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PANSY

AN E-BOOK BY
HELEN COUSINS DIP SBA (DIST)

HCB



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MY STORY SO FAR

My name is Helen and I have been studying botanical art since I was 18 years old, and painting for a lot longer than that! I completed the *Society of Botanical Artists Distance Learning Diploma*, graduating with distinction and the Award For Excellence in 2016. Since graduating, I have continued to practice the skills I have learnt, and have found a profound passion for sharing the knowledge and skills I have developed with others.

I find such joy in creating botanical illustrations. The whole process - from gaining inspiration in nature and studying the details of a plant or flower, to the process of putting pencil and paint to paper - can be a wonderfully calming, meditative and restorative process.

As well as selling my own original paintings, prints and printed products, I host intimate and inspiring workshops where we can paint and learn together.

My first eBook - *Let's Start Botanical Art* - created in 2019, has been downloaded by hundreds of students. Over the last few years I have dedicated more time to creating a video version of this eBook, as well as different stand-alone projects to help you learn from home and from anywhere in the world.

I hope this free tutorial will give you a taste