

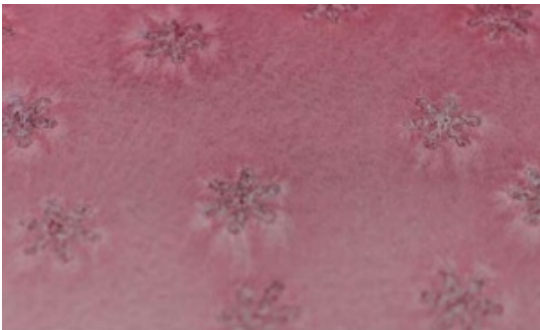
CUTOUT WAX-PAPER SHAPES

Cutout wax-paper shapes can be placed on a wet wash and left there until the wash dries. The shapes will leave a faint imprint on the wash. This technique works well on regular paper and Yupo paper.



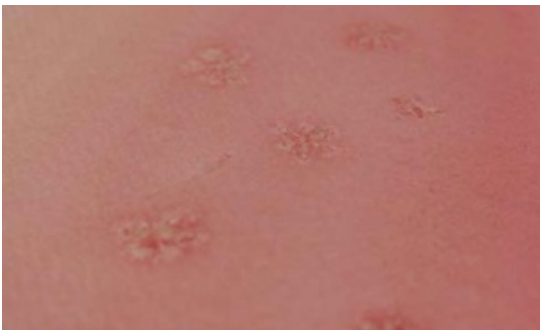
Wax-Paper Shapes as a Resist

Place cutout wax-paper shapes on a wet watercolor wash.

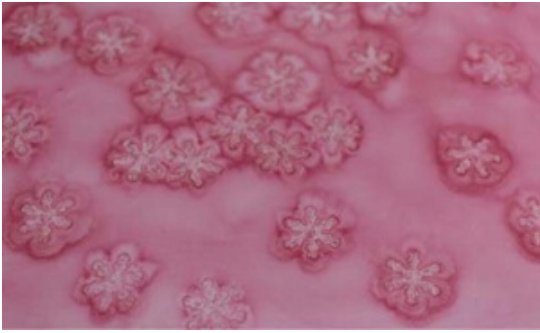


Leave the Shapes in Place Until the Wash is Dry

Later in the painting process, you might consider outlining those shapes with watercolor crayon and painting the inside of each shape white to make them more visible on the finished painting.



Cutout Wax-Paper Shapes on Regular Paper



Cutout Wax-Paper Shapes on Yupo Paper



Thread on Yupo Paper

Other materials laid down on a wet wash will also leave traces that can make interesting textures. Here a thread is placed on a wet wash on Yupo paper.



Thread on Yupo Paper

Once dried, the thread is removed. It leaves behind an interesting texture.



FROM NOW ON YOU CAN CALL ME NEIL ARMSTRONG

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

15" x 22" (38cm x 56cm)



RYAN-JI

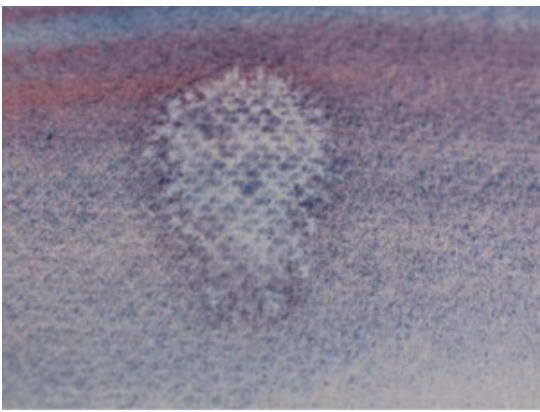
Watercolor and marker on Yupo paper

9" x 11" (23cm x 28cm)

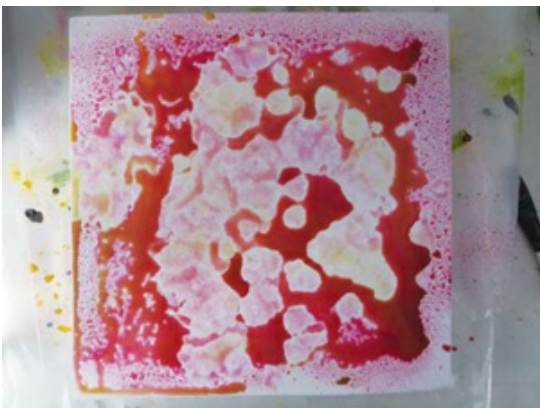
ALCOHOL AND WATER TEXTURES

Alcohol and clean water can make very striking textures on a wet wash, since they disperse the paint in the area to which they have been added. The effect is more subtle with water than with alcohol, and you get a fish-eye effect (a darker area in the center of the lighter area) with alcohol that you won't get with water.

When dropping water onto a wet wash, you are intentionally producing back runs.



A drop of water on a wet wash will cause the paint pigments to move away. The trick here is to drop the water when your wash is almost dry. If you do it when the wash is still very wet, the paint pigments will rapidly remix and the texture will disappear.



In this example, drops of alcohol have been added to a wet wash. The alcohol has repelled the paint, leaving a slightly darker area (or fish-eye effect) in the center.



Drops of alcohol on a Yupo paper wet wash will produce very visible textures.



Drops of water on a Yupo paper wet wash will also produce visible textures. This technique works better if the wash is not too wet; if it is, the paint will likely remix.

Will Alcohol Ruin My Paper?

Rubbing alcohol is slightly acidic but very close to a neutral pH, so it won't change the pH of your acid-free paper.



ENGLISH GARDEN

Watercolor and mixed media on canvas

12" × 12" (30cm × 30cm)

This painting on canvas was built up of watercolor textures made with drops of alcohol on a wet wash. Once the background had time to dry, I looked for shapes in the abstract patterns and came up with this floral still life.



CHERRY BLOSSOM 2

Watercolor and oil pastels on Yupo paper

10" × 8¹/₂" (25cm × 22cm)

The textures in the background of this Yupo paper floral painting have been created by dropping alcohol on the still-wet wash.

SCRATCHING OFF PAINT

Scratching off watercolor paint while it is still wet works well for representing grass, for example, or for carving out tiny branches for a tree. You can use a variety of tools to do so, as long as you are careful not to make a hole in your paper. Tools you might consider include a painting knife, the corner of a plastic card (like a hotel room key card or credit card) and the handle of a brush. The options are limitless.

