellow ochre, burnt sienna, and burnt umber. Use the airbrush to paint the basic patterns of the wood grain and the cast shadows. Paint the fringe of the rug with a dark mixture of burnt umber, cobalt blue, and Naples yellow. The underpainting is much darker than the actual fringe, which helps create an illusion of shadow.



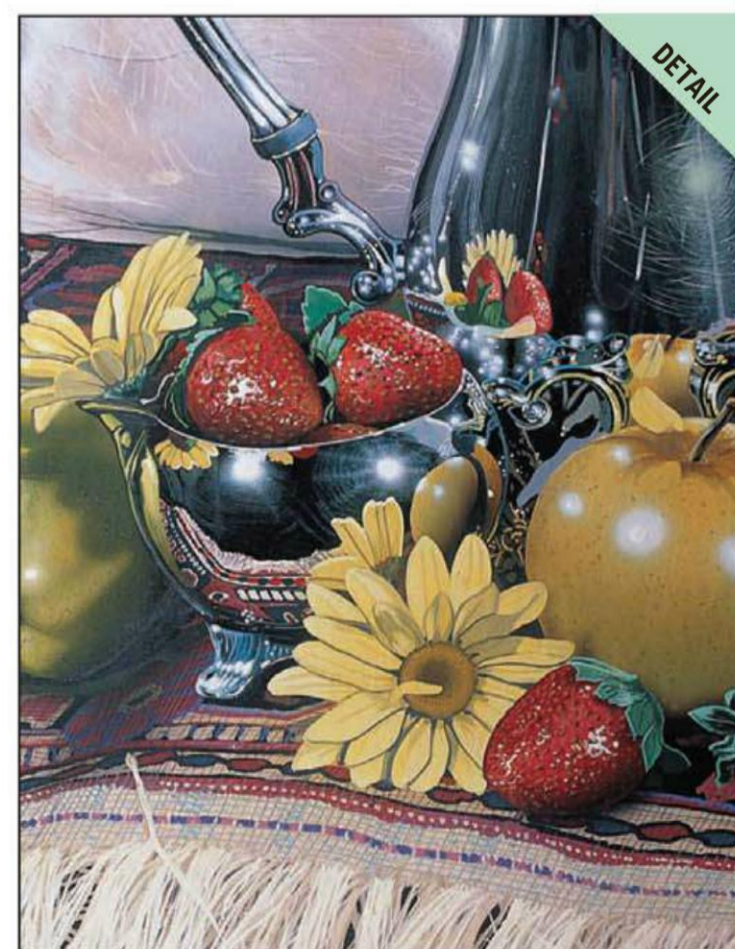
**4** Apply a lighter layer of fringe over the underpainting with Naples yellow and burnt umber. Notice that portions of the darker fringe underneath show through. Paint the knobs on the drawers and the keyhole on the right, and then re-establish highlights on the drawers.



**5** Complete the highlights on the fringe. Then paint the basic colors of the strawberries and the top of the teapot. Paint the spout with pure ivory black; then finish the tiny knob on the lid of the teapot.



**6** Complete all the silver and the three apples. Then paint the flowers. Paint the tops of the strawberries last. Silver is easiest to paint by making the entire underpainting black and then carefully observing all the reflections around it. Silver takes on all the colors and shapes around it, and it usually distorts the shapes.



**CREAMER DETAIL** This close-up of the creamer and surrounding objects demonstrates the precision that gouache can achieve. Notice that the reflections in the creamer are of the surrounding objects. The opacity of gouache makes it a wonderful medium for building layers of light over dark throughout the painting. Additionally, a lot can be accomplished in an hour of painting because gouache dries so quickly.



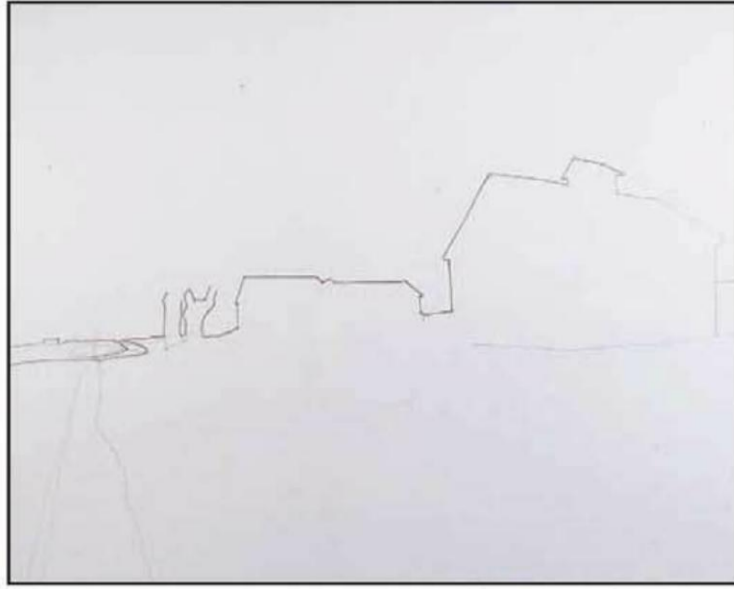


7 Shade the strawberries slightly with black watercolor. Then paint the seeds and add highlights with permanent white gouache in the proper areas. Permanent white

gouache white is a good permanent hue when used in its pure state but should never be used as a mixing white.

