

June

TIPS • ADVICE • IDEAS

Top tip

To use the drip technique on a dry wash you will need to dampen the paper with clean water



MAKE BEAUTIFUL MARKS USING DRIP TECHNIQUE

OSCAR ASENSIO offers his tips for creating dazzling effects

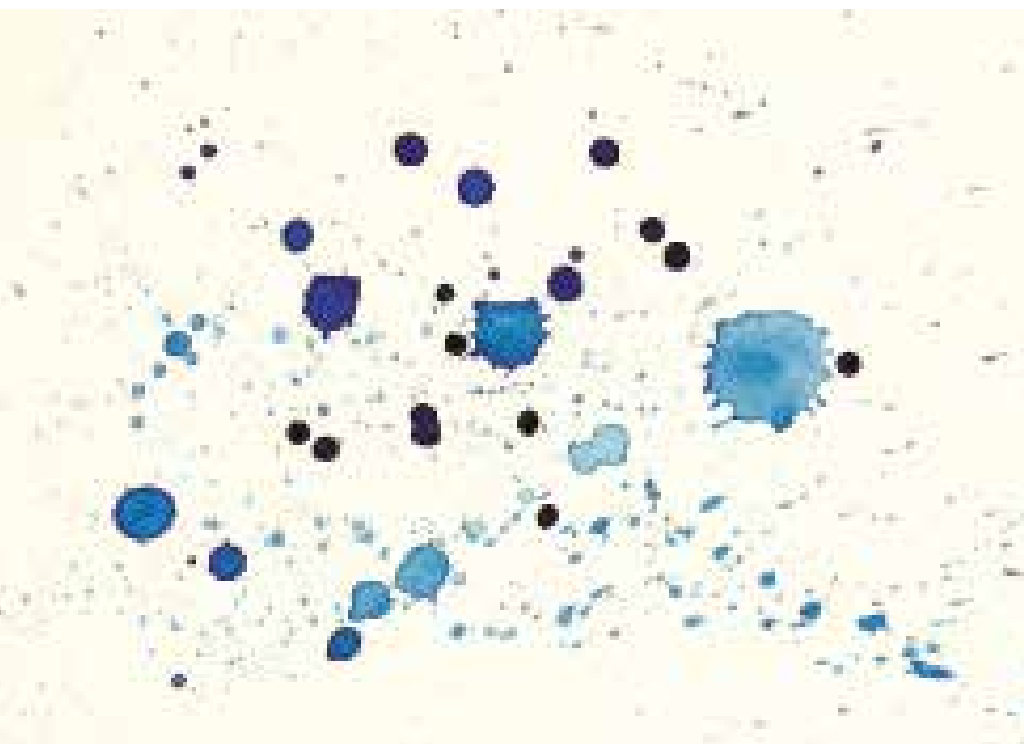
This technique involves taking advantage of the moment when the paint is still wet to deposit one or several drips from a well-charged paintbrush on top of it. The brush may be charged with pure water, with the same colour at a different intensity, or with a different colour. The drip will casually mingle with the layer underneath, though the artists should always guide this by inclining the paper to one side or the other, bearing in mind how wet it is at that moment.

DRIP TECHNIQUE RESULTS

Dripping paint can change any wash and produce richer qualities, with excellent textural effects as with the painting on the top left. If you want to use the drip technique on a wash that is already dry, you will have to dampen it using enough clean water to soften the previously applied colour. The right moment to apply drips of paint is when the wash is soft, without the paper being excessively saturated with water.

This is an edited extract from *A Watercolour a Day: 365 Tips and Ideas for Improving Your Skills and Creativity* by Oscar Asensio, published by Promopress, £19.99. www.promopresseditions.com

TOP LEFT The drip technique from a work by Katrin Johannesson
BOTTOM LEFT What the paper looks like after using the drip technique





MASTER TIP: REMBRANDT

Discover the techniques of the world's greatest artists

The artist's *Self-portrait, Aged 51*, painted around 1657, creates an air of intimacy with its sombre dark-brown background contrasting with light from an unseen source illuminating the face. The head takes up much of the surface area, demanding to be the focus of attention, while Rembrandt's use of impasto around the eyes and forehead ensures these areas are particularly textural and expressive, in contrast to the smooth passages, further demanding the viewer's direct eye contact. The painting is on show as part of *Rembrandt: Britain's Discovery of the Master*, at Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, from 7 July to 14 October. www.nationalgalleries.org

REMBRANDT VAN RIJN, SELF-PORTRAIT, AGED 51, ABOUT 1657, OIL ON CANVAS, 53x43CM @ LONG LOAN IN TWO NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND/BRIDGEWATER COLLECTION LOAN, PHOTO © ANTONIA BEEVE

