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## MAIN COVER IMAGE

Taken from Vic Bearcroft's Drawing and Painting Wild Animals (Search Press)

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## Welcome

Getting started is often the trickiest part of painting. Where do you place that first mark on the page? What is the right technique for your subject? If you struggle with these questions, then Let's Paint! is the answer. Packed with simple-to-follow demonstrations of basic techniques and ideas for painting colourful subjects, it is designed to give you the helping hand you need to get started - or perhaps even encourage a non-artist friend to pick up a paintbrush and join you!

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## Paint a bird... With 50 Brushstrokes Bu <br> Hashim <br> I like to think of my brushstrokes as

$\rightarrow$ You will need<br>- Brushes<br>2" Sky Flow; 2", 112", 1" and $1 / 2^{\prime \prime}$ short flat

- Acrylics

Titanium White, Phthalo Green, Coeruleum Blue, Deep Violet, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Cadmium Yellow, Olive Green, Cadmium Red and Orange

- Canvas

46x61cm (18x24")
 a series of elite units of well-trained, assertive marks. Each one is the equivalent of 10 or 20 lazy, nervous and tension-filled brushstrokes. If your marks exude confidence so will your paintings. Start to think that these marks represent you and imagine how you would want to come across.

This exercise should help create an appreciation for the potency of each and every brushstroke. Try adopting this same technique to paint other subject matter or raise the number of strokes to paint more complex scenes.


1I started with a base colour of Phthalo Green, Coeruleum Blue and Titanium White, which was added to soften the tone. I scooped large unblended amounts of Coeruleum Blue, Deep Violet, Phthalo Green, a touch of Yellow Ochre and Burnt Sienna with a 2" flat brush. Loading with plenty of paint allowed me to produce a longer, continuous brushstroke that causes the colours to streak spontaneously across the canvas. The first mark was an angled L-shape with a couple of strokes either side - upside-down L-shape marks created the back tail.


2Using a clean 2" brush, I loaded Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Cadmium Yellow, a hint of Olive Green and Deep Violet to block in light feathers on the back. It is actually best to consider things such as feathers and feet as marks, shapes, colour, tints and tones rather than feeling the pressure to paint them exactly as they are.


3Adding a touch of Coeruleum Blue to the Ochre mix, I applied a couple of large strokes for the neck, while two other marks described one foot.


4A $11 / 2$ " brush loaded with Cadmium Red, Orange and a tiny dab of Deep Violet was used to fill in the head area. A couple of strokes of Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna and Deep Violet then bulked out the main body.



5Using a 1" flat, a combo of dark hues including Deep Violet, Phthalo Green and Burnt Sienna helped to describe the line of patterns in the main body. Three small marks using a $1 / 2$ brush with the previous Yellow Ochre mix created the other foot, followed by one brushstroke for the eye and one for the beak. The original Coeruleum Blue mix was used to add length to the back tail.

By 25 brushstrokes, I was ready to apply the lighter tints. Starting with the back of the cockerel, I added White, Yellow Ochre and Cadmium Yellow using a $1 \frac{1}{2}$ " brush and blocked a couple of strokes in. A long drag was used to highlight the neck and three flicks lifted the tail.

6With 20 brushstrokes left, I added tiny shots of Coeruleum Blue and Olive Green to the light mix and drew out the top and back of the head.

Another few highlights in the body were made, this time with less Titanium White and added Burnt Sienna, to create more variation in the body. More Coeruleum Blue added a cooler edge to the shaded neck, while cool tints of Coeruleum Blue, Phthalo Green, Deep Violet and Titanium White added to the body and back balanced the warmer tints. Two highlights on the feet and some delicate touches of Cadmium Red and Titanium White highlighted the face and crest to complete the exercise.

## How to use... <br>  areas of unpainted paper from the application of a wash. When removed from the paper, the

 reserved white areas are revealed. By protecting the paper in this manner, it allows for a looser, freer application of colour, as you don't have to paint around the 'whites' in order to keep them.