# DEMONSTRATION: *LAST LIGHT*

**1** Establish the drawing with an HB pencil on illustration board. There is no need for much detail work in the trees because this area will be covered with paint. After the sky is painted, re-establish the background trees and detail by using the tracing paper technique. (See page 4.)



**2** Paint the sky with a large, soft-haired flat watercolor brush and a mix of cerulean blue, cobalt blue, and zinc white. Lightly airbrush the yellow clouds over the blue sky with zinc white and cerulean blue mixed with Naples yellow. Try to create light, fluffy clouds; they should not appear solid.



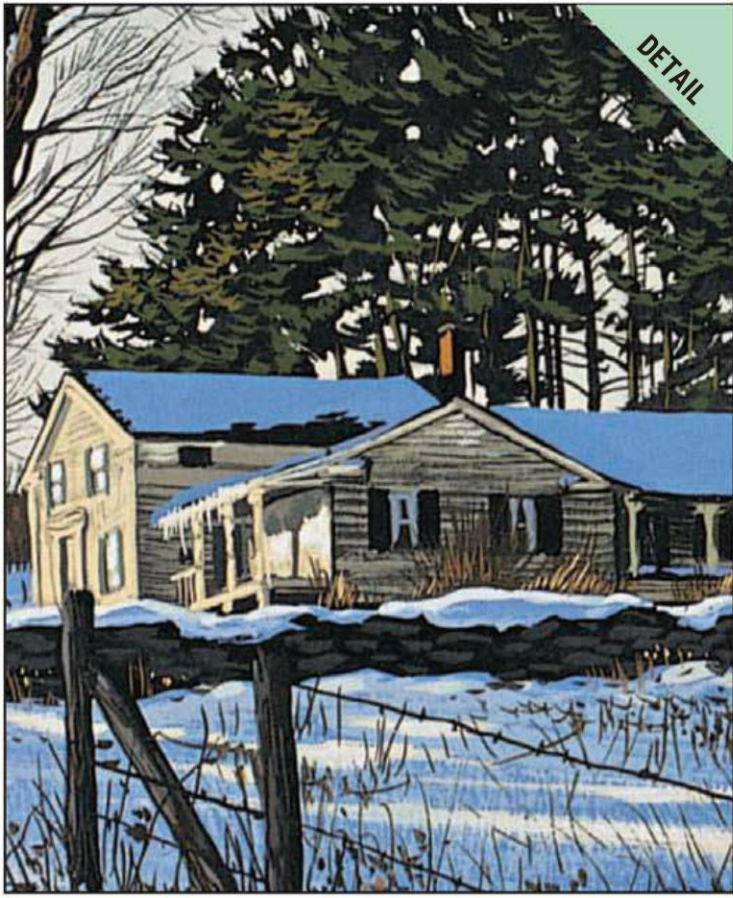
**3** When the sky is complete, paint the background. Paint the large pine trees, the distant trees along the horizon, and the receding road with a small watercolor brush. The pine trees are ivory black and viridian. The background trees are burnt umber and ivory black.



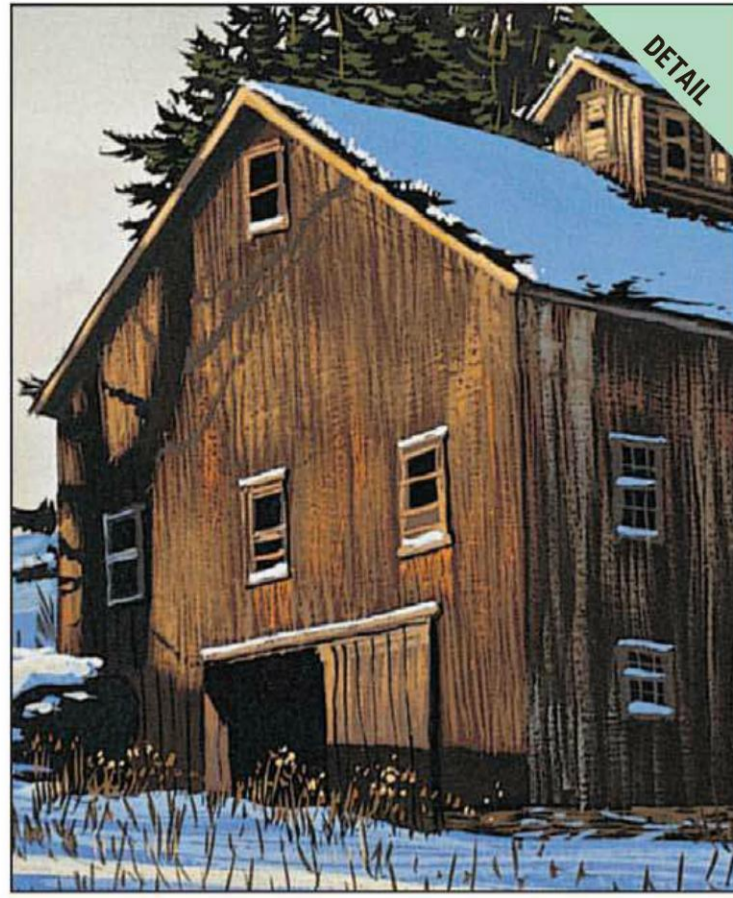
**4** Lay in a medium blue of cobalt blue and zinc white, creating the foreground snow. Then add the road and front fence posts. Save the weeds that grow in front of the house for the finishing touches. Paint a landscape in layers to avoid many technical difficulties.



