

Gouache Painting Techniques

Gouache paint ingredients:

Main binder: Gums (tropical and cherry tree sap)

Other binders:

Dextrin- improve handling (cheaper paints)

Sugar syrup (plasticizer in cheaper products)

Starch (for poster paints)

Fillers: alumina hydrate, precipitated chalk, blanc fixe (to control tinting strength)

Mixing additives: ox gall (wetting agent (add 10 to 12 drops to cup of distilled water) - use to dilute paints

Tip: add 2 to 3 drops of liquid detergent to water to increase mixing

Gouache brands:

- 1- Windsor & Newton (120 colours) including 10 premixed grays (5 cool + 5 warm); excellent permanency
- 2- Holbein (63 colours); excellent consistency and handling
- 3- Schmincke (84 colours) excellent brilliancy
- 4- Da Vinci (28 colours) good for price
- 5- Turner (113 colours) best blending & handling, but changes tone
- 6- Lefranc & Bourgeois (semi-transparent gouache)
- 7- Dealer- Rowney (very chalky "poster paints")

Tools

Palette: 6mm glass (glazed round edges)

Tip: place grayscale, colour circle or photo resource underneath

Keep it clean and organized

Additional tool: Table easel, magnifying lens and overhead projector (for transferring the images)

Brushes: squeeze the hair to check the amount of hair

Best of the best: W & Newton series 7 (Kolinsky sable-male); # 14 becomes # 000.

Test how long line it makes (has to hold the shape and lot's of liquid)

Tip: synthetic brush will restore the shape if immersed in hot water.

Supports

Illustration board: (Crescent, Whatman, etc); make your own by mounting bristol or watercolour paper on cardboard

Hot pressed paper is for detailed work, Cold pressed is for textures

Gesso boards: sized with natural gesso (follow the receipt in the handouts) or acrylic gesso diluted from 10% to 50 %

Tip: make drawing with pencil, cover with diluted gesso. Wait until dries and sand back drawing with finest sandpaper.

Blending & transitions

Dried gouache is blended with damp brush.

Add "aquapasto" to increase elasticity (or simply add some acrylic gesso into the cup of distilled water) remember: acrylic cannot be reworked

Handling grays

Gouache is always diluted, never used directly from tube

Add ox gall to distilled water (10 to 12 drops to cup)

Apply paint as liquid-not paste

Tip: mix 2 parts of water with 1 part of paint

Flat tones: load the brush (not dripping); don't repeat over same strokes; work quickly; mix horizontal and vertical strokes; try lightly loaded brush

Grayscale: make your own grays or use premixed ones (5 to 7 grays is enough for great work). Make a hole in the gray field to compare with sample colours.

Evaluation of colour: colour should "sink" into gray (put your eye "out of focus")

Textures

Gouache could be used with water resist methods (same as watercolour)

Spatter: use toothbrush with liquid paint (make stencil shape to control spattering)

Palette knife: creates "impasto" effect (random and natural); you may overpaying and

glaze texture

Rubber cement: paint coat of rubber cement over area to be painted and dab with the paper towel; repaint and continue the process (do not rub off)

Lines: use double rulling pen or brush; make proper consistency of paint

Masking: gousche is delicate and can be taped without damage only with weak removable tape (Skotch Magic Plus 811 or Holbein Frisket Film "Toricon SP 110")

Colour tips

Always clean brushes in separate "dirty water" can

Maintain your paints clean (do not dip dirty brush into every colour)

White paint straightforwardly shows the impurity of brush

Use gray card and colour wheel to maintain same values (if working on illustration)

Organize and clean palette

Colour mixing- light to dark (without adding black)

Yellow: use raw sienna and browns to darken, white to lighten

Purple: mix alizarin crimson (it is violet) with pthalo blue (warm) or pthalo green (cool)

Red: Cadmium turns violet mixed with white

Darken it with burnt umber, lighten with touch of orange

Primaries: mix complimentary lightly (all 3 colours) to make gray, or strongly to make muddy tones; play with mixing techniques (dots, blending, etc)

Use 3 primaries (cadmium yellow, pthalo blue and quinacridone red) to make 48 different colours

Skin tones: apply cool shades in the shadow area and warm into light sections

Underpaint with "greenish" colour and add warm skin tones; finish with dark and white highlights

Test paint intensity, transparency and value on separate sheet

Model the form using crosshatching, overlapping or blending methods

Start form mid-tone and continue to darker and lighter ones

Use limited palette (do not apply "surprise" colours until composition is solved)

Landscape: divide tonal planes from light to dark (squint the eyes to avoid seeing details); introduce these values into the composition (create an "abstract" - synthetic landscape); continue working with colour using dark & light tones in every plane

respectively

Still life: divide composition in 3 to 5 main tonal/colour values; introduce the composition from dark to light; model each form respecting the "assigned" tonal value; finish with details & highlights

Tip: all colour theories will have the same conclusion: use your intuition.