1On dry paper, I often use a variety of tools to put the masking fluid on the paper, including a colour shaper, an old brush caked with masking fluid and a dip pen. Remember to avoid using your favourite sable brush to apply the masking fluid, as the chances of the masking fluid drying on it are very high - rendering the brush useless and suitable only for the application of... masking fluid!


3Here I have used two colours: Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Sienna. I freely washed these over the masked areas.


2Allow the masking fluid to completely dry. Touch it carefully; if a small amount comes off, it is still too wet to apply a wash.


4When this wash was completely dry, I removed some of the masking fluid off by gently rubbing it. Note how protected areas of the paper are revealed in pristine white.


5However, you don't have to stop there. I mixed a darker version of the two colours and painted these below some of the masked areas, like shadows. As before, when completely dry, I removed the masking fluid from the whole area, adding a few touches of colour to the preserved areas here and there, creating a rocky foreshore or the edge of a muddy estuary. Don't forget you can also use the masking fluid to protect previously painted areas before adding more colours.

The variegated wash offers the watercolourist a great opportunity to fully exploit the unique ability of the medium to produce exciting, interesting and sometimes unexpected, random ways to blend and mix colour. It is one of the watercolourist's most useful washes.
They are often used for skies, seascapes and botanical backgrounds - indeed, anywhere the artist chooses to introduce a degree of spontaneity and chance into the work.

## How to make...

 A Variegated Wash Bor Dudley

Typically a variegated wash will contain at least two colours, which are applied separately to damp paper, where they will bleed and merge creating even more colours and tones. Working on stretched watercolour paper, begin by dampening the surface with clean water.


3Work quickly and with confidence when applying the colour. Resist the temptation to 'fiddle', let the colours do their own thing.


2Have your chosen colours already mixed in sufficient quantities; you don't want to run out midway through the painting. Be bold with the strength of colour because the dampness of the paper will dilute the strength of the colour as it dries.


4Stand back and watch paint dry! Now, I mean this quite literally watch the paint dry and see how the colours mix and alter as they touch one another.


5I will often add other details to an exercise to see how I might use the technique in future paintings. Here the variegated wash reminded me of a powerful sunset so using a mix of Ultramarine Blue and some Burnt Sienna, I added some trees and bushes to create the effect of a silhouetted hedgerow.

## Paint a landscape... With bold colour



This tree is located next to the banks of the River Stour in Suffolk and it is one of my favourite places to visit. There is a collection of four or five amazing trees there, each with their own unique features - this one was hollowed out in the centre, with spiralling branches reaching skywards.

When faced with a choice of interesting views, composition is everything. I decided to position the main trunk to the left of my picture so that the branches would create dramatic diagonals leading you in. Even the downed trees behind nicely fill what could otherwise be a void in the painting. Composition is something to consider and finalise before you start painting to avoid headaches later on. With the scene sorted, I'm ready to paint!

## $\rightarrow$ You will need

- Brushes

2" Sky Flow; 2", 1¹/2", 1" and $1 / 2^{\prime \prime}$ short flat

- Acrylics

Titanium White, Phthalo Green, Coeruleum Blue, Deep Violet, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Cadmium Yellow, Olive Green, Cadmium Red, Process Magenta, Process Cyan, Sap Green and Lemon Yellow

- Canvas

46x61cm (18x24")


1I started with a base colour of Cadmium Red mixed with Titanium White. This should contrast well with the mass of greens that will dominate the final painting. Spending no more than five to 10 minutes, I roughly sketched the scene.
My first marks tend to be blocky so I used a 2" flat brush. Yellow Ochre, Phthalo Green, Coeruleum Blue, Sap Green, Olive Green, Burnt Sienna and Deep Violet were loaded on to the brush and dragged from the trunk upwards. Particularly at the beginning of a painting, I hardly ever blend or mix the paint first. Instead, I simply scoop up the various colours from the palette and apply them, which creates spontaneous, exciting combinations. It sounds easy but judging quantities takes practice.