And while these tools can be used to remove paint from a wet wash, they can also be used to add marks by dipping them first in paint (a technique called *sgraffito*).



Scratching Paint Off Paper

While the paint was still wet, I removed paint using a painting knife to carve out lighter branches.



Scratching Paint Off Yupo Paper

You can use this same technique on Yupo paper. Here I've used it to evoke the texture of wheat fields.

Help! I've Made a Hole in My Paper!

Hey, it happens. Sometimes you may be too rough while scrubbing with a stiff brush, or while using a razor or a painting knife.

You have different options depending on the size of the tear. If the tear is big, the easiest way to repair it is to attach another piece of paper to the back of your painting with acrylic medium. Try to blend the new paper into the old as much as you can.

If the tear is smaller, it might be possible to close it by filling it from the back side of the paper with a bit of gel medium.

Another option is to paint a layer of white acrylic gesso over the tear and then repaint the area of the painting that was damaged.

It is also possible to add a layer of tissue paper or rice paper collage and paint over it to seal or disguise the tear.

DOWNLOAD IT! Visit [ArtistsNetwork.com/fearless-watercolor](https://www.artistsnetwork.com/fearless-watercolor) for a downloadable PDF: **Fixing Mistakes and Lifting Color**. Sandrine shares techniques for fixing what you might not like in your work.



THEY KEEP ME COMPANY

Watercolor and mixed media on paper mounted on board
15" × 22" (38cm × 56cm)



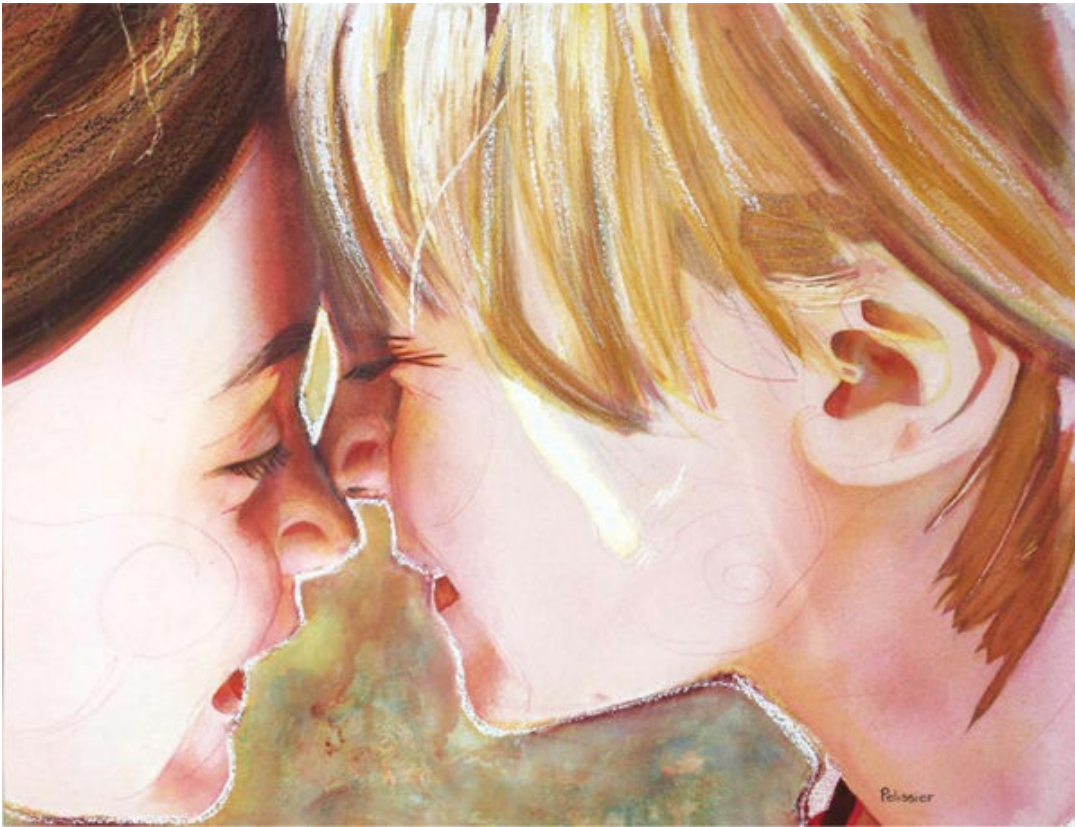
WHEAT FIELDS

Watercolor on Yupo paper
9" × 10" (23cm × 25cm)

WAX RESIST

Wax resist is a technique that can be used on Yupo paper and regular paper. A wax resist will have a more textured look than a masking fluid resist because wax (such as oil pastel) is picked up by the texture on the paper. The edges along a wax resist will also be textured and softer than what you usually get with masking fluid.

It should also be noted that when using masking fluid, you have the option of painting the resulting white areas that have been preserved. That's not an option when using wax as a resist; the wax will repel paint if you try to paint over it.



SISTERS

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

22" x 28" (56cm x 71cm)

In this painting, white oil pastels have been used as one would use masking fluid to preserve highlights in the hair.

Will the Wax Stay on My Paper?

Wax (and anything oil based) will repel paint, so it is an easy way to preserve some lighter (or white) areas from being painted. The main difference between wax and masking fluid is that you can peel off the masking fluid; crayon or oil pastel will remain in your finished painting. This is something to consider if you plan to apply a varnish to your painting. If so, you would need to use a varnish suitable for water-based *and* oil-based paintings.

DEMONSTRATION

Wax Resist on Yupo Paper

One common problem with Yupo paper is that its slick surface offers little control with the paint; the paint moves fast and won't stay where you are trying to put it. One way to gain a bit more control over the paint's movement is to draw outlines with wax crayons, outlines that will contain the watercolor where you want it. It's a bonus that a visible crayon outline adds a really interesting and unique look. If you prefer to not see the outlines, just use a white crayon. (You get similar results with oil pastels.)



1 Draw and Trace Your Image

Draw your image on the Yupo paper with pencil, so you can make corrections and adjustments before you add the wax. Then trace over all or some of the drawing with oil pastel or crayon. In this project I'm using a single color of oil pastel, but you can choose to use as many colors as you desire.



2 Paint

Paint each part of the painting as you usually would. I chose to mix several colors wet on wet.



3 Continue Painting

Paint right up to the resist lines. The wax from the pastels or crayons will contain the paint and prevent your washes from mixing.



