

Frollicking Through the Flowers • + ° ✿ ≈



Supplies:

- Strathmore watercolor paper (300gsm 12x12")
- Golden fluid acrylics
 - Green gold, hansa yellow light, quinachridone magenta
- Daler Rowney acrylic inks
 - Antelope brown, white, flame orange
- Holbein acryla gouache
 - Opera
- Isopropyl alcohol
- Baby wipes
- Floral or leaf stencil
- Oil pastels
 - White and green (I used Meeden but any student brand will do)
- Liquitex (or any brand gel medium for collage)
- Titanium white heavy bodied acrylic paint
- Green pencil
- Floral paper napkin
- Variety of brushes



In this joyful mixed-media lesson, we step into a world of color, movement, and intuitive mark-making as we create a layered abstract floral piece on watercolor paper.

Using a combination of acrylic inks, acrylic paint, oil pastels, collage, pencil, and isopropyl alcohol, you'll learn how to build rich, expressive surfaces while letting go of perfection and embracing the unexpected.

This lesson is all about freedom. Working wet-in-wet, allowing materials to interact in surprising ways, and discovering how floral forms can emerge organically from layers of color and texture.



What We'll Learn:

- How to work wet-in-wet with acrylic inks and paints on watercolor paper
 - Techniques for layering multiple mixed media materials without overworking the surface
 - How to use isopropyl alcohol to create movement, texture, and soft diffusion
 - Ways to incorporate oil pastels, pencil, and collage to add depth and detail
 - How to loosen up and allow floral elements to emerge intuitively rather than planning them
 - How to embrace imperfection and trust the creative process
-

Lesson Notes:

- Begin by laying out your watercolor paper and selecting a stencil with floral or foliage-inspired shapes. Prepare a limited palette of acrylic paints and inks, choosing a harmonious range of colours that will support a soft, floral feel.
- Using a baby wipe, mix a few gentle variations of corals and greens directly on your palette. Then, with the stencil in place, lightly rub the colour across the surface. This creates a delicate layer of patterning, just enough to suggest form and movement without overwhelming the page. Because the first layer is applied so lightly, it dries almost instantly. This allows us to move intuitively from one layer to the next without stopping, helping to maintain a sense of flow and momentum throughout the process.
- Now we begin to gently bring in our floral and foliage elements.
 - Using a white oil pastel, start sketching simple, symbolic shapes inspired by your chosen reference. This might be the imagery from a paper napkin, flowers from your garden, or inspiration found elsewhere. Keep this process loose and intuitive. There's no need to capture detail, try to remain loose and unrestricted..
- Once you've established your shapes, begin layering in a couple of green oil pastels to add variation and depth. As you work, repeat each element at least three times across the page. This creates a natural sense of balance and cohesion. This same principle can be carried through all stages of the painting, including the earlier stencil work, where color and pattern can be repeated in varied sizes and places to create a more dynamic composition.

- Using acrylic ink, revisit the same floral and foliage shapes you've already introduced. Move intuitively around the page, repeating these forms while allowing them to overlap with earlier marks and areas of color.
- With a wide flat wash brush, gently pull some of the wet ink outward into the surrounding areas. As the ink moves across the surface, it interacts with the oil pastel beneath, creating a subtle resist effect.
- As you build this layer, be mindful not to cover everything. Allow small areas of white space and glimpses of earlier color to remain visible. I like to call these "truth windows".
- With a spare sheet of mixed media paper nearby, use this to catch any excess paint rather than rinsing it straight into your water. Over time, you'll begin to build a second, spontaneous artwork alongside your main piece, no paint wasted here!
- Now, using the remaining paint and ink on your palette, we're going to print directly onto the surface of the painting.
- Gently press the palette down onto your artwork, allowing the color to land organically. Repeat this in a few areas, building up interest and variation.
 - There's no need to overload your palette with paint, the natural amounts you've been working with will be more than enough. Any excess can be printed onto your spare sheet, continuing to develop that second piece.
- With a clean brush and just a touch of water, start to ease into some of the wet painted areas, working with one color at a time. For example, you might pick up a small amount of the heavier white paint and gently glide it across the surface, allowing it to mix subtly with the colors beneath.
 - As you move your brush, think about creating pathways for the eye to travel through the painting. Repeat this process in a few places, using small amounts of white or other colors already on your surface. The goal is not to cover what's beneath, but to create semi-transparent veils that soften edges and introduce moments of quiet within the more active areas.
- Next choose a piece of collage material; this could be hand-painted paper or a floral paper napkin.
 - Tear small, thin pieces and begin placing them in different areas, testing where they might sit most naturally within the composition.
 - Once you're happy with the placement, use a soft brush and gel medium to adhere them to the surface. Allow the edges to melt into the painting so they feel integrated rather than placed on top.
- Finally, working with the remaining wet paint, add in some final touches to tie the painting together, whether that be petals, leaves or simple repeating patterns around the work.

I hope you've enjoyed this process of layering, play, and discovery... and I can't wait to see your beautiful "frolicking through the flowers" pieces shared in the group!