**5** Underpaint the buildings. Note that the underpaintings are darker than the final colors on the buildings. When the underpainting is dry, drybrush and spatter the textures on the weathered old barn. The front of the farmhouse is bathed in a warm, beautiful evening light.



**TREES, HOUSE, AND SNOW DETAIL**  
 Notice how the background trees are painted in layers from dark to medium to lighter colors. The same technique is used for the house and snow.



**BARN AND SNOW DETAIL**  
 Only when sunlight is hitting snow directly does it ever appear pure white. Look for the blues of snow on sunny days.

*LAST LIGHT* (16" x 20") gouache on illustration board, collection of Fran and Kay Wildenstein

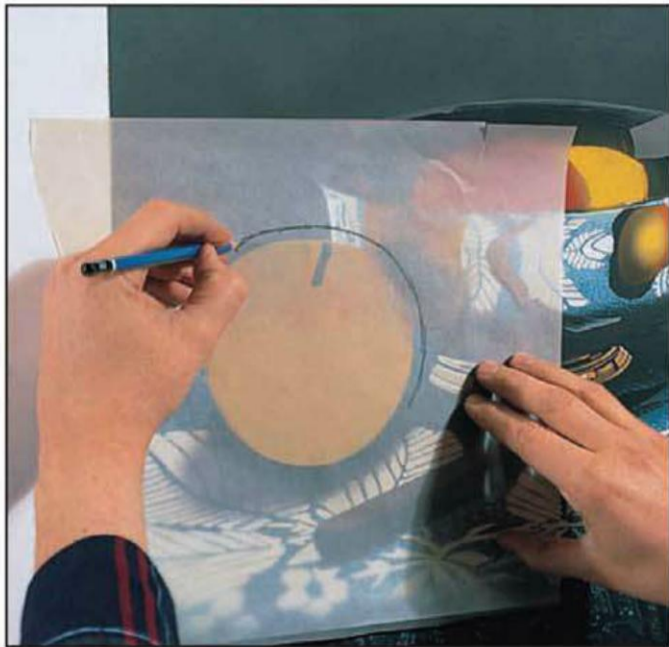


6 To complete the painting, re-establish the highlights, and then add the grasses and minute details throughout the painting. (See details above.) This enhances the final

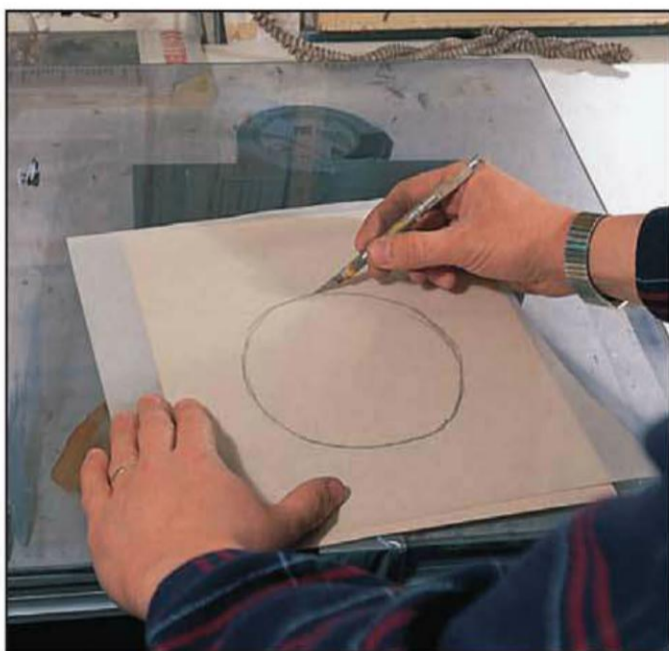
vestiges of the light raking dramatically across the field. Then repaint the weeds in greater numbers.

# DEMONSTRATION: *STILL LIFE WITH BLUE CLOTH*

## MAKING A STENCIL



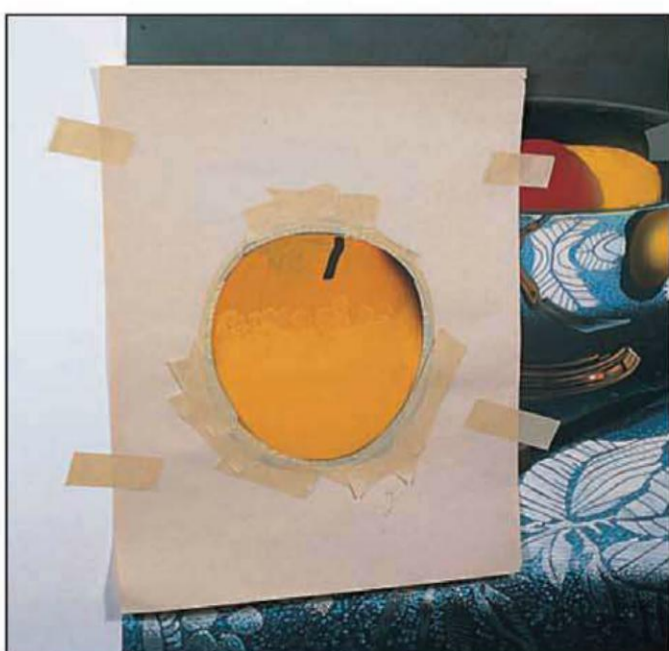
**STEP ONE** You can make stencils with tracing paper, newsprint, and drafting tape. This method is easy and inexpensive; plus, there is less tacky area to stick to the painting. Place a piece of tracing paper over each object to be airbrushed and then trace the object with an HB pencil at a slightly larger size.



