

# Learn to Paint in Watercolour



## "The Essential Basics!"

with **Annette Raff**



**Annette is an award winning artist who has painted and tutored in watercolour for the past 14 years.**



*"Mysterious Wisteria" Royal Qld Art Society Big Art Awards – 1st Prize 2009*

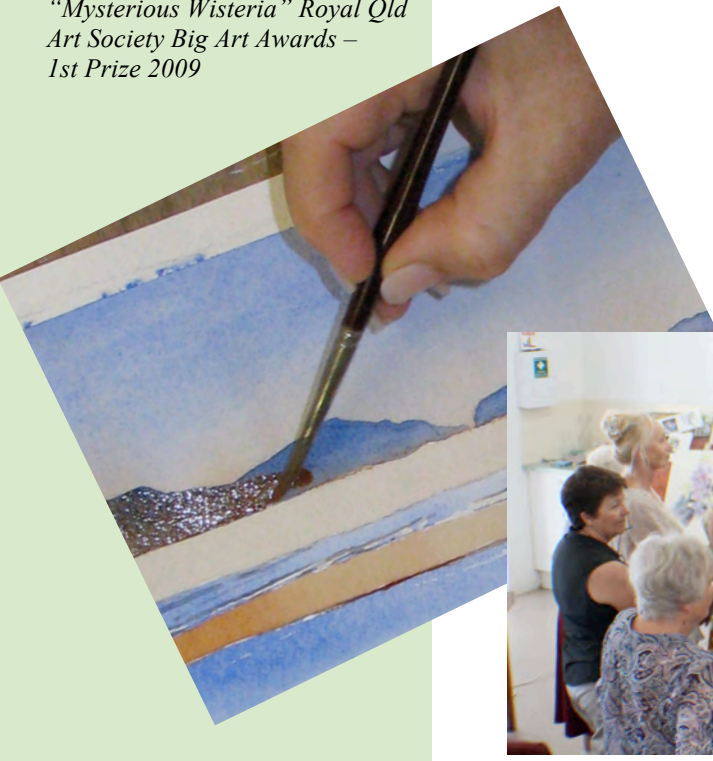
- *Have you always wanted to paint in watercolour , but not sure where to start?*
- *Are you struggling with 'technique' and need to refresh on the basics?*

**Everything you need to know about watercolour painting explained clearly and simply with demonstrations that you can follow and practice. Ideally suited to beginner and intermediate painters or those wishing to improve their technique.**

**Essential techniques will be covered, including, glazing, brush control, wet on wet washes, and colour mixing**



*"Anna under the Palms" Finalist Artists Magazine 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Prize 2011*



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# Watercolour with Annette Raff

## MATERIALS LIST

This is a list of ideal materials to get you started painting in this wonderful medium. Please bring along any additional items or paints you may have at home that you think may be of use. I am flexible about pigments and brushes, but please do have a couple of full sheets of good (Arches or Saunders) cold pressed paper. (see attachment on papers).

**Watercolour Pigments:** Artists Quality Pigments in tubes are recommended:-  
(Winsor & Newton are ideal)

- Quinacridone Gold (Winsor & Newton)
- Permanent Rose (Winsor & Newton)
- Winsor Blue (Red or Green Shade) or Pthalo Blue
- Permanent Alizarin Crimson (*in Winsor & Newton*)
- Burnt Sienna (red based brown) (Winsor & Newton is best)
- Cerulean Blue

Additional colours to add ***if your budget allows! (not absolutely essential)***

- Aureolin Yellow
- Permanent Alizarin Crimson (*in Winsor & Newton*)

3B or 4B and a 6B or 8B Pencil.

1 x Large black waterproof marker such as a chisel point Nikko.

Masking tape 1/2" or 3/4"

1 Scotch *magic* sponge (the type you buy from Coles or Woolworths in the sponges section).

Sketch paper – 2 or 3 A3 sheets should be enough!

A pen that doesn't work any more for tracing (they're always around when we *don't* need them!)

Sharp cutting blade

Scissors

**Brushes:** No. 4, 12 and approx. no. 20 round watercolour brushes (*Robert Wade* brand or similar synthetic or synthetic blend or natural hair)

1 or 2 *old* bristle brushes or toothbrush (great for foliage!)

2 x 1" 'soft' Large flat watercolour brushes

The more brushes you can bring to choose from, usually the better! I also like to use large soft 'dry' ones for 'fanning'!

**Paper:** A *pad* of A4 Arches or Saunders cold pressed paper 300 gsm.

**Alternatively** Arches & Saunders papers can be purchased in large separate sheets, which can be cut into 4ths to make smaller sheets. Please do this in preparation for the class. Although not as convenient as the *pads* it is slightly cheaper to purchase paper this way. You will need approx. ½ sheet per day.

**Water Container:** 2 x Jars or 1 litre yoghurt containers or similar.

**Rags and tissues.**

**Palette** – This can be purchased from an art shop or you can use *white* ice-cream container lids or plastic trays or plates. As long as there is plenty of room to mix colours. You'll need at least 3 ice-cream container lids. Hint: you can use blue tak pressed into little 'bridges' to divide up separate sections on your palettes if you wish. 6 or 'so' tiny dishes are also handy, such as glass tea light holders or the tiny Japanese sauce dishes.

**Pencil and Rubber** – 2B, 4B and 8B pencil is recommended and a *kneadable* eraser.

Masking Tape: Approx: ½ or ¾" wide.

