

Wet-in-Wet Exercises

The wet-in-wet technique means precisely what it says: putting wet paint on wet paper. The thickness of the paint and the wetness of the paper will determine the level of control you have over what you're painting. In any wet-in-wet painting, it's a good idea to use rough-surfaced paper because the paint settles better. The trick is to make the color dark enough and avoid overwetting the paper. You will also discover that you have to move swiftly before the first wash dries. Timing is crucial when executing a wet-in-wet.

Palette:

Burnt Sienna

Ultramarine Blue

Two Pines

In this exercise, we're going to paint a very simple scene of two pines in grass. As usual, tape a $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7\frac{1}{2}''$ (14cm \times 19cm) piece of rough-surfaced 300-lb. (640g/m²) paper to your Coroplast. I haven't sketched anything onto the paper beforehand because this is old hat to me, but I think you should. It will help guide you. Base your simple drawing on the completed picture on the facing page.



Step 1: Grass

Cover the entire paper with a graded wash of Burnt Sienna. While this is still wet, stroke in a mixture of Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine Blue along the bottom with random upward strokes using a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch (12mm) square brush. This gives us a brown-gray grass. In this case we have a brown of medium value.



Step 2: Tree

While the graded wash and the wet-in-wet grass are still wet—and you have to be fairly quick here—take your $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch (12mm) square tip and paint the pine tree in.

Step 3: Another Tree

With a slightly lighter value of the Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine Blue and with a no. 8 round brush, I'm about to paint in a smaller pine tree in the distance.





Step 4: Reinforcement

With a heavier pigment, I'm adding a little more detail to the large pine. I call it "spidering" the edges. It creates the illusion of the fir tree as seen from a distance.



Step 5: Scoring

I'm taking the blunt edge of the 1-inch (25mm) square brush and scoring or scratching in some of the grass while it's still wet. You can use your dull-as-dishwater paring knife here, if you want.



Inspiration and Perspiration

You can see that when using the wet-in-wet technique, you have to move fast. It's fairly simple, but simple doesn't mean easy. You have to work at it. Practicing to paint this picture will teach you how important time is to achieving the desired effect. Time really is the essential factor when doing a wet-in-wet. Just remember this: Success in painting breaks down to about 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration. If you didn't get it right the first time, do it again, and again, and again. . . .

Two Pines

5½" × 7½" (14cm × 19cm)