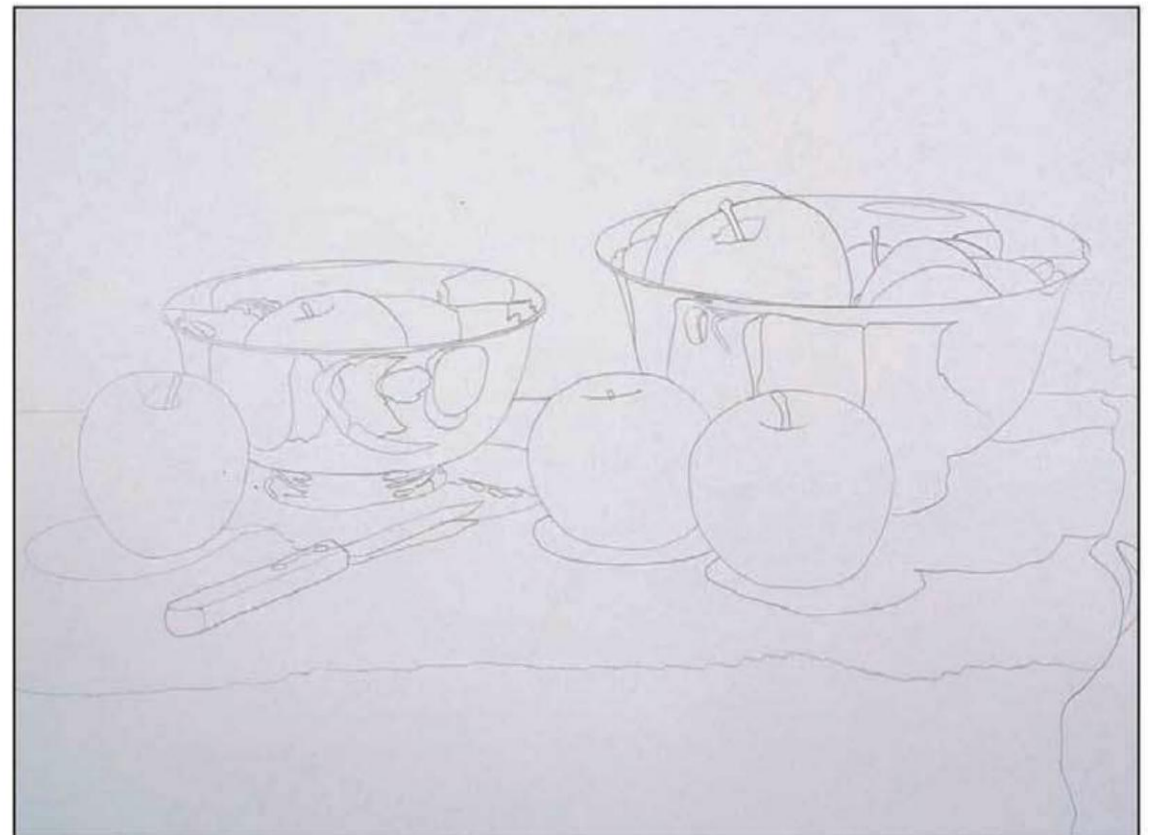
**STEP TWO** Place the tracing paper over a piece of newsprint and cut out the shapes with a craft knife. Use a piece of heavy glass as a cutting board to ensure a precise cut.



**STEP THREE** Throw out the tracing paper and tape the newsprint stencil over the object. Note: Use drafting tape rather than masking tape to ensure that the paint will not lift when the stencil is removed. To make the drafting tape less sticky, press it down on your pants or shirt a few times. The lint will make it less tacky.



**STEP FOUR** Use 1/4" drafting tape to cover the inside edge of the stencil (around the object) and affix the stencil to the surface of the painting. After airbrushing, allow the paint to dry and then carefully remove the tape to detach the stencil. To prevent the tape from lifting away paint, heat it with a hair dryer. The heat reduces the stickiness of the tape.



**1** Sketch the drawing with an HB pencil on hot-pressed illustration board, concentrating on the large basic shapes. The details will be transferred from the drawing once the painting is begun.



**2** Paint the background with an airbrush and black, burnt umber, Naples yellow, alizarin crimson, and viridian gouache. Paint the foreground with a brush, using cerulean blue, cobalt blue, ivory black, and zinc white.



**3** After establishing the cloth pattern, use transparent black watercolor to create shadows on the overhanging cloth. Again, the airbrush is an excellent tool for applying watercolor washes over gouache.



**4** Apply a gouache underpainting for the fruit. Paint most of the fruit lighter than the true local color, but make the reflections of the fruit on the silver darker. Paint the apples from light to dark; the silver from dark to light. The airbrush makes painting apples easy; gouache can be sprayed on in smooth gradations—just like the skin of an apple.