2More of the cooler hues were added to the areas adjacent to the shadows, while Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna and Olive Green were added for lighter areas. The branches were also painted in with the edge of the 2" flat brush using a relaxed and loose motion. The hollow of the tree is the darkest area and a large shot of Process Magenta is added to Deep Violet and Phthalo Green to lift the tone. Coeruleum Blue is included and used to punctuate other dark sections.



3Using a clean 2" brush, I introduced Sap Green, Olive, Coeruleum Blue and a touch of Yellow Ochre in the midground for the field. Long horizontal strokes were dragged from left to right. Similar greens were used to block in the leaves in the tree. I angled the brush to create a combination of varying brush marks, avoiding anything too consistent.

4Once I'd exhausted all the colour on my brush, Titanium White could be added to Lemon Yellow, Phthalo Green and Olive Green to lighten the green fields in the background. I then added more Coeruleum Blue to diminish the brightness of the white, so I could graduate from the lighter greens to a darker tone in the foreground. Soft green tints were also applied to the leaves at this stage.

5As more white is introduced, it is best to pre-mix colour and try the blends out on a mixing tray to avoid white streaks or unwanted extreme highlights.

Process Cyan is a lovely rich blue and, when softened with white, it is perfect for creating a subtle lines of trees in the far horizon with a 1" brush. Pockets of the same tint were also used in the sky, between the branches and leaves.

Prior to this, the foreground was blocked in with a $11 / 2^{\prime \prime}$ flat loaded with White, Deep Violet, Coeruleum Blue, Sap Green, Burnt Sienna, Olive Green and Yellow Ochre.

That same combination of colours (albeit with varying amounts of white) was used to create form in the trunk and some of the branches. At this stage, more concentration is required to pick out subtle variation of hues within the detailed areas, perhaps more greens with certain marks, or more Deep Violet and Burnt Sienna with others.

6The final stages were quite dramatic and required the most controlled brushstrokes using a 1 " and $1 / 2^{\prime \prime}$ brushes. Titanium White and Lemon Yellow were applied to the sky area in delicate, blocky strokes - these condensed together to form a unified tint. Process Cyan was also added to cool the tint in certain place and I was also keen to leave some of the base colour showing through for contrast.

Deep Violet, Coeruleum Blue and Phthalo Green were used to define certain tones while variations of Titanium White, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna and the two greens were used to lift out the highlights and pick out the smaller twigs and branches.

## How to paint... A Watercolour "Qer ByVia Beainoft

Now we are going to paint probably the most iconic and favourite of all big cats: the tiger. Most of us love painting tigers because of their distinctive stripe pattern and colouration - anywhere from pale ivory through to redorange. The stripe pattern in each tiger is unique, almost like a fingerprint; and the Siberian tiger has the palest coat, being white under the belly.

Before we begin the painting, let's think a little about composition. Whether you are sketching from life or taking reference photographs, try to consider how you can position your subject to create an interesting composition. Below are two examples of the same tiger in different poses. Which do you think will make for the more interesting painting?

If you chose composition two, congratulations; this is the one that I opted for. The first composition is quite flat and static, producing the kind of painting you might find in a Victorian encyclopaedia on wild animals. The second composition, on the other hand, shows movement and life. This is also an example of the classic 'diagonal composition', enhanced further by the portrait aspect of the paper.

Rather than paint the tiger on white paper, we are going to create some drama in the painting with a paintspattering effect in the background, using very warm colours to suggest a hot environment.