2 backing **boards** to support your work (No larger than A3 size). Watercolour paper can rest on anything that is fairly *firm* and *waterproof*! A recent discovery of many

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### **MATERIALS LIST (CONTD)**

Watercolourists is “gatorfoam” or “corflute” board. This is a *lightweight* board made from foam panels (found in most art stores). It is laminated and resists moisture. It is perfect for a firm surface and ideal if you are going to be carrying it with you.

Hint: I covered mine with clear laminate (the type you cover school books with) so that my masking tape doesn't stick to it on removal.

Something to lean your board on at an angle of about 30° (a box of tissues works well).

I look forward to many happy hours of painting with you. Please do not hesitate to contact me either by phone or email if you have any enquiries.

Please see over for attachment on ‘watercolour paper information’.

# All about Watercolour Paper!

by Annette Raff

## Papers 'aint' just papers!

There are a huge number of watercolour papers available today. It is important to know the difference between these papers and how you can choose a paper suitable for what you wish to achieve.

You will notice that some papers are much more expensive than others. This is because they are manufactured differently and are made from different materials.

You can basically divide all the papers into two main groups. These are the pure (100%) cotton or rag papers and those that are not! The pure papers are more expensive but are essential, even more so when starting out, as they provide a surface that is more receptive to wash work.

The papers that are not 100% cotton are usually a blend of cotton and synthetic fibres. They can be used for quick 'brush work' and 'sketches', but are not good when building up a painting with successive 'glazes'. The paint tends to sit on the surface of the paper and often lifts when applying another wash which can result in a 'muddy' look.

The price usually gives a fair indication of whether a paper is pure cotton or not. You can expect to pay between \$9 and \$15 for a full sheet of pure cotton or rag paper. The most common brands available here in Australia are:- Fabriano, Arches, Saunders Waterford, Blue Lake and Llana Aquarelle.

Papers such as Cotman, Bockingford and Canson are not pure cotton or rag papers. Don't rely on what the front cover or the sales assistant tells you. If it is a pure 100% cotton or rag paper it will say so somewhere on the front if it is a pad or will have one of the brand names imprinted on one corner if it is a full sheet.

## Paper surfaces

Once you have found a good pure paper, you then have a choice of surface texture. They usually are available in a smooth finish (sometimes called 'hot press'), a medium finish (sometimes called 'cold pressed') or a rough finish.

Cold pressed or rough are the most popular choices as they both produce beautiful washes that can be layered. The smooth or 'hot press' papers are for the more experienced painters as the paint tends to run around on top of the paper and results in little 'blooms' sometimes called 'cauliflowers' or 'runs'. Contrary to what the name suggests it is quite hard to achieve a smooth wash on 'hot pressed' or 'smooth' paper.

## Thickness (weight) of Paper

The thickness or 'weight' of paper is referred to as 'gsm'. Good watercolour papers usually come in three choices of thickness or 'weight'; 185gsm, 300gsm or 640gsm. The most commonly used is the 300gsm. The thicker papers are very resilient but also much more expensive. The thinner paper can 'buckle' a little and is not conducive to harsh treatment, but is a great option when starting out to practice your washes on, as it is still a pure cotton paper but is just a little thinner and may require 'stretching'.

## Stretching Paper

When working with water and pigment paper tends to 'cockle' or 'buckle'. For some painters this is a problem and for others it is not. It depends on your style of work and personality. There are many different views on how to prepare your watercolour paper and/or whether to actually prepare it or not!

I am of the belief that paper buckling is usually not a huge problem. Usually it flattens out again and if it doesn't I recommend 'stretching' the paper ***after you have done the painting***. This means using a similar technique to 'prestretching', but avoiding wetting the painted surface.

## The Prestretching Method (before you paint)

Step 1. You will need a sheet of ply (preferably 'marine ply') a little larger than the watercolour paper. You will need the gummed tape especially for stretching paper and available at art stores. ***Please note masking tape will not work.*** Tear 4 lengths of gummed tape the same size as the edges of your paper and put aside ready. You will also need a wet sponge.

Step 2. Fill a bathtub with about 2" of cold water. Lay your paper in and under the water for about 3 minutes. When it is completely soaked, pick it up by one corner, letting the excess water drain from it and then lay it on the sheet of ply. Lift the corners and lay back down to remove any large air bubbles. There may be one or two little ones that you cannot remove and that is okay. Run each length of gummed tape over the wet sponge to totally wet the shiny gummed side of the tape. Now lay the tape over all four sides of the paper, half on and half off. That's it! Put your board and

paper somewhere flat. It may take anywhere from a few hours to overnight to dry (depending on weather). As it dries the paper shrinks and will tighten and flatten. When dry, **cut with a blade** along the edge to remove. You will be left with tape on the edges of your paper, this may look a little unsightly but will not be seen when the painting is framed. Don't try and remove it with water, whatever you do!

The 'After Painting Stretching' Method

Do as above in Step 1. Place a clean towel on a table and place your paper **painting side down** on the towel. Use your soaked sponge to completely wet the back of the painting right up to the edges. The water **will not affect** your painting! Make sure it is **thoroughly** wet. Now squeeze out some water from your sponge onto your board as well and spread it all over the board. Pick your painting up by one corner and place **painting side up** onto the board. It should 'suction' itself onto the board. Again lift corners to remove as many air bubbles as possible. If there are large air bubbles you may need to spray some water under the paper onto the board while lifting a corner of the painting. Now place the gummed tape as mentioned in Step 2 above on all four edges. Leave to dry as above.