**5** Painting silver means painting the reflections of the colors around it. Look for large masses of color in the reflections first, and then paint the small details. Notice that the cloth, background, fruit, and floodlights are reflected in the silver—all somewhat distorted.

*STILL LIFE WITH BLUE CLOTH* (24" x 34") gouache on illustration board, Collection of Dan and Sarah Harrington



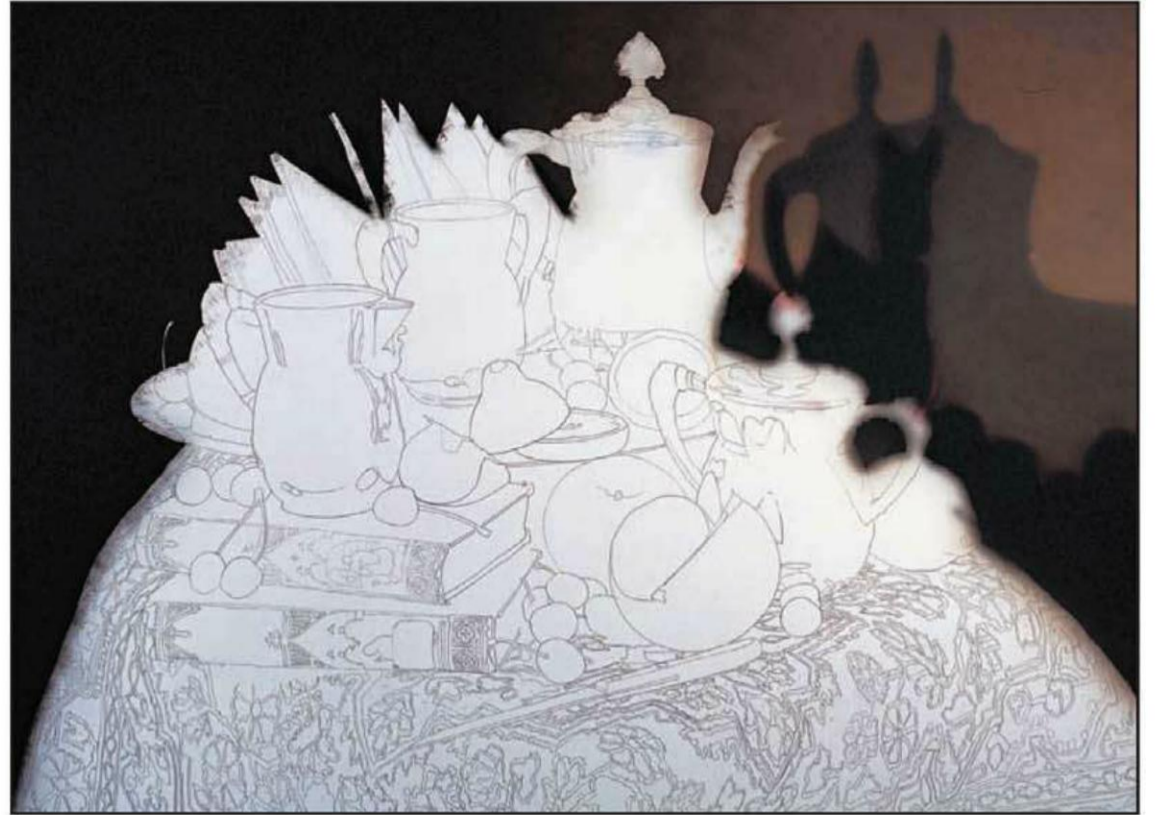
**6** Complete the painting by finishing the apples and knife. First, airbrush highlights on the apples with permanent white, and then finish off with a small dab of white and a

#00 brush. The highlights create a shimmer of intense light on the apples.

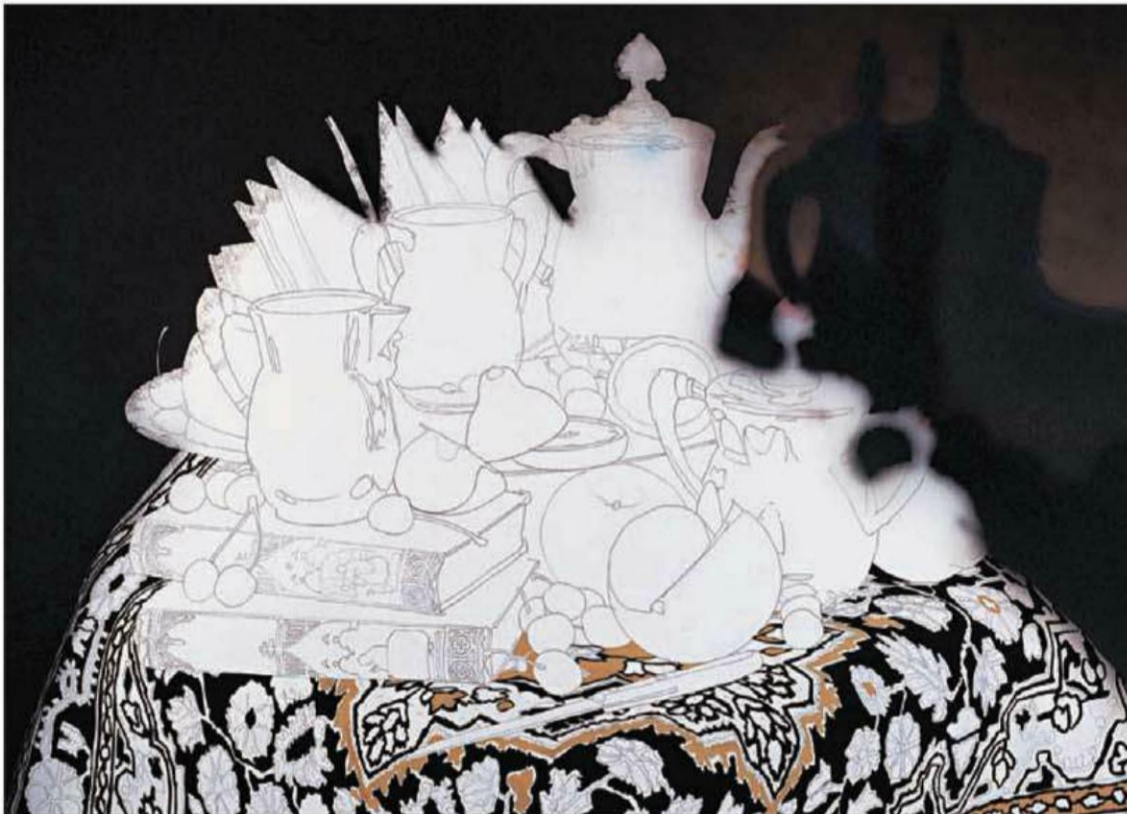
# DEMONSTRATION: *HEIRLOOMS WITH CHERRIES*