$\rightarrow$ You will need

- Paper

300gsm (140lb) NOT surface watercolour paper, $30 \times 42 \mathrm{~cm}$

- Watercolour paints

Burnt Sienna, Vermilion,
Cadmium Orange, Spectrum
Yellow, Burnt Umber, Mars
Black and Sap Green

- Brushes

Size 10 round, 15 mm ( $1 / 2^{\prime \prime}$ )
short flat, 5 mm ( $1 / 8^{\prime \prime}$ ) short
flat, size 6 round, size 4 round,
7 mm ( $1 / 4^{\prime \prime}$ ) round

- Drawing board
- Masking tape
- 2B pencil
- Masking fluid and old brush


Having decided to use the second reference photograph for the painting, we need to translate this into a basic shape sketch. Secure your watercolour paper to the board with masking tape and sketch in the tiger as shown with a 2 B pencil.


4Lay in a wash of Burnt Sienna over the whole background with a size 10 round brush. Do not worry about being neat loose, haphazard strokes will add vibrancy.


2 Cover the bulk of the tiger with pieces of low-tack masking tape.


5While the wash is drying, prepare wells of Vermilion, Cadmium Orange and Spectrum Yellow. Load a $15 \mathrm{~mm}(1 / 2$ ") short flat brush with dilute Vermilion. Hold the brush approximately $15-20 \mathrm{~cm}$ from the surface and draw your finger across the bristles to spatter the surface.


6
Repeat the spattering with Cadmium Orange and Spectrum Yellow. Keep the paint dilute so that it springs from the brush in a loose spray.


Use a clean finger to gently rub away the masking fluid. Do not be too vigorous or you risk taking off the surface of the paper.


7 While the paint is still wet, spatter more Vermilion below the tiger.


10Switch to the $5 \mathrm{~mm}(1 / 8$ ") short flat and paint the tiger with a warm coat of Cadmium Orange, avoiding the lighter areas of the face (see inset). Use a clean, wet brush to feather the colour into the lighter-tinted areas of the fur.


8
Allow the paint to dry completely, then carefully remove the masking tape.


11Allow to dry thoroughly, then glaze Burnt Sienna over the orange in the stripes for the darker tones. Begin to suggest texture by cutting out basic shapes, such as the tiger's ruff, using the blade of the brush. Note the darker area running down the centre of the tiger's head.


12Prepare Burnt Umber, making it slightly less dilute than the previous washes. Begin to sketch in the dark areas of the face using the size 6 round brush. Keep the detail fairly loose, as this Burnt Umber provides a soft base for the later darker tones. Use short, light strokes to suggest the fur.

## TOP TP

 tone of the dark areas on the face with tiny strokes.

13Lay in the same Burnt Umber strokes over the rest of the tiger. Soften any strokes that are too dark or harsh with a damp brush before they dry.

15Switch to the size 4 round brush and use a nearly undiluted mix of Burnt Umber and Mars Black to strengthen the


16 Clean and wet your brush and use it to gently soften and feather the very dark strokes on the face.


14Use a clean, damp brush to lift some of the dry darker tones and draw them subtly across the other areas to soften the colour. Use short strokes to reinforce the texture of the fur.


17Using a slightly weaker mix of Burnt Umber and Mars Black, paint in and soften tiny strokes across the rest of the head. For heavily textured areas, such as the ruff, use the side of the brush.


18Paint in the other dark stripes. The greatest tonal contrast should be at the focal point in the foreground (the face, where the clean white of the paper and near-black strokes lie), so as you work into the background, use more Burnt Umber and less Mars Black in increasingly dilute mixes.


21Switch to the $7 \mathrm{~mm}\left(1 / 4{ }^{\prime \prime}\right)$ round and glaze areas that need to be knocked back with dilute Burnt Umber, such as the foreleg on the left-hand side, the rear leg, tail, the back, hindquarters and behind the ruff.


19 Paint the tiger's eyes with Spectrum Yellow (see inset), then lay on Sap Green, leaving some yellow at the bottom to show the area of the eye unshaded by the eyelid.


22 Make any final changes you feel are necessary to finish, such as muting the foreleg on the right-hand side with a dilute glaze of Burnt Sienna.

This article features in Drawing and Painting Wild Animals by Vic Bearcroft, published by Search Press, RRP £14.99.
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