

Watercolor

What is it?

Watercolors are water soluble pigments that are either sold as cakes or in tubes. Most school programs use the cake sets for easy setup and clean-up, but professional artists tend to use tube watercolors.

Watercolors are popular because of:

- the ease of set-up and clean-up
- the ability to blend colors
- the transparent tones of the paint
- the ability to use a loose, sketch-like technique or a more detailed approach

Preparation

- Each table should be covered in newspaper or larger sheets of paper to help soak up water spills
- There should be a water cup and watercolor set for every 2 people
- Each child will need one brush
- Paper towels are helpful to contain spills

Techniques to Try

Color Saturation – to get a deeper tone, pre-wet the paint in the tray with a brush full of water. Let it sit for 30 seconds to soften the paint cake. For a lighter, translucent color, mix paint with water on the inside lid of the tray and then apply to the paper.

Wash of Color – Paint water on the paper first and then apply paint onto the wet paper

Overlay – To build up a darker color or to mix colors, paint a layer of paint, let dry, and then add one or more layers until the desired color effect is reached.

Wet vs. Dry – Try using a dry brush with wet paint for details.

Salt Sprinkles - Sprinkle salt on wet paintings and let dry. Once dry, brush off the remaining salt. You'll have an interesting design because the color concentrates into the areas where the salt crystals form.

Plastic Wrap - While paint is still wet, press crumpled plastic wrap onto the artwork. This technique will leave an interesting texture. Or try laying plastic wrap flat on the wet painted surface. Pull with one strong stroke in one direction. As the wrap moves, it will pull the paint along.

Crayon Resist - Color lines and shapes heavily with crayons. Then cover with a thin wash of watercolor paint. The waxy crayon will "pop" through the painted surface.

Clean-up

Projects need a space to lay flat and dry for a few hours. After the projects are dry, they can be stacked and stored in a safe place.

Brushes and paint cups need to be rinsed with cold water and gently dried. Brushes should be stored with the brush side up.

Watercolor sets should be blotted dry with paper towels and the lids wiped clean.

Newspaper/paper covering the tables needs to be thrown away (and tables wiped down if needed)