



By Appointment to
HRH The Prince of Wales
Manufacturers of Artists' Materials
Winsor & Newton
London



Watercolour tutorial

Napoleon





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My relationship with watercolour began as a traveller using watercolour to colour maps and drawings in travel journals. Watercolour is portable, dries quickly and is the perfect medium for the road.

The first paintings I sold were “portraits” of sailing boats down in the South Pacific. I use the term portrait loosely, meaning a subject at a specific moment in time with some of its soul or spirit captured. Here is a portrait of a Dalmatian, Napoleon.

Painting the Darks (and balancing temperature)

In this tutorial, I’m going to show how I paint darks. The subject is a Dalmatian, Napoleon, a mostly white dog with black spots. Painting white objects, like snow, a statue or drapery is great for practising your understanding of colour temperature. You begin to see the endless shades and varying temperatures of white.

I often mix two colours, one warm, one cool. I add many of the Winsor & Newton earth tones to blues to create my greys and darks. Painting greys is best done without using grey paint from the tube, but by mixing a warm and a cool colour until it turns neutral. This will provide a variety of temperatures in your greys. I use Winsor Newton paper which “granulates” really well with these earth tones.



I mix Raw Sienna with Cobalt Blue for a green grey, (grey mixture 1), Burnt Sienna with Smalt for blue grey (grey mixture 2) and a reddish grey (grey mixture 3) and really strong Burnt Sienna and Smalt for the (black mixture 4) at the bottom.



Step 1

When the drawing is done, I start to add nice pure colour patches. I want these patches to be as large as possible to tie the painting together. With it being watercolour, we must leave the whites. If in doubt, leave it white. You can always go back and paint it later, but you can't make it white again.



Step 2

I start filling in the light and mid tone values using colours that I've already tested and know work together nicely. Keep the edges and especially the corners quiet. Now I mix a variety of warm and cool greys. (see fig. A)



Step 3

I like a 9 value scale like the one shown. It's these greys that I've used to paint Napoleon's spots. Notice these colours are made up of the same colours seen elsewhere in the painting, so they fit in nicely.



Step 4

I lean my paper about 30 degrees, so the paint flows down and doesn't bloom, but the pigment settles nicely in the grooves of the paper and "granulates" as the Burnt Sienna has done here.



Step 5

I add the warm medium darks under Napoleon, using a soft sable brush which will avoid "waking up" the layers underneath. Tilt the brush and gently lay the colour in. Soak up the excess water and paint at the bottom.



Step 6

At this end stage, I carefully finetune the different values and their temperature. Lighter layers soak into watercolour paper, but very dark darks have a lot of pigment to absorb so most of it sits on top of the paper. That's why very dark layers will run if you paint over them.

Materials used:

*Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolour
Paper - Cold pressed - 300 gram*

Winsor & Newton

Professional Watercolour
tubes 5ml

Raw Sienna, Cobalt Blue,
Burnt Sienna, Smalet



*Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolour Sable brush -
round No. 4, one stroke No. 1/2*

About Professional Watercolour

Pigment

We use single pigments wherever possible. Single pigment formulations are purer in hue and cleaner in colour than mixtures of pigments, providing more colour mixes before resulting in muddy effects. Within the new Professional Watercolour range, there are 80 single pigments amounting to 73% of the range.

Unrivalled Transparency

Our Professional Watercolour range provides unrivalled transparency due to the unique pigment dispersion in the manufacture of the colour. This is particularly important because transparency is the key characteristic of watercolour. As a result of the thinness of the watercolour film, all colours have a transparent quality on paper, allowing the reflective white of the paper to shine through.

However, pigments do retain their natural characteristics to some degree. For example, transparent pigments refract light in much the same manner as stained glass, making jewel-like brilliance and clean mixing. Opaque colours such as Cadmiums are likely to cover significantly more than transparent colours.

Permanence

106 out of 109 colours in the Professional Watercolour range are classed as 'permanent for artists' use'. This means that 97% of our Professional Watercolours are rated AA or A for permanence to ensure that the colours used today will appear the same for generations to come.

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