**1** Work out all the details of your composition in a drawing. Then use an HB pencil to transfer your drawing to an eight-ply museum board. The board will be a sturdy support for your painting.



**2** Apply ivory black, alizarin crimson, and ultramarine blue gouache to the background with a #4 watercolor brush. Airbrush highlights on the right side using burnt sienna, alizarin crimson, and Naples yellow gouache. Where the shadows overlap, create an even darker shadow with ivory black gouache.



**3** Start filling in the patterns of the foreground rug with ivory black and yellow ochre. To judge the other colors you will use later, gauge the darkest color early on in the painting process.



**4** Now add other colors to the rug. Take your time perfecting the designs with blues, reds, and browns. Mix each color with a touch of black to make it darker, creating an underpainting for the tapestry.



**5** Once the tapestry's underpainting is finished, bring out the brilliant colors in the patterns. Apply a layer of local color with yellows, blues, and reds. These are the colors the tapestry will remain, except in areas hit by direct light or areas of shadow.



**6** Airbrush a dark wash of ivory black and alizarin crimson watercolor over the right side of the rug that is in shadow. Notice how the tapestry details are still visible beneath the wash. Using watercolor over gouache creates very effective shadows.

## BOOKS DETAIL



**STEP ONE** Create an underpainting for the large books in the foreground with burnt umber, zinc white, and a touch of ivory black. Do not use permanent white when mixing colors, as it may cause other colors to fade.



**STEP TWO** Paint over the books with tints of the colors in step one. Now fill in the gold designs with yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, and zinc white. Spray the shadowed areas with black watercolor, and then add pure white highlights in the gold designs.



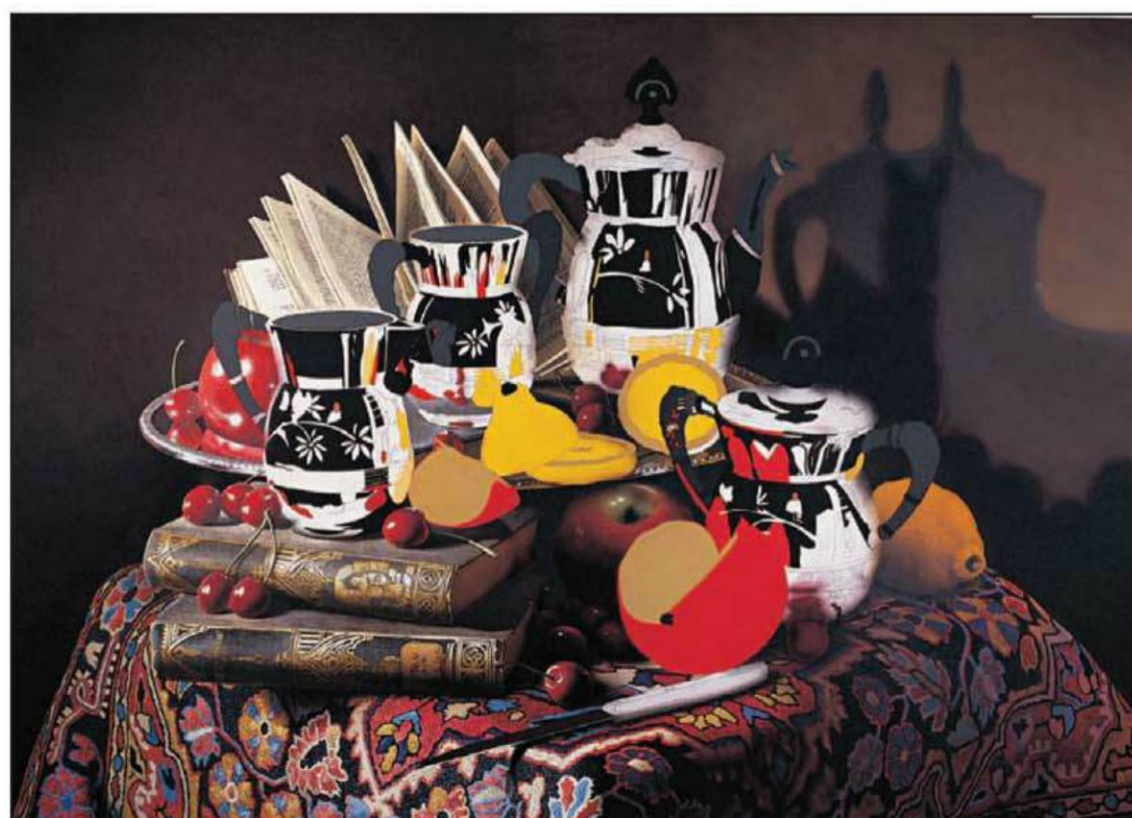
**7** Airbrush highlights with lighter tints of the rug colors. Now paint the book's pages with yellow ochre and zinc white. Add burnt umber and ivory black to this mixture to airbrush the shadows. Create the writing with ivory black, burnt umber, and zinc white.



