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# Painting a landscape with watercolours: Mountain mist ? Wet on wet technique

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**Estimated time:** 3 hours

**Level:** expert

**Artist:** Ewa Karpinska, [www.ewa-karpinska.fr](http://www.ewa-karpinska.fr) [6]

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? How to create a watercolour with an ephemeral atmosphere? Place a small sheet of paper on a Plexiglas sheet and create your first ever wet on wet watercolour with magnificent airy, cotton-like mists..

**Material :**

- **Paper:** Canson® Montval, fine grain, 300 gsm, format 24 x 32 cm
- **Watercolour paint:** blue, yellow, pink, red oxide
- **Brushes:** sable hair, liner, acrylic brush
- **Accessories:** a porcelain palette or large plate, a Plexiglas sheet, plastic basin.

## Acrylique - Réaliser un rapide crayonné du sujet - étape 1

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### **Step 1 : Making a sketch**

On a small sheet of paper, approximately 5 x 6 cm in size, create a colour distribution scheme. This will guide you when you apply your first pools of colour, as you will be creating your watercolour directly on the wet sheet of paper, with no prior drawing.

The proportions are essential, as they create the balance of values between the various masses and planes of colour.

You will also be able to decide where to create white spaces when you are applying the watercolours.

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### **Step 2 : Soaking the paper**

Submerge the paper for 1 to 2 minutes in a plastic tray filled with water, allowing it to absorb the water.

A sufficiently soaked sheet of paper will give you extra time to handle the watercolour.

Place the paper on a Plexiglas sheet. It will remain stretched and flat as long as it stays wet.

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### **Step 3 : Applying colour**

1- On your palette, mix yellow with a little red, ?dim?this colour with a hint of blue to obtain a luminous brown and create a greenish brown by adding more blue.

2- Dip your sable-hair brush into the watercolour and allow it to fully absorb the paint, press the hairs between your fingers to make the colour flow onto the paper and apply the first pools of diluted colour.

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## Step 4 : Placing colours

Tilt the Plexiglas sheet to direct the flow of coloured liquid and repeat this process with the second colour. Do not let the watercolour run in areas that must remain white (although a slight wash of colour on the white spaces is not a problem).

Use a wedge and absorb the excess liquid with a large liner. You should apply your colour quickly and the film of water (coloured or not coloured) should be even over the entire surface.

**Tip:** liquid always runs from where there is excess to where it is scarce. To create a painting using the wet on wet technique, try to create a balance between the wet areas; for example, if a pool of colour is 1 mm thick and it is placed next to a pool with the same thickness, the wet areas will not run.

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## Step 5 : Patches of colour and their shades

Apply small quantities of diluted colour and blend these into each other with your brush. Then allow the water to make its own blends.

Cover the entire surface of the painting, working quickly on several areas in order to have an even layer of watercolour and maintain unity in the painting.

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## Step 6 : Absorption of excess watercolour

Remove the excess watercolour that has accumulated on the lower edge of the paper with a large liner that is damp but not loaded with water.

Work carefully, skimming the surface of the water as the colours have started to adhere to the paper and if you press your brush too hard you could move the pigments and change the visual aspect of your watercolour

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## Step 7 : Anticipating changes in lines

Moderately load a fine brush with a diluted dull violet.

Draw lines using quick, light strokes. This clear thin line will change under the action of the water. If your stroke is too slow, excess liquid will form at the end of the line you have painted, which will gradually get thicker.

Do not hesitate to absorb unwanted excess paint as soon as it forms.

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## Step 8 : Shading small surfaces

When the mountainside and the distant summits become semi-matt, i.e. when the paper is slightly less wet, paint the details with a smaller quantity of creamier watercolour.

Allow these small pools of colour to run before proceeding to the next step.

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## **Step 9 : Balancing sharp and blurred details**

Draw the details on the summits of the mountain using a thicker paint.

Without changing the load on your brush, draw lines in the misty area.

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## **Step 10 : Creating white spaces**

Lightly rub the area in question with a brush loaded with water. Quickly dry it with a cloth and absorb the watercolour with the same brush; through capillary action, the coloured water moves up the hairs of the brush and a white space is created on the paper. Add a little water to the cleared space.

This water will make it possible to prevent the diluted colours around this white space from running into it. Create these white spaces when the wash is just matt, i.e. when the surface is no longer granular but

perfectly smooth.

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## Step 11 : Balancing sharp and blurred details

Make new lines with the most textured paint on all surfaces that are no longer granular.

Watercolour paper is structured in holes and bumps (the grain). The granular surface is formed by the holes in the paper where the watercolour is more concentrated. This is a highly useful visual cue as to the moisture content of the paper.

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## Step 12 : Creating white graphics

Make white lines by dipping your brush in clear water.

Your brush is only slightly loaded and barely skims the paper; you will be able to create beautiful wispy lines resembling caterpillars.

Work on different areas to enable the liquid to spread evenly. The lines will vary in aspect according to the quantity of water applied.

**Tip:** A large number of lines too close together will inundate the surface of the paper and could blur your painting. Let the water guide you... When you consider your watercolour to be finished, dry it with a hairdryer to prevent the water running and enjoy your creation!

**More information** Ewa Karpinska reveals all the secrets of wet on wet watercolours in her book, published in French and entitled 'Aquarelle lumière de l'eau?', ed. Fleurus.

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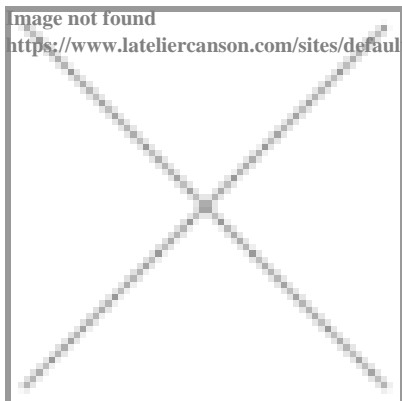


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