LILY FLOWER

Watercolor and wax crayon on Yupo paper

9" × 11"

(23cm × 28cm)

WATCH IT! Watch Sandrine **Paint Using the Wax Resist on Yupo Technique**. Visit [ArtistsNetwork.com/fearless-watercolor](https://www.artistsnetwork.com/fearless-watercolor).

BACK RUNS

Back runs occur when you add water to a freshly painted wash, either by touching a water-loaded brush to the wash or dropping water onto the wash. Back runs are also a product of the drop of paint that may sit on the edge of the paper. As the wash begins to dry, that drop of paint might form a back run. Adding fresh water will repel the paint and cause textures to form that sometimes look like flowers. Hence, their other name, *blooms*.



GRETA

Watercolor on Yupo paper

14" × 10" (36cm × 25cm)

(Painted from a photo of the great Greta Garbo.)



Back runs can add textural interest to a painting. This detail is from the right edge of the subject's shirt.

The Charm of Back Runs

Like drips, drops and uneven washes, I think back runs add to the charm of watercolor. You can avoid them by watching the borders of your washes and removing excess paint that might otherwise form a back run. You can choose to embrace the imperfection of the watercolor medium and try to make the most of happy accidents when they happen. You can also create back runs on purpose, which is as easy as splattering a still wet or not totally dry painting with water.

PLASTIC WRAP

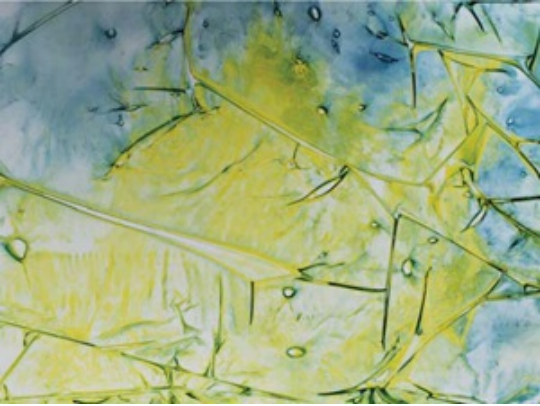
Plastic wrap, when applied to a wet wash, will cause the paint to move and accumulate on the edges of wrinkles formed in the plastic wrap. Allow paper that's covered in plastic wrap to dry undisturbed, and you will be rewarded with an interesting geometric-looking texture. I like to use this texture as the base layer for paintings with mixed media and patterns drawn with markers.



Apply plastic wrap over a wet wash on regular paper and allow the wash to dry completely.



Use the resulting textured layer as a starting point to build up designs and patterns.



Apply plastic wrap over a wet wash on Yupo paper and allow the wash to dry completely.



Use the resulting textured layer as a starting point to build up designs and patterns.

SOAP

Soap added to paint will yield different results on regular paper than on Yupo paper.

On regular paper, soap will make the watercolor paint a bit thicker. Your colors will move more slowly on the paper, giving you greater control.

On Yupo paper, soap is very useful. You might notice that sometimes paint is unexpectedly repelled in certain areas. This is usually because of fingerprints on the Yupo. Adding a bit of soap to your water or paint will allow you to eliminate these paint-repellent areas. Adding more soap to Yupo paper will cause the paint to form tiny bubbles that will imprint texture in your wash once dry.



Soap on Yupo paper creates tiny bubbles that will be visible even after the wash dries.



Soap mixed with paint on regular paper makes the paint thicker, and pigments move more slowly than if you were just using water.

A Word of Caution About Using Textures

Textures are a lot of fun, but it's easy to get carried away and overdo them.

Of course, it all depends on your personal taste and what your painting is about. If your painting is about texture, then feel free to go crazy.

When painting texture onto an object, you often don't have to paint the texture on the entire surface of that object. Texture is usually more visible on the edges and in the places where the light is changing (on the edge of an area of light and shade, for example). If you think about fur on an animal, for instance, you might see more clearly the texture of the fur on the contour of the animal and in the light/shade contours, but not necessarily everywhere.



JUSTE AVANT L'ESCALADE

Watercolor on Yupo paper

11" × 9" (28cm × 23cm)

Private collection

5

Incorporating Mixed Media

Breaking the Rules and Having Fun

Mixing Dry or Oil Pastels with Watercolor

Adding Gouache to a Watercolor Painting

Adding Acrylic Paint

Adding Colored Pencil

Drawing with Watercolor Pencils

Sewing on Paper

Adding Zentangles

Combining Painting and Drawing

Drawing with Watercolor Pencils and Pastels

Mixed Media on Yupo Paper

Collage on Yupo Paper



RAINFOREST IMAGERY

Watercolor and mixed media on paper mounted on board
48" x 48" (122cm x 122cm)

BREAKING THE RULES AND HAVING FUN

Mixing media can be lots of fun, and there are many techniques and mediums you can try that will work well with watercolors.

As a general rule, you can layer and mix many different media as long as the water-based media are under the oil-based media. For example, oil pastel on top of acrylic or watercolor will work, but acrylic or watercolor on top of oil pastel will not. Adhesion and drying problems can arise in general when painting with a water-based medium on top of an oil-based medium. The water-based medium can't adhere properly to the paper because the oil-based medium is acting as a barrier or a resist between the paper and the water-based medium. The layer of water-based medium could peel off the oil-based medium. The paint could also crack when dry.

Another property to consider is water solubility. Does the medium you are using need to be water soluble? For example, if you are drawing designs with markers on top of a painting and then you paint over that with watercolor, the markers, if water soluble, may bleed into the rest of the painting when water is added in the next layer. If you don't want such bleed through, you will want to use water-resistant markers.

A few general rules and guidelines for working in mixed media and watercolor:

- Oil-based mediums should be applied after water-based mediums.
- Some mediums may require fixative, like dry pastels. This is especially true if the pastels will be a final layer.
- Mediums used in your first layers should be water-resistant if you want to paint over them without bleeding or mixing.
- You can apply workable fixative between layers while painting if you want to keep on working without disturbing the previous layers. Use fixative or spray varnish before brushing varnish onto your finished piece to avoid any smudges and to fix pastels and other dry media.
- Always use archival acid-free materials if longevity is a concern.
- Have fun and experiment!



These drawings added with markers and graphite on top of watercolor and acrylic will need to be covered with fixative before paint is added or the piece is varnished.



