



LESSON 6 LEVEL C LANDSCAPE

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

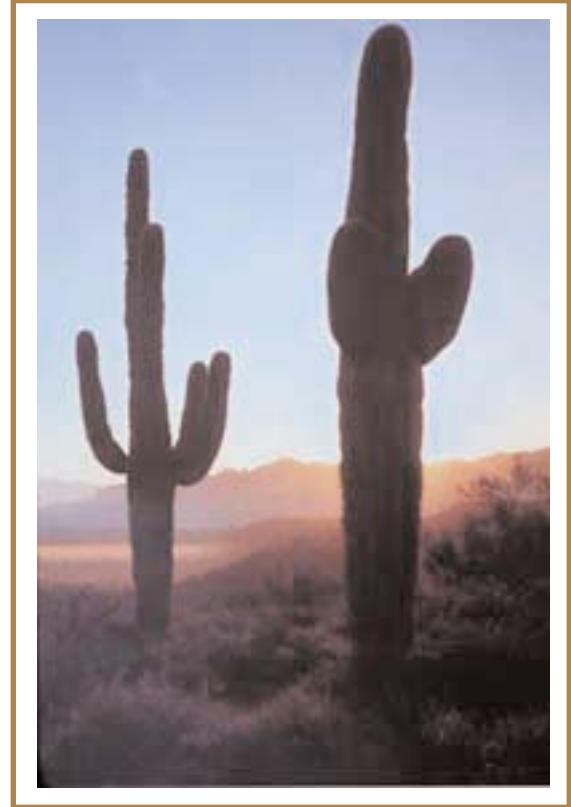
using complementary colors to achieve low intensities;
learning a controlled watercolor technique

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

watercolor paint box containing pans of blue, orange and black; liquid starch; a #12 watercolor brush; white construction or watercolor paper; water to rinse brush; newspaper to cover work surface; moist sponge; paper towels or tissues.

“TIPS”: Watercolor is meant to flow and blend fluidly, but it can be controlled by mixing the pigment with liquid starch. This mixture also makes an unusual texture. Limiting the choice of colors to two complements, blue and orange, plus black, yields a broad range of brown tones which are suitable to the desert subject. The finished art work tends to curl while drying, so weight the corners down.

SUNSET IN THE DESERT: Painting Near and Distant Landscape Features



Photograph by Kay Alexander

GETTING STARTED: Think back to visits to, photos of or TV programs about the desert. Think of the land features, plants, and animals. Imagine yourself on a desert mesa (tableland) at sunset. Look out over a dry valley floor to distant low hills. The light is fading, making silhouettes of the cactus plants and small desert animals among the rocks at your feet. This view is what you came here to paint.

1. Put several drops of clean water on each of the colors you will use:

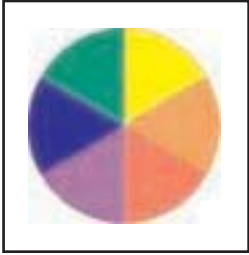


WORDS TO LEARN:

horizontal: the longer side of a rectangle shape

complementary colors: those colors opposite each other on the color wheel

color wheel



Look at the color wheel. The colors opposite each other are green and red; yellow and violet; orange and blue. These pairs of

colors are called complementary colors.

orange, blue, and black. While they are softening, pour a small puddle of liquid starch into the lid of your paintbox. You will use water from here on only to rinse your brush, unless the starch needs to be thinned a bit.

2. Fill your brush with starch. . .as much as it will hold...the roll it into the orange paint and tip it into the blue. Start at a top corner of your horizontal paper. Drag the brush across to the other top corner. Reload and repeat for a second row.

3. Add more starch and a little less double-loaded color for each of the next two rows. You are lightening the

sky color as it approaches the horizon, the way it looks at sunset in nature.

4. Make another row or two with more starch and very little color. You should have painted about one-third of your paper.

5. Now for the mountains! You will use a "tumbling" stroke. Lay the brush flat and pick it up under your hand, so that you can roll it between your thumb and fingers. Add more starch and a medium amount of blue plus a tip-dip of orange and tumble the brush from one side of the paper clear across to the other. This makes the mountains rise and fall gently. Be sure this line and the next two or three overlap the paler sky strokes. If you need to, touch up your mountains a bit to make an interesting skyline.

6. Next is the valley floor, a series of mostly starch, some orange, and a little blue. Use long smooth strokes that overlap the foothills so that no white paper shows. Continue down to about two inches from the bottom.



Kelly Age 12

7. Now, remember that your view includes silhouettes of rocks, cactus and perhaps a little desert “critter”(western U.S. slang for ‘creature’.) Think saguaro cactus, Joshua trees, maybe a coyote!

Load your brush with starch, mostly black, some blue and orange paint, and add your foreground objects. Be sure they’re solid, not transparent. Make them tall, blocking out parts of the distant land forms.

8. To finish, make some paler, smaller objects on the valley floor. Then weight your picture at all four corners to keep it from curling.

CLEAN-UP: Wipe up the leftover starch with a damp sponge. Blot your paints with a tissue or damp paper towel. Put them away. Wash and point your brush. Dry it with the brush part pointing up. When it is dry, put it away. Discard the newspapers. Wash up anything that needs it. That means yourself, too.

TALK ABOUT IT: This was a closely structured, “dictated” lesson to teach you some particular skills. Now that you know the technique, think what other subjects you could paint with the same complementary colors (a seascape with sailboats and sharks?) or with other pairs of complements. For what else could you use tumbling strokes? How do you like the way the starch affects the flow of water color? Look again at your picture. Did you create a variety of light and dark areas to suggest a feeling of distance in the landscape?

CONNECTIONS: Learn more about the flora and fauna (plants and animals) of the desert. Can you name five kinds of cacti (more than one cactus)? Five or more desert animals? What adaptations allow them to survive in a harsh desert climate?