

ARTventures ... at home!

Watercolor Still Life

Create a watercolor painting inspired by two still life artworks in our permanent collection.

Learn more about each DAI artwork by clicking the images.



Janet Fish (American, born 1938). *Embroidery from Uzbekistan*. 2008, Oil on Canvas. 50 x 70 inches. Museum purchase with funds provided by Medici Society. 2009.8.



Martha K. Schauer (American, 1889-1985). *Daisys, Cosmos in Round Vase with Blue Cloth*. 1926, Watercolor on paper mounted on illustration board. Museum purchase. 2001.62.

Basic Supplies Needed:

- Watercolors* (or food coloring)
- Watercolor brush
- Paint palette
- 1 to 3 sheets of 9" x 12" watercolor paper** (or heavy cardstock paper)
- Small cup of water
- Paper towels
- Pencil

*Grab a watercolor and brush set from our [museum store!](#)

**We recommend [140lb. watercolor paper](#)



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Additional Supplies Recommended:

- Tape
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Q-tips
- Salt
- Crayons



Step 1: Sketch and Draft

Using pencil, draft a composition featuring still life objects (ex: fruits, flowers in a vase, tablecloth, etc.)

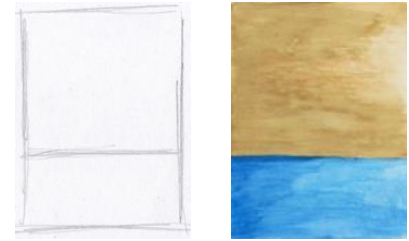
Helpful hint: Sketch several ideas with varying elements onto scrap paper.

Helpful hint: Make one larger item the focal point. Avoid items too small to make cutting easier later.

Step 2: Compose, Paint and Create

1. Paint just the background on a full watercolor sheet.

Note: Tape edges down to prevent warping. To reverse warp later, add a small amount of water to opposite side of paper.



2. On separate and different sheets of watercolor paper, sketch and then paint still life objects.

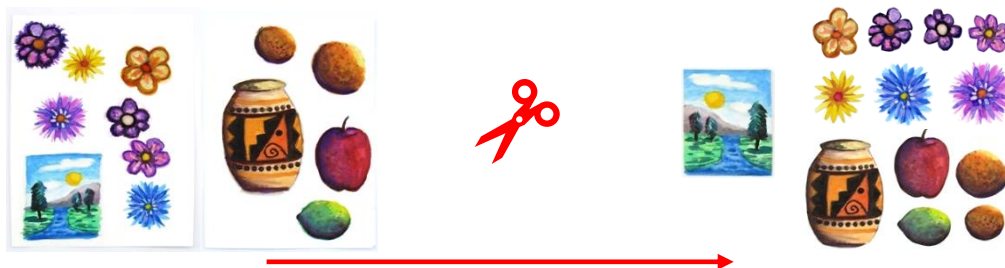


Helpful hint: Paint colors lightest to darkest. Reserve black for the very end as it can be difficult to paint over.

Helpful hint: Create rich colors by building up several thin layers. Allow to dry before adding new layers. Lightly dab with paper towels to speed up drying.

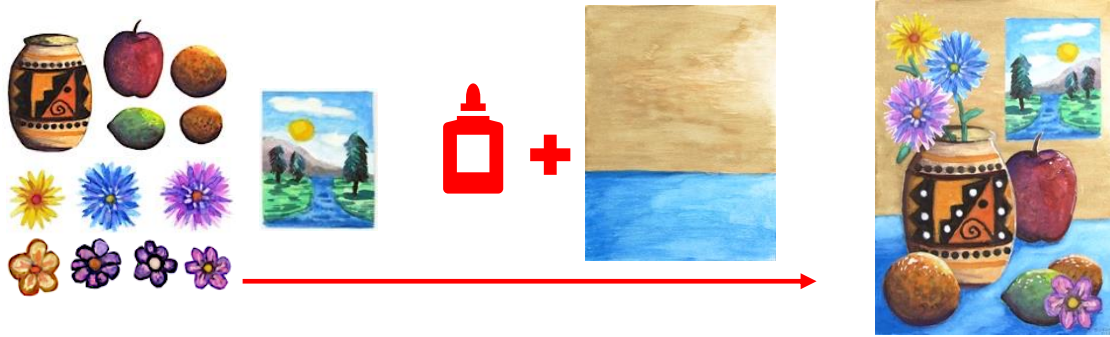


3. Once dry, cut still life objects out entirely. Trim each object closely for seamless collage effect.



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4. Arrange the cut-out objects onto the painted background and once decided, glue everything down.