TALES OF A LUCKY HAT

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

26" x 15" (66cm x 38cm)

A few drips of gouache mixed with watercolor and water has been allowed to run from the background onto the figure as a way to emphasize the painted nature of the portrait.

MIXING DRY OR OIL PASTELS WITH WATERCOLOR

Dry pastel and watercolor can work very well together since they are both very matte. Pastels can be a great way to modify a watercolor that's lost its impact: Add speckles of bright colors or pastel smudges for subtle effects. Oil pastels can also be used on top of watercolor. I like to add some touches or outlines of pastel color after the painting has been completed. Pastels will act as a resist if added before painting.

Dry Pastel on Top of Watercolor



CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Watercolor and pastels on paper

9" × 13" (23cm × 33cm)

This painting was working well as a watercolor-only painting, but I felt it a bit too common and unoriginal for my taste. The brightly colored and textured pastel helped push it a bit further by accentuating the contrasts and giving it a bit more audacity and punch.



Dry or Oil Pastel Outline



An oil pastel outline has been added to the hair in *A Bird's-Eye View of Charlotte*. The pastel was added after the watercolor painting was finished. Colored pencil lines have also been added to the hair for texture, depth and contrast.

Do I Need to Fix the Pastel?

Oil pastel won't need to be sprayed with fixative but note that if you want to varnish your painting, you will need to use a varnish suitable for both water- and oil-based media.

Dry pastel will need to be fixed, especially if you are not going to frame your painting under glass. Spray fixative when the painting is dry. Note that the fixative spray will make the pastel colors appear a bit darker.



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF CHARLOTTE

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

29" x 21" (74cm x 53cm)

ADDING GOUACHE TO A WATERCOLOR PAINTING

Gouache is very similar to watercolor, and it is a water-based paint. The main difference is that gouache is semi-opaque to opaque while watercolor is essentially transparent. Gouache dries a bit darker than it appears wet, and watercolor dries a bit lighter.

Gouache makes a great addition to a watercolor painting since it allows you to have transparent and opaque passages in your painting. You don't need to buy a whole set of gouache paints since you can mix your watercolor pigments with white gouache to make opaque colors.



MULTI-COLOURED DAYS

Watercolor and mixed media on paper
18" x 22" (46cm x 56cm)

But What Exactly is Gouache?

Gouache is traditionally made from the same pigments watercolors are made from but with added gum Arabic and a white inert pigment that will

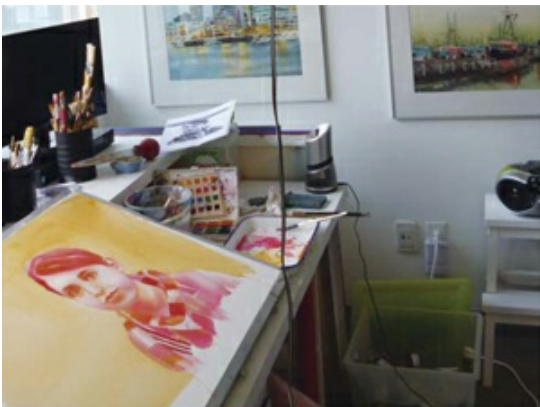
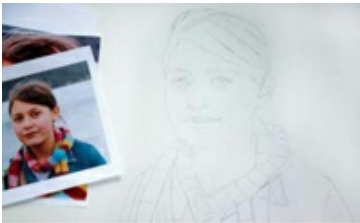
make it reflective and opaque. That pigment is usually chalk. Gouache is water based and dries fast. It is opaque and highly pigmented, so unlike watercolors, you can paint a lighter color on top of a darker color. Gouache can be made water-resistant if you use an acrylic medium to mix it instead of water.

DEMONSTRATION

Painting a Background with Watercolor and Gouache

Adding gouache to watercolor portrait backgrounds is a technique you should try. The gouache will make abstract textures as it dries, and the opacity of the gouache will contrast nicely with the transparency of the skin tones in the portrait.

For this painting, I worked from a reference photo of my daughter. After stretching and drying your watercolor paper on foamcore, you can transfer a sketch using carbon or graphite paper.



1 Paint the First Layers

Your base layers should be painted mostly using a wet-on-wet technique so the face doesn't have any unnaturally hard edges. Start with your lightest colors. Be sure to preserve white areas (like the whites of the eyes) with masking fluid. I painted in layers, starting with yellow, then red, then blue.



2 Paint a Watercolor Background Layer

Layer a few watercolors in the background; they will show through the gouache if the gouache is applied lightly. Doing this will produce a glowing effect.



3 Mix Gouache with Ink or Watercolor

Mix white gouache with ink or watercolor. For this painting, I used blue acrylic ink.



4 Paint Over the Background

Apply a layer of blue gouache and ink on top of the watercolor background layers in an irregular way—you want to give the background a complex texture with some colors showing through the light blue layer of gouache.

ADDING ACRYLIC PAINT

This is an interesting technique if you like the figures in your portraits to have an outline and textured background. Basically you are painting a first layer in the background, either with watercolor, ink or acrylic, and then you are painting a second layer on top leaving some of the first layer to show through either the edges or the texture of the background, or both.



SELFIE

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

15" x 22" (38cm x 56cm)

You can leave the background of your portrait as it is or paint additional layers on top on your India ink and acrylic paint background. For my finished painting, I added watercolor paint and designs drawn with watercolor crayons.

What is the Difference Between India Ink, Black Watercolor and Black Acrylic?

- India ink is different from acrylic in that it is made of soot with a binding agent. Different kinds of India inks have different degrees of water resistance. In my experience most India inks are not totally water-resistant.

- When painted on paper and allowed to dry, the India ink will mix with the white acrylic painted on top, giving the ink irregular light gray accents. I guess that is because the ink is absorbed by the paper. If you want a lighter background, you can leave that first layer of acrylic to dry and it will fix the ink. Successive layers of white acrylic will lighten the background.
- Water resistance: India ink can be more or less water-resistant depending on the surface you are painting on and the type of ink you use. Acrylic-based inks and acrylics will be water-resistant once dry. Black watercolor won't be water-resistant and will actually lift quite easily.
- Lightfastness: Inks are made of dyes and acrylic paint, and watercolors are made of pigments. Pigments have better lightfastness than inks, although India ink has pretty good lightfastness; it is made of soot that is diluted in water with a binding agent.
- Fluidity: Inks and fluid acrylic will be liquid, while acrylic will generally have a bit of body to it.

