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How to paint snowflakes video

Jump to content You'll find our guide to painting snow in our February issue (available online and at your favorite art store). Highlights include Cathy Johnson's thoughts on the keys to handle color, shape, and shadow in snow scenes. For those interested in an additional challenge, here are some of Johnson's favorite tips for capturing the look of snow when it falls: • Sprinkle with salt. To create the appearance of snowflakes, try adding a little salt to a wet wash in the sky or in a shadow area. The salt repels the water and pigment mixture, leaving light spots. The key to using this technique properly is to make sure your laundry is just right before adding the salt—if you add it too early while the wash is still too wet, the effect will be clumsy and hard. You also need to make sure to brush off the salt once the laundry has dried completely. Otherwise, it will continue to attract moisture. (Be careful that the wash is completely dry, or the salt and pigment may smear.) • Splash on white. To create a soft snowfall effect, splash opaque white in a wet wash. The drops will spread slightly, depending on how wet the mixture is. For a more hard-edged effect, let everything dry, then sprinkle on a thick mixture of opaque white and water. If you want to create a targeted snowfall effect, vary the way you hold the brush. If you hold the brush at a sharp angle to the paper when splashing, for example, the snowflakes will actually appear to fall, or inflate. • Mask the whites. You can also make a variant of the splash technique using liquid masking. Before adding the first wash, splash nice drops of masking in all areas where you want falling snow. Let the masking dry thoroughly, then paint in the rest of the design. Once the paint has dried, gently rub your fingers or a rubber cement pickup over the surface of the painting to remove the masking and leave perfect stains of white. • Draw the flakes. Finally, you can use a white colored pencil, either wax-based or water soluble, to make fast, directional dots and streaks suggesting individual snowflakes. If you use the watercolor pens, which are really water-soluble pigments encased in a wooden pen, you may want to soak lead before each stroke to ensure that you make stronger marks. MORE RESOURCES FOR ARTISTS • Online Seminars for fine artists • Immediately download fine art magazines, books & video workshops • Sign up for your Artist's Network e-newsletter & get free fine art tips & demos To paint realistic snow, we need to be able to analyze what we actually see to recreate the texture of snow on our painting surface, and acrylic artist Brian LaSaga has tips to help us do just that. We presented LaSaga's work in the Winter 2016 issue of Acrylic Artist so check it out if you want to read full-length feature on how he realistic texture of his landscape paintings. Learning about LaSaga's painting process and his life was one thing clear—he spends a lot of time in the snow. Like any topic you want to paint successfully, you need to understand the subject at a deep level. And for LaSaga that really means looking snow—it's many colors and textures. Winter Relic by Brian LaSaga, Acrylic Artist It's not simply White Snow is really not white. Snow is a collection of colors and the colors can be pretty much everything. Like everything else we paint, the color depends on snow on lighting, time of day and adjacent objects, LaSaga explains. If you have a hard time thinking of snow as anything other than a large white mass, take some pictures and turn them upside down, then crop the image to reveal only the snow. Now study the colors. What do you see, LaSaga challenges us. When it's time to paint snow, the colors LaSaga reaches for reflect his thoughtful study of snow. I don't use much, if any, yellow paint in my snow when painting a gray, overcast day. Instead, he uses burnt sienna, dioxazine purple, Mars black, ftalanblå, titanium white and ultramarine blue. When he depicts a day that is not gray and overcast, he uses yellow as well as all adjacent color objects reflected in the snow. Finally, any paint used in painting the sky is also used in painting the snow. Looking beyond the surface Our first look at which landscape we are going to paint takes in its entirety – the details of the foreground and the extent of the distant horizon. There is no wrong or proper way to see anything, and it is in how we interpret what we see that leads to successful, realistic recreation of all textures of nature, including snow. LaSaga says: We all perceive things differently, and it is how we perceive them that dictates the end result. Recreating three-dimensional texture The next challenge to recreate realistic snow is to understand its many textures. Snow is not flat, smooth and white. Snow has great texture created by disturbances from sun, wind, rain and defrosting and freezing cycles, LaSaga explains. No matter what I paint, I am more interested in the structure of my subject and every element of the work. Color is secondary. Detail is useless, or should I say impossible, without structure and it is very important to understand shortening. Paint what we see I basically paint what I see from my reference material and photos, LaSaga says. I paint in the structure and larger forms of snow before I ever think of any detail. Snow is also on top of objects so I paint the snow as if it were land, small mountains, hills and valleys. I always think in 3D. As I always say, it's also about feeling what you're painting too. I spend a lot of time outdoors experiencing nature, even in the dead Winter. Now that we have you interested in painting nature, check out this video, and learn how to paint foliage! Leaves!

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