Top tip

Use a good handheld magnifying glass to help see fine details



WHY NOT TRY... PAINTING MINIATURES

VALERIE GREELEY ARMS shares her top tips for working on a small scale

- 1** Make sure your palette is free from dust. The tiniest speck can adhere to a brush and spoil the work. This ensures the surface is free from graphite, which can smudge and look dirty.
- 2** Make a detailed preliminary drawing. Then transfer it to your base using tracing paper and a sharp, fine HB pencil.
- 3** Paint around the outline with walnut ink mixed with water, applied with the tip of a fine brush. The walnut ink is water-soluble and will not show when the painting is finished.
- 4** When dry, remove the pencil with a soft eraser.
- 5** Rest your hand on tissue paper to avoid getting grease on the work. Use another piece of tissue to remove paint from the brush to ensure the point is almost dry. This will allow a tiny amount of paint to be used for each stroke. Build using tiny dots. Visit the Royal Miniature Society's Annual Exhibition at Mall Galleries, London, from 28 November to 9 December. www.royal-miniature-society.org.uk; www.valeriegreeley.com

PRODUCTS OF THE MONTH

HAHNEMÜHLE HARMONY AND EXPRESSION WATERCOLOUR PAPER

These new watercolour papers are acid-free, light-resistant and offer excellent longevity. Harmony is a natural white paper for wet-painting techniques, while Expression is a natural white 100 per cent cotton paper, suitable for wet-painting and etching. Both papers let paint really stand out with surfaces that are eraser-resistant due to sizing. Masking fluid or tape can also be easily removed. www.hahnemuehle.com





TOP TIPS FOR DRAWING WITH COLOUR MEDIA

Control your brush with **KIM SCULLER**

1 Playing with watercolour mark-making is a good way to get to know what your materials can do. First, mix one very saturated colour. Next, take a line for a walk across the surface of your paper.

2 See how many varied marks you can make with the brush, such as dots, dashes, quick and slow marks, and so on.

3 Practise brush control by drawing faint lines

with a pencil and ruler. Then use a small brush to try to follow the lines.

4 Play with saturation by starting with a watery mix – it should only have a light tint. Make puddles with the mix and before it dries, drop in saturated colour and watch it grow. **Kim Scouller's five-week course Learn to Use: Colour Media in Drawing starts on 5 May at City Lit London.**

www.citylit.ac.uk;
www.kimscouller.com

STUDIO IDEA

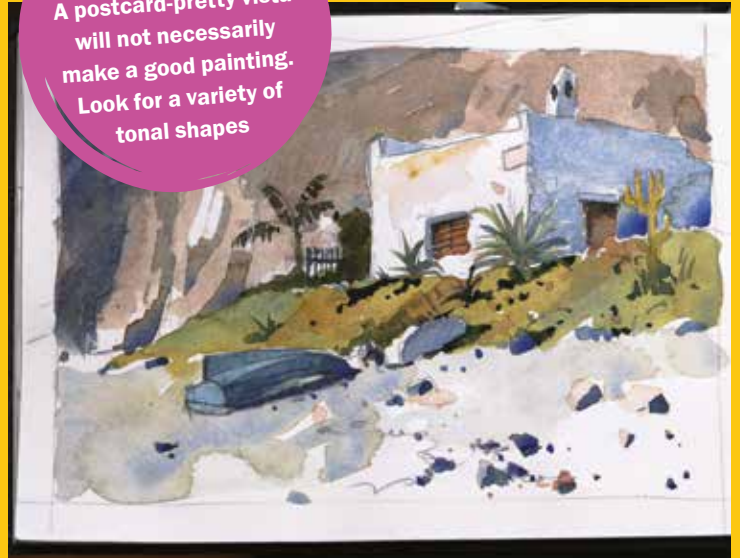
As a member of the National Acrylic Painters' Association, Alice Hole loves having a large library of colours, but storage had become a problem. "The solution was simple and cheap," she says. "I screwed plywood to the wall and hammered in panel pins. Then I attached bulldog clips to each tube and hung them from the pins."

www.alicehole.co.uk



Top tip

A postcard-pretty vista will not necessarily make a good painting. Look for a variety of tonal shapes



TRAVELS WITH MY SKETCHBOOK

GRAHAME BOOTH finds time and space to work on a family holiday

Lanzarote is a wonderful winter destination for a family holiday and it is easy to leave the resorts behind in search of beautiful painting subjects. I suggest you don't overload yourself with painting equipment on holiday. I have found the more equipment I take, the less likely I am to use it. A sketchbook fits the bill perfectly. For colour work, a pencil, a couple of brushes, a small snap-top container for water and a small box of watercolours provides a more than adequate kit.

Choosing a subject can be impossible but, if it is sunny, I look for good side-lighting or back-lighting, followed by a suitable place to sit. For me the subject is less important than the pattern of light and dark shapes. I dismiss any subject lit by the sun from behind me, irrespective of the subject's attractiveness. Such flat lighting destroys any sense of three dimensions.

Playa Quemada is not much more than a few houses and restaurants on the coast and a large rock, which provided a good, but somewhat painful, seat from which to paint this dwelling. I moved one of the boats and left out another to provide a better composition but, other than this, everything was pretty much as you see. The sketch took about 25 minutes to complete. Using cartridge paper means I have to use simple, decisive wet washes without fiddling and with no excess brush strokes. Treated like this, the paper will stand up quite well, unlike me. Rising from my rocky perch reminded me I should add one of those fold-up foam cushions to the kit list.

www.grahamebooth.com

ABOVE *Playa Quemada*, pencil and watercolour, A5 cartridge paper