



DORIS JOA

FINE ART WATERCOLOR

15 Watercolor Mistakes

& how to avoid them

A little book of practical painting tips

FREE BOOKLET



Choosing unsuitable materials

Good watercolor paper, reliable paints and brushes that hold water make learning easier. Expensive is not always better: choose materials suited to watercolor, especially paper that tolerates repeated washes.

TRY THIS

Start with dependable watercolor paper before buying lots of colors.



MISTAKE

02

Losing control of the water

Too much water can create puddles and unwanted blooms; too little can leave dry, patchy strokes. The right moisture depends on the effect you want.

— TRY THIS —

Look for an even sheen rather than standing water when preparing a wet wash.



Making every edge hard

Outlining every petal can make flowers look stiff. In realistic painting, some edges disappear into neighboring tones while others stay crisp.

TRY THIS

Choose one focal edge to keep sharp and soften a neighboring edge.



Ignoring tonal values

Beautiful colors alone do not create form. Light, midtones and darks help petals turn, overlap and feel dimensional.

TRY THIS

Squint at your reference to spot the main light and dark shapes.

MISTAKE 05



Overworking a wash

Repeatedly brushing a drying wash can disturb pigment, lift earlier color or create marks you never intended.

TRY THIS

Make a deliberate pass, then let it settle before deciding what comes next.



Using dirty water for pale washes

Pigment left in rinse water can tint delicate whites, yellows and pale pinks without you noticing.

TRY THIS

Keep one jar for rinsing and another with clean water for light mixtures.

MISTAKE 07



Starting too dark

A heavy first layer can make it harder to preserve luminous light passages in a transparent watercolor.

TRY THIS

Build depth gradually with controlled transparent layers where appropriate.

MISTAKE
08

Forgetting the lightest lights

Once a highlight has been covered, recovering its original brightness can be difficult.

TRY THIS

Identify the brightest areas before you begin and protect them as you paint.



Painting every detail equally

If everything is equally sharp and detailed, the viewer has no clear place to look.

TRY THIS

Save your strongest detail and contrast for the focal area.



Using the wrong brush

A brush that holds too little water or has no useful point can make smooth petals and precise edges frustrating.

TRY THIS

Choose a brush that holds a wash and still comes to a fine point.

Ignoring color temperature

Warm and cool variations can suggest light, shadow and depth even within a single pink or white petal.

TRY THIS

Observe where the light feels warmer and where shadows lean cooler.



Making all leaves the same green

Leaves change with their angle, lighting, age and distance. Uniform green can flatten an otherwise lively painting.

TRY THIS

Vary value and temperature before adding more green pigments.

MISTAKE

13



Skipping the composition

A technically beautiful flower can still feel awkward if its placement, direction and surrounding space are ignored.

TRY THIS

Check the silhouette and negative space before beginning.

Trying to fix everything at once

A mark that looks alarming while wet may soften as it dries. Rushing to correct it can make the problem worse.

TRY THIS

Let the area dry, look again, then choose the smallest useful correction.



MISTAKE

15

Judging colors while wet

Watercolor often dries lighter than it looks on the paper. A wash that seemed perfect when wet may lose some intensity as it dries.

TRY THIS

Wait until it is fully dry. Sometimes one more transparent glaze is all you need.

Happy Painting!

*Which mistake will you
fix first?*

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