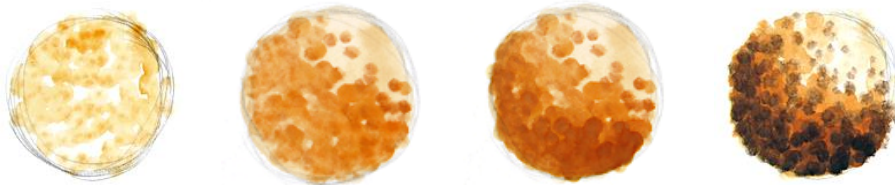
5. Wait for glue to dry and then paint any desired final details (ex: shadows of fruit, vase, etc.)

Helpful hint: Avoid adding glue before paint dries. Use a permanent glue stick for thicker papers.

Extensions and Techniques: Discover a new technique or experiment with some extra challenge.

1. **Pointillism:** Create colorful layers of dots using Q-tips for added texture in some areas or render the entire painting in Pointillist style extra challenge.

Helpful hint: Use both Q-tip ends to layer more efficiently (ex: both tips wet with orange). This way, painting continues without having to re-mix as often.



Helpful hint: Paint dot colors from lightest to darkest.

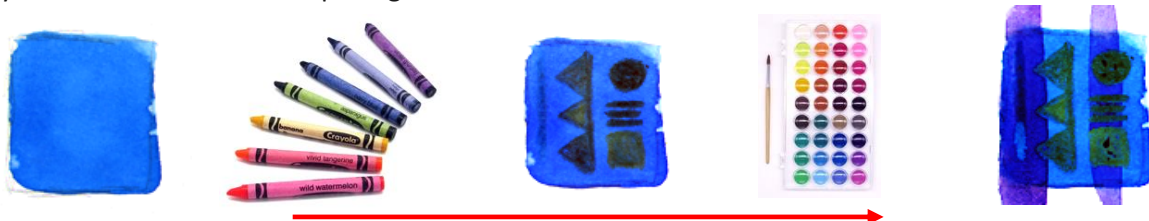
2. **Salt texture:** apply a pinch of table salt to watercolor for unique texture effects, such as: the illusion of bubbles in water, tie dye patterns, clouds in the sky, flower-like patterns, or aged / antique effects.

Note: Timing is important. Allow watercolor to soak into paper before applying salt, which is best applied when paper is still damp but not overly- saturated.

Helpful hint: Try not to disrupt the chemical process by painting over salt while watercolor is still wet.



3. **Crayons / wax resist:** Apply crayon and paint over it for wax resist effect (crayon marks will appear through the paint) or use crayon to add final details after paint is dry. For best results, firmly apply the crayon and use darker over top of lighter colors.



4. **Wet vs. dry marks:** Wet down paper with water before applying paint. Alternatively, simply paint onto dry paper. Or try drying brush out some before painting—this process is known as dry brushing.

Wet on wet



Wet on dry



Dry brush



5. **Learn more** about watercolor techniques in [this helpful tutorial](#).

Step 3: Cleaning and Caring for your Materials



Brush cleaning

- Rinse brush with water.
- Wipe brush onto paper towel until no more color appears on towel.
- Repeat as needed.
- Gently massage in a small amount of liquid soap, then rinse.
- Form bristles into a point (this prevents bristles from being permanently bent).
- Lightly dry brush.

Palette cleaning

- Gently wipe down plastic palette with paper towel until all color is cleaned off.
- Use a dampened paper towel or Q-tip to wipe any dirty watercolor pans very gently until original color reappears.
- Do not rinse watercolor palette in sink because this washes away all colors.



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Questions about or ideas for ARTventures at Home? Email edu@daytonart.org