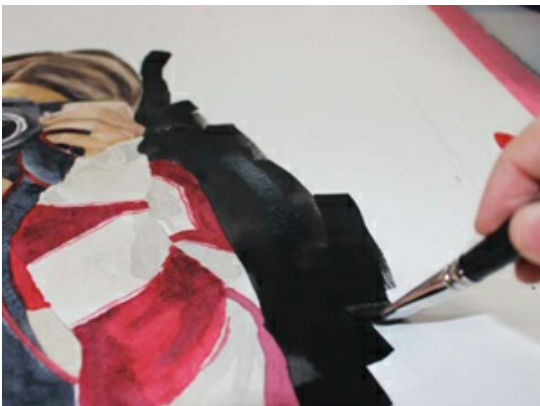
DEMONSTRATION

Painting a Background with Acrylic and India Ink



1 Paint a Simple Portrait

Paint a simple portrait with watercolor and leave the background unpainted.



2 Paint an Ink Background Layer

Carefully paint your first background layer using India ink. Pay extra attention to the edges—you don't want any white of the paper to show between the figure and the background, but you also don't want the ink to overlap the watercolor figure.



3 Mix Gouache with Ink or Watercolor

Once the ink is completely dry, paint over it with white acrylic. The acrylic is semi-opaque, so the resulting color will be a light gray with some variation because the ink will mix slightly with the acrylics.



4 Paint Over the Background

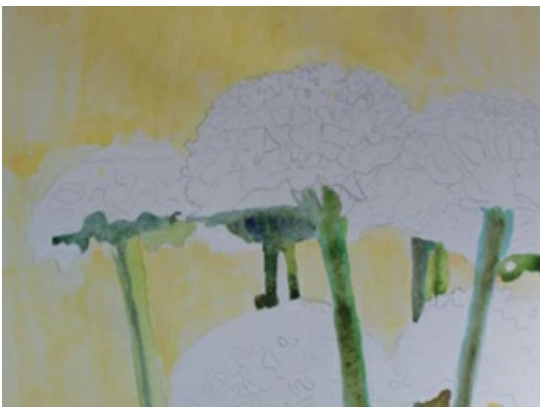
If you like the effect, you can leave a small outline along the edges of the figure where the ink has not been painted over with acrylic.

DEMONSTRATION

Adding Colored Pencil

If, like me, you like the idea of mixing elements of drawing in your paintings, you might be interested in trying various techniques to incorporate designs and drawings into your watercolors. For this demonstration, I wanted a somewhat realistic rendering of flowers juxtaposed with a stylized rendering of flowers. I decided to add two stripes of patterned flowers in the background of the realistically painted flowers.

Colored pencils offer the advantage of being available in many colors. You can draw a line or color an area, and they won't smudge the way watercolor pencils do if you decide to paint on top (they act as a resist).



1 Draw and Then Paint a Simple Still Life

Draw your subject on the paper (I am working from a photo of green chrysanthemums). Paint a light, textured background first, then paint in the flower stems and leaves.



2 Paint the Flowers

Paint the flowers by layering several watercolor washes to build up the texture. Add layers to the background as well.



3 Mark Edges or Borders for Your Background Designs, If Desired

If your designs are not going to cover the entire background, you can draw in edges or borders before you begin. For example, I want my designs to be integrated as two stripes in the background, so I'm using a ruler to mark the edges of the stripes with graphite.



4 Draw in Designs with Colored Pencils

Draw in your designs with colored pencils. Keep your pencils well sharpened so the thickness of the lines in your designs is consistent.



GREEN MUM

Watercolor and mixed media on paper mounted on board, wax finish
16" x 16" (41cm x 41cm)

Where Can I Find Pattern Ideas?



Patterns are fun and exciting, and there are endless sources of inspirations: doodles, Zentangles®, flowers, fabrics, wallpaper, lace, crochet...

Make a Pinterest board, a folder on your computer or a collection of pictures where you can keep interesting patterns. Go through your

collection when you need inspiration for a painting.

DEMONSTRATION

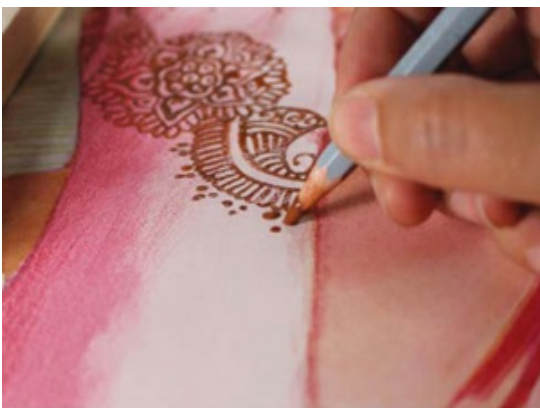
Drawing with Watercolor Pencils

Watercolor pencils dipped in water work as an alternative to brushing watercolor with a thin brush. This technique also results in darker, more pigmented lines than dry watercolor pencil does.



1 Dip Your Pencil in Water

Dip your pencil in water before drawing. The lead will soften if you use it for a while, so you might need to dry it and sharpen the tip regularly to ensure you get the line weight you want.



2 Draw on Top of Your Watercolor Painting

Draw the designs or patterns you desire on top of your watercolor painting.

Versatility of Watercolor Pencils

Watercolor pencils can be used in many ways in your watercolor paintings:

- When painting really fine details, like the number on a door, for example, you can try to draw that number with a pencil (dipped in water or not) instead of painting it.
- You can accentuate some areas on your painting by coloring lightly with dry watercolor pencils on top of the dry paint.
- You can add patterns as shown above.
- You can draw with dry watercolor pencils on some areas you want to smudge more before splashing water on a painting.

Remember that watercolor pencil will smudge if you paint over it. If you don't want this to happen, you can use colored pencils to draw patterns instead.



GEORGIA, THE SPANISH DRESS AND THE ECLECTUS PARROT

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

22" x 15" (56cm x 38cm)

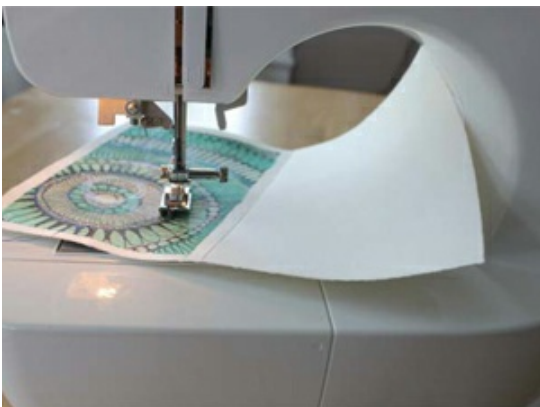
The background designs and outlines were drawn with watercolor pencils dipped in water.

