

Watercolour Winter Wonderland

In this session we'll be using three colours to create a simple watercolour winter wonderland. Have fun with this one – watercolour can be tricky to control but try not to overwork your painting and really think about a strong contrast between darks and lights.



Equipment: watercolour paints (ultramarine blue, burnt umber and crimson), white gouache – white watercolour or even white acrylic can be used if you don't have gouache, masking fluid, chunk of soap, masking tape, tracing paper, black pens, size 6 or 8 round brush, size 2 or 0 round brush, watercolour paper – I used cold pressed, palette with wells, salt

Above: copyrighted images

Main Task



Begin by taping a sheet of watercolour paper to your board to create a border and also to keep your paper in place.

Using a 2H or HB pencil, sketch out your composition – keep it simple – I simply placed in some of the important trees and the edges of the path. Take a damp brush, rub it over some soap and dip it into your masking fluid. Carefully paint in your important trees and a moon. **Note: the soap will protect your brush. I use Pebeo drawing gum as it's blue and I can see where I've been. If you can't get hold of masking fluid, masking tape can be cut into**

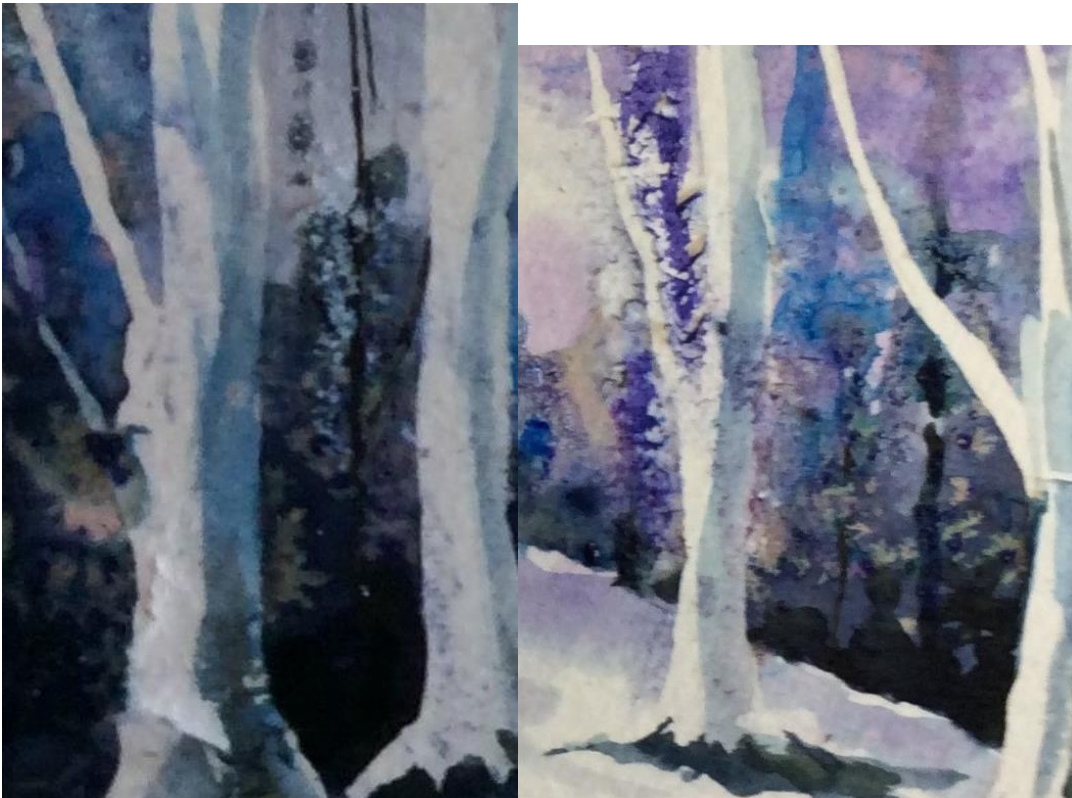
shapes, although this is much more fiddly! Allow your masking fluid to dry.

In a palette, mix a little crimson into ultramarine to create a violet colour, and in a separate well, mix a little burnt umber into your ultramarine to darken the blue to a navy. Brush clean water into the sky area and sweep a little of your dark blue into the sky to give a hint of colour using a size 6 or 8 round brush. When this is still a little damp, begin to paint in a layer of purple trees and in front of this, a layer of navy trees – where you have dried masking fluid, the white of your paper will be reserved. When these colours are still damp, sprinkle salt into the paint – this will absorb some of the pigment and create an interesting texture. Allow to dry.



Once dry, darken your blue with a little more umber and using less water. Add some of this stronger colour to the base of the where the tree lines meets the bank of snow. A little watered down ultramarine and more of the mixed violet colour were added too. Sprinkle more salt if you want further texture.

Using the variety of blues and purples in the palette, begin to add shadows at the base of the trees, using water to drag the colour out as the shadow moves away from the tree. Don't overdo this –you want to preserve the white of the paper for the majority of the snow. Allow to dry.



L- texture created by salt



Remove your masking fluid by gently rubbing with a clean finger or a clean eraser. Do ensure that no paint has pooled onto your masking fluid first- if it has, gently dab it away with a piece of tissue.

You may like the contrast of the strong white shapes against the background, but if this is jarring, water down the blues already mixed and sweep these into the trees to create shadows.



Carrot People

Placing little figures into a landscape can change the mood of a painting altogether. I like to think of drawing carrots when I'm adding small, silhouetted people to a landscape.

Try this out on a piece of scrap paper before committing them to your painting. Begin by drawing a wonky carrot. Place a head on top (don't go too big- it's a common mistake to oversize this)! Add arms and legs by extending the 'carrot root'. To give your figure personality, think of a hairdo or accessories. Note: in the first image, the head is attached to the body and in the second, a gap has been left. Note how one makes the figure appear as if they are walking towards you and the other appears it is walking away.

I draw my chosen carrot people onto a piece of tracing paper first and experiment with where I want them to appear in the landscape. Once, I'm happy with this, I draw them into my painting.



Choose whether you want to paint your figures using a size 0 or 2 brush using more burnt umber into ultramarine to darken it, or use a black pen to draw them in.

Twigs and branches can also be added with this brush and colour mix or with your pen for finer details. Don't forget to add a little shadow beneath your figures to help to plant them into the landscape.



Finally, add a little water to your white gouache, watercolour or acrylic and use a brush to splatter on some snow- the higher you hold the brush the finer the snow; the lower down, the larger the snow. Experiment with this.

Photographic Reference