**8** Paint the lemons and yellow reflections with cadmium yellow. Then add yellow ochre to the lemon on the far right and airbrush it with burnt umber, alizarin crimson watercolor, and ivory black. Use cadmium red for the other fruit and red reflections.

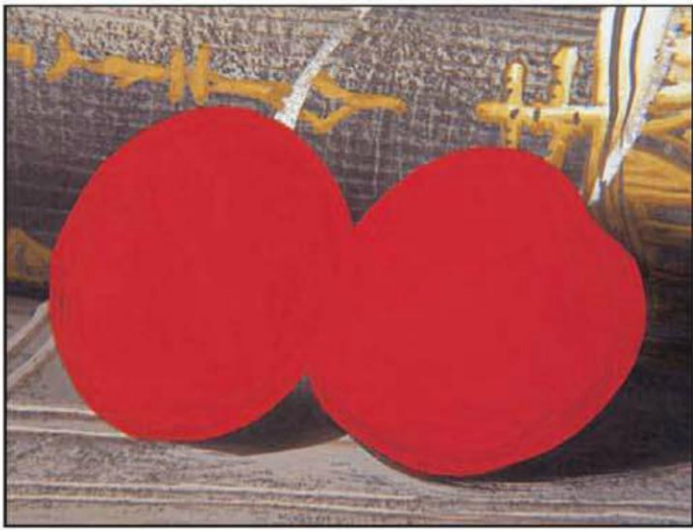


**9** Now start defining the two books in the foreground. (See "Books Detail" above and "How to Paint Old Books" on page 14 for more information.)



**10** Complete the cherries and apple in the back (see "Cherries Detail" on page 30). Paint the rinds of the middle lemons and apple flesh with a Naples yellow and yellow ochre gouache mix. Then apply pure ivory black to the darkest areas of the silver pieces.

## CHERRIES DETAIL



**STEP ONE** When rendering any type of fruit, begin with an underpainting. For these cherries, cadmium red was applied in an earlier step. At this point, the cherries still appear flat and uninteresting.



**STEP TWO** Airbrush a wash of alizarin crimson, and then a wash of ivory black watercolor over the right shadowed side of the cherries. Then touch up the overspray of alizarin crimson on the book with gouache.



**STEP THREE** Where the light is strongest, apply lighter tints of cadmium red along the outer left edge of the cherries. Finally, add pure white highlights with permanent white gouache for a glistening sheen.



**11** Now complete the underpainting for all the silver pieces (see “Silver Detail” step one below). At this point, the entire museum board should be covered with paint and no white from the painting surface should remain. Now it is time to refine the silver pieces; accurately rendering these reflective surfaces is key to creating a sense of realism in this painting.

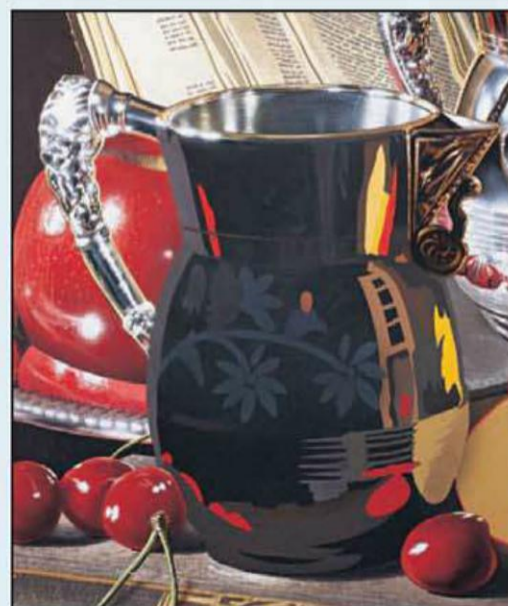


**12** Begin by developing the large teapot in the background and the silver piece to its left (see “Silver Detail” below and “How to Paint Silver” on page 12). Then complete the lemons in the center, painting them with full lighting and airbrushing cast shadows to their right using ivory black watercolor. Add permanent white gouache highlights with a #1 watercolor brush.