SEWING ON PAPER

Sewing on paper works really well and produces a crisp line that can be a valuable addition to your design. There are, however, two things to consider.



Sewing will create holes in your paper where paint might accumulate if you paint on top of the sewing.



You are limited by the distance between the needle and the side of the machine, so take this into consideration when planning your painting. You can roll the paper if you want to access areas in the middle of a bigger sheet of paper, but you run the risk of making visible fold marks on the paper.



Examples of Sewing on Paper

These are postcard designs I did to show the sewing-on-paper process. I use this technique on smaller projects because of the limitation of the width of the sewing machine arm.

In these examples, the sewing was the last step because it makes holes in the paper, and the paint will accumulate in those holes if applied after the sewing.



The first example features a background painted with salt (added for texture). Then I drew the poppies with waterproof markers, and I added another darker layer on the background for contrast. The final step was the sewing.

The second features a layer of designs made with an hypotrochoid set (sort of like a Spirograph®). Then I added designs with markers before adding the stitching.

CLICK IT! To learn more about Sandrine's process for **Experimenting with Postcards**, visit PaintingDemos.com/experimenting-with-postcards.

CLICK IT! To learn more about Sandrine's process for **Experimenting with Hypotrochoid Designs**, visit PaintingDemos.com/experimenting-with-postcard-sized-watercolor-paper-alcohol-acetone-hypotrochoid-designs-and-patterns/.



LOUISE

Watercolor, mixed media and sewing on paper

21" x 29" (53cm x 74cm)

This portrait was painted using layering technique shown in [Chapter 3, Painting with Multiple Color Mixing Techniques](#). Then I painted a layer of black acrylic in the background, followed by a layer of white acrylic that allowed some of the black underneath to show through the paint and around the edges. The contours have been accentuated with dry pastels.

ADDING ZENTANGLES WITH MARKERS

Zentangles® are repetitive drawings of structured patterns. I am doing my own version of tangling by adding repetitive symmetrical designs with markers to watercolor paintings.

For the beginner, markers are much easier to handle than pen and ink—there is always a risk of ink spilling from the pen. An ink spill on watercolor paper is very difficult to remove.

If you have a lot of experience with markers and enjoy it, I suggest you try pen and ink.



Try drawing geometric patterns into plants. In this example, I've drawn patterns into leaves and stems.



In this example, I'm adding a pattern to a tree trunk. Since my chosen pattern is detailed and very geometric, I drew a grid with graphite to use as a reference.

Do I Need to Fix the Marker Drawing and Can I Paint Over It?

Some markers are water-resistant and some markers are water-soluble. On a spare piece of paper you can paint over a design and see if the marker smudges or not. If the markers are not water-resistant you can spray fixative before painting or varnishing on top. The fixative will change the properties of the paper though, and make it more water-resistant. The paint applied afterwards, especially watercolor, will react as if it was painted on Yupo paper or gessoed paper.

You can also add designs as the last step of your painting process so you won't have to paint over the markers. The designs drawn in marker will need to be fixed if you want to brush varnish as a finish.



A LITTLE BIRDIE TOLD ME

Watercolor and mixed media on paper mounted on board

21" × 26" (53cm × 66cm)

I like my portraits to have a fairy-tale feel that mixes the realistic with the imaginary. In this painting, I am juxtaposing a more realistic portrait with abstract elements, like a monochrome tangled bird and suggested background. This portrait was painted using a layering technique shown in [Chapter 3, *Painting with Multiple Color Mixing Techniques*](#). I wanted to keep the background painted in a simple way since I knew I wanted to add extra layers of patterns, so I painted a very light and simple wash that just outlined the tree shapes. I wanted the bird to stand out but not look realistic, so I painted it with just one color: Permanent Red (Holbein) with added splatters. Next I looked in my Zentangle® books and online for patterns that would fit the painting. I did not make them up, except for the part that follows the plant shape on the left of the figure. I wanted the patterns to be present but not to overpower the whole picture, so I only covered part of the background with patterns. Since I wanted the bird to stand out as much as possible, I chose a darker and finer marker and more intricate details for its patterning.

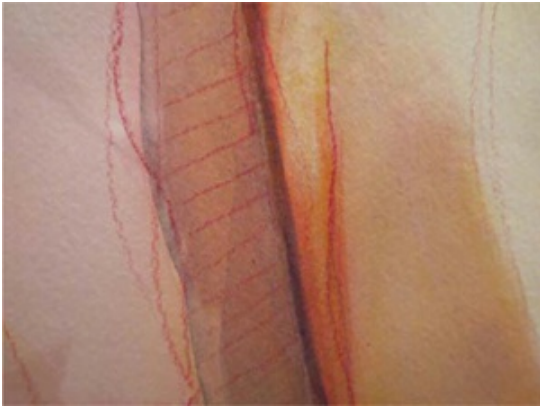
DRAWING ON TOP OF A PORTRAIT WITH WATERCOLOR PENCILS

Mixing drawing and painting can lead to very intriguing results. What I like about this technique is that the drawn lines are usually not very visible from a distance but will show upon closer inspection of the painting. They provide more levels of complexity.



DAY OFF

Watercolor and mixed media on paper
29" × 22" (74cm × 56cm)



In this close-up of *Day Off*, lines have been drawn on top of the portrait, many that detail or highlight the creases in the shirt.



You can also draw patterns with watercolor pencils or crayons. This example is from the painting *Selfie* (see [Chapter 5, Adding Acrylic Paint](#)). Drawing doodles on top of an acrylic or ink layer is a great way to add special details.



SELF PORTRAIT

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

20" × 20" (51cm × 51cm)

Private collection

(From a photo by photographer Paula Vander)

This portrait is painted from a reference picture that my friend Paula took. The reference picture already had the unusual cropping that I liked but I wanted more than just a realistic rendering of the picture. So, once the painting had time to dry, I started adding colored pencil marks that are reminiscent of the ones I would make if I was doing a quick sketch for that portrait without being too careful. I like the combination of carefully planned slow painting and spontaneous, fast gesture drawing.

I did a drawing from the reference picture that I transferred onto the watercolor paper.

The portrait and the background are carefully painted by layering colors to render the skin tones using a technique demonstrated in [Chapter 3, Painting with Multiple Color Mixing Techniques](#). I used masking fluid only for the white of the eye.

DEMONSTRATION

Combining Painting and Drawing

You previously saw examples of lines drawn on top of a watercolor painting and of patterns added with drawing media. You can also draw one part of a painting and paint the rest. For example, on a portrait you can paint the face and draw the hands or some element of the clothing, like a scarf. In this demonstration, you will draw the hands.



1 Layer Watercolors and Paint Background with Gouache

Paint your portrait as you normally would: Layer your watercolors and work from light to dark. Once the watercolors are dry, add a layer of white gouache to your subject's background. Let the paint dry completely.



2 Paint the Hand and Draw in Details

Paint the hand with a very light wash of Alizarin Crimson. After the paint has dried, draw in the details of the hand with a red watercolor pencil.



3 Draw Textural Lines in the Background

Draw lines with your colored pencil over the gouache background to add texture and contrasting color.



4 Draw in Designs with a Watercolor Pencil

Use a watercolor pencil dipped in water to draw henna designs onto the hand and arm.



NOW YOU SEE ME

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

20" × 24" (51cm × 61cm)

The background was first painted with watercolors. Then I added a layer of gouache and then the lines with colored pencil.

The inspiration for the patterns on the hand are traditional henna designs. I found that brown watercolor crayon dipped in water looked very much like henna.

After painting over the background with watercolor and gouache, I felt the overall painting lacked contrast in color temperature; in other words, the painting was too pink. I added the textural green lines to the background to balance the pink.



MIXED

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

29" × 22" (74cm × 56cm)

For this painting, I wanted the hands to have the feeling of a classical drawing. I painted a very light wash before drawing the hands in a classical style and with crosshatching shading.

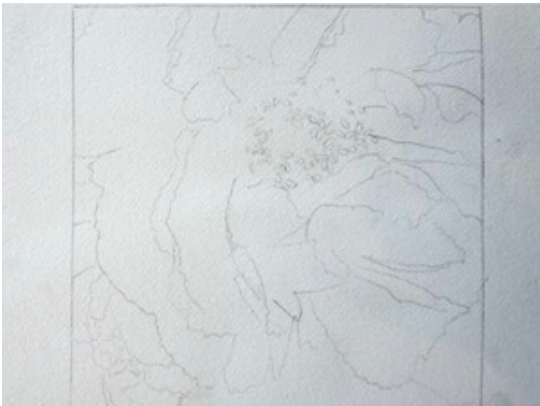
The bit around her neck is the strap of a swimsuit. It helps to balance the composition by adding a drawn element to the right side of the painting. The direction of the strap is vertical, which works well with the placement of the hands.

I scrubbed off quite a bit of paint with a stiff brush and water to lighten areas in the hair and in the shaded areas of the face.

DEMONSTRATION

Drawing with Watercolor Pencils and Pastels

When painting, you can easily become lost in details and find it difficult to paint in a looser, softer way. This technique allows the “precise” painter to give up some control by allowing the water to move the paint in unpredictable ways. The successive layers of pastels and watercolor allow for added definition within a ghost image.



1 Outline Your Design

Draw the outline of your design with graphite on paper.



2 Color the Design with Watercolor Pencils

Color the different sections with dry watercolor pencil. Remember, you can layer different colors to make color mixes.



3 Spray the Drawing with Water

Spray your drawing with water and let the colors move freely. Allow the paper and the pigments to dry.



4 Define and Finish with Pastels

Refine your image by using whatever medium you like: washes of watercolor, more watercolor pencil, acrylics or pastels. Pastels are convenient as they allow you to paint light on dark and retrieve some light in your painting—something you can't do with watercolor.

CLICK IT! For tips on loosening up, visit [ArtistsNetwork.com/fearless-watercolor](https://www.artistsnetwork.com/fearless-watercolor).



PEONY

Mixed media on paper mounted on canvas

12" x 12" (30cm x 30cm)

This painting features a lot of mixed-media techniques:

- The peonies were first painted on paper using the technique shown on the previous page. I like that you can still clearly see the line of the original drawing in graphite and also some of the lines of watercolor pencil that were not totally mixed when I sprayed the image with water.
- When sprayed with water, the image became very blurry. I call it a ghost image. The peonies were mostly redefined with watercolor washes (wet on dry) once the paper had time to dry and a touch of dry pastel here and there.
- The paper was then mounted on canvas using gel medium.
- I added a final layer of resin for an extra-shiny finish.

MIXED MEDIA ON YUPO PAPER

Yupo paper is a synthetic water-resistant paper made of 100 percent polypropylene. When Yupo is painted over with watercolor, your paint will dry only by evaporation and there will be no absorption by the paper (as there would be with regular watercolor paper). This is why Yupo paper allows very nice textures to form while the paint is drying. This is also why the paint will take a longer time to dry.

What Media Can I Use on Yupo Paper?

Pencil on Yupo Paper

Pencil works great on Yupo paper. It makes a very crisp and clean line. But it's a little difficult to erase completely and prone to smudging.

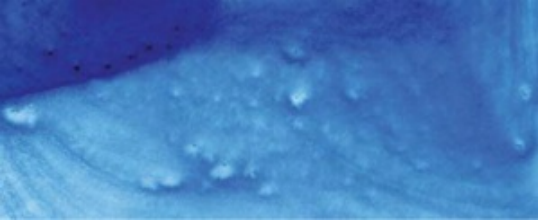
Markers on Yupo Paper

Markers slide very nicely across toothless Yupo. Depending on the marker, it may smudge once it's dry. Markers will definitely smudge on Yupo while wet, so use caution.



Watercolor on Yupo Paper

Watercolor works very well for painting on Yupo paper and can be lifted easily if needed.



Acrylics on Yupo Paper

Fluid acrylics and acrylics with more body can both be used on Yupo paper. Fluid acrylics will behave somewhat like watercolor paint. The main difference is that acrylics won't lift off the paper as easily, thus allowing layering techniques that are more difficult to execute with watercolors. Acrylics with more body will work well also.

What is the Difference Between Yupo Paper and Regular Watercolor Paper?

Because paint dries only by evaporation on Yupo paper and because Yupo paper doesn't have any tooth at all, textures occur very easily. It is difficult to paint a flat wash on Yupo paper. When painting wet on wet the colors are moving and mixing really fast, making the final result more difficult to control.

Paint on Yupo paper can be lifted with a wet tissue, and if you are using nonstaining pigments you will easily renew the white of the paper in any area you would like to rework.

To paint dark areas on your painting, you can use the following technique: Use watercolor paint either directly from the tube or very slightly diluted. It will be easy to manage, and you will get a darker color. Then use a clean tissue on the still-wet area you just painted to lift the paint carefully. Doing so will add some transparency to the dark areas you paint.



POPPY FIELDS

Watercolor, pastels and gouache on Yupo paper

8¹/₂" × 11¹/₂" (22cm × 29cm)

For this painting, I did an initial drawing with graphite and then painted the whole picture with watercolor. I added acrylic in some places (such as the sky) and touches of pastel. I painted over some of the pastel with water (pastel brushed with water behaves much like gouache). I scratched off some of the wet paint between the poppy flowers in the field as a way to create grass and stems.

COLLAGE ON YUPO PAPER

Yupo paper is not only for watercolor; you can mix media on this surface for interesting effects. The most challenging characteristic of Yupo is the absence of any tooth or texture, which makes it difficult for some mediums, such as chalk pastel, to adhere. The absence of tooth also makes it a very pleasant surface to work on with graphite or oil pastels.



Collage on Yupo

Collage with acrylics will work well on Yupo paper. I especially like the textures made with tissue paper, as the color underneath the tissue will show. This technique allows you to use dry pastels more easily because your collaged areas will have more tooth than the Yupo paper.



Chalk Pastels on Yupo

It is possible to use chalk pastels on Yupo, but they won't adhere well due to the lack of tooth of the paper. If you are using pastels, fix them with workable fixative when you are done.



Oil Pastels on Yupo

Oil pastels will present a better adhesion than chalk pastels. Layering is still very difficult, but sgraffito is very easy and can produce interesting effects. You can use oil pastels as a resist that limits some painting areas. It will prevent watercolor from going in every direction, giving you more control of the paint.



India Ink on Yupo

India ink will produce a very strong contrasting black on the bright white of Yupo paper. You can dilute it to obtain different shades of gray, then work it the way you would other inks, watercolors or liquid acrylics on Yupo paper. The ink will stain the paper, and once it dries it is very difficult to lift.

CLICK IT! To learn more about the making of *Autoportrait 5*, visit PaintingDemos.com/autoportrait-5-an-experiment-in-ink-wash.



AUTOPORTRAIT 5

Fluid acrylic and mixed media on Yupo paper

14" × 11" (36cm × 28cm)

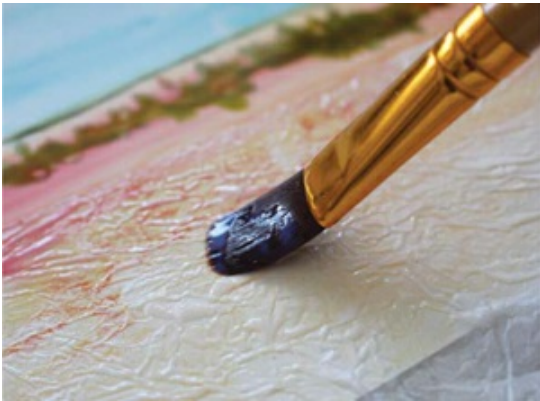
This portrait was painted using a gouache-resist technique: Gouache is painted over the areas you want to keep light. Then a layer of India ink is applied to the whole painting and allowed to dry. Then the painting is rinsed with water in the sink. The gouache acts as a resist and prevents the ink from staining the Yupo in the areas where gouache has been painted. You end up with a ghost image you can rework with whatever medium you wish. I used fluid acrylics, but I could have used watercolor. I layered the fluid acrylic the same way I would layer watercolor to build up a portrait: by painting successive layers of yellow, red and blue.

This technique is interesting because you can't be too precise. The process of painting the white areas, applying ink and rinsing results in an imperfect image with stains and a kind of aged, somewhat childish look. That is part of the charm of this technique.

DEMONSTRATION

Collage on Yupo

Collaging paper on Yupo is a technique you can try if you want to add a bit of tooth and texture to your painting.



1 Collage Tissue Paper to Your Painting

Brush thin tissue paper onto your painting with gel medium. Don't worry about adding wrinkles and creases—these add visual interest, depth and tooth.



2 Add Other Media as Desired

Once the gel medium has dried, integrate media such as dry pastels. The tooth provided by the gel medium and the tissue paper will result in the firmer adhesion of additional media.



ABSTRACTED LANDSCAPE

Mixed media on Yupo paper

9" × 9" (23cm × 23cm)

I find that working with horizontal layers of color and texture works well in creating a semi-abstract representation of an imaginary landscape. Collaging tissue paper on Yupo produces fine wrinkles that are reminiscent of natural textures found in stones or rocks. The textures naturally formed by watercolor drying on Yupo add interest to the landscape, while pastels allow for soft atmospheric changes of color near the horizon line. It could also be used for bright accents of vivid color here and there. In this example, I used contrasting red watercolor in the green stripe of the trees for accents of contrasting colors.



SOMEWHERE 8

Mixed media on Yupo (watercolor, collage, pastel)

8" x 13" (20cm x 33cm)

This mixed-media piece has been painted with watercolor. To add a bit of interest I tore some pieces of tissue paper so they had interesting irregular contours and fixed them with gel medium on top of the watercolor washes. I spread that gel medium all over the painting, on top of the watercolor-painted areas so I could add another layer of watercolor on top.

It is very difficult to work with layers of watercolor on Yupo paper because the brush can easily disrupt the previous layer. Fixing the first layers of watercolor with gel medium allowed me to paint another layer of watercolor on top of that first layer. Collaging the tissue paper provided some tooth, and I was able to use chalk pastels for some contrasting contouring where the tissue paper had been collaged.

Do I Need to Use a Fixative on Yupo?

It depends on whether you want to frame your painting or mount it on a board. If the painting is framed, you might not need to fix it, although it can be a good idea to do so to avoid any problems before framing.

Workable fixative is a good product to use in between layers; spray varnish can be used at the end.

I recommend fixing anything that involves dry pastels, as they can lift very easily.

Note that if you used water-based media as well as oil-based media, you need to use a varnish that is suitable for both.