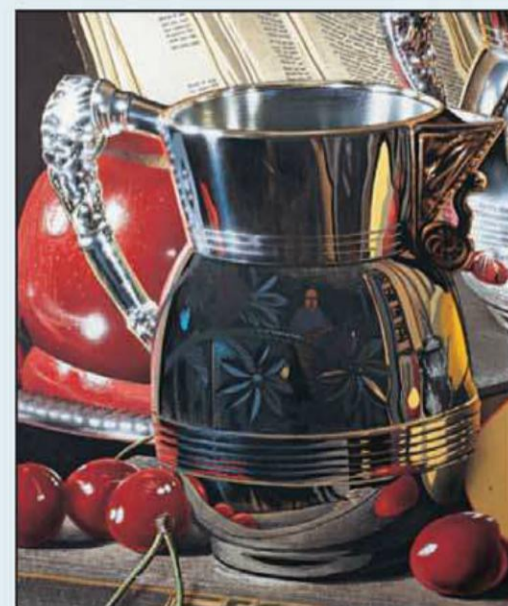
## SILVER DETAIL



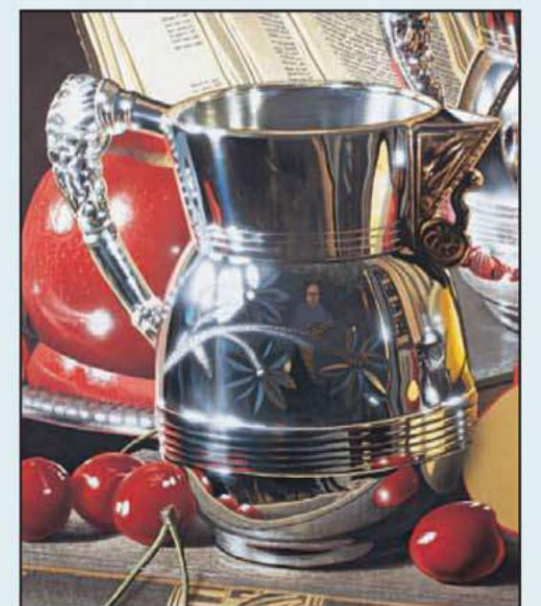
**STEP ONE** Start with the brightest colors, then the darkest shades, and then the midtones. The fruit reflections and ivory black were added previously. Now use mixtures of ivory black, cobalt blue, and Naples yellow for the midtones to complete the underpainting.



**STEP TWO** Mask off the spout, and then paint it and the handle with ivory black, cerulean blue, and zinc white. Spray on Indian yellow watercolor for warmth. Paint the spout with Chinese orange and ivory black; then use Naples yellow and zinc white for the highlights.



**STEP THREE** Paint the parallel bands around the neck and base of the silver piece, taking into account the colors of the different objects reflected in them. Now refine the floral patterns and other reflections, making them lighter in color.



**STEP FOUR** Capture the wonderful glisten of the silver by adding the brightest highlights. Start with an airbrush, and then use a small watercolor brush loaded with pure permanent white. Be sure to include highlights where the light hits the floral designs.





**13** Now finish the silver piece above the books on the left. (See “Silver Detail” on page 30.) Pay careful attention to the highlights and reflections on the surface of the silver from the objects surrounding it.

*STILL LIFE WITH CHERRIES* (38 1/2" x 53") gouache on museum board, Private Collection



**14** Complete the last silver piece on the right and the cherry in front of it (see “Cherries Detail” on page 30). Then paint the foreground apple and apple slice. The apple’s skin is cadmium red gouache, and the flesh is a mix of yellow ochre and zinc white gouache. The airbrushed shadows on the slice are burnt umber and ivory black watercolors. Next paint the knife to subtly blend in with its surroundings. Tape off the edges of the blade to ensure that they are sharp and clean when you airbrush ivory black watercolor at the base of the blade and zinc white gouache at the tip of the blade. Don’t

forget to capture the cherry reflection on the knife blade. For the knife handle, use burnt umber, ivory black, and zinc white gouache for the top. The shaded side of the handle is an ivory black and burnt umber gouache mixture. Now go over all of the white highlights with fresh, clean permanent white to add sparkle to the entire painting. The final step is to proudly add your signature. I actually signed the piece earlier on the spine of the bottom book, but the placement is entirely up to you as long as you include it!



## About the Artist

**Daniel K. Tennant** was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and he attended Syracuse University, where he received a BFA in painting. Tennant's artwork and writing have appeared in many magazines and ten books, and he is considered one of the most technically proficient artists working in gouache today. Many of his paintings now reside in important private collections in the US and abroad. His work has been published on calendars, limited edition prints, and book covers, and his work has also been exhibited in many important museums in the United States. He has been exhibiting in galleries in New York City since 1990. Tennant has won many prestigious art awards in competition over the past 25 years. He is the father of our four grown children and is a full-time painter living in Central New York State with his wife, Karen. Tennant has always loved to draw and paint. "There was never any doubt that my calling in life was to be an artist. My paintings are statements about things that are important to me. In this age of advanced technology and fast-paced living, it is important to know that there are still quiet places to see and experience," he says. "I love crisp, detailed realism. In each painting I try to produce a piece that is painted well and offers art of the highest caliber. I have been using opaque watercolors for over thirty years and appreciate them more each year. They are my favorite medium." You can see more of his artwork at [www.danielktennant.com](http://www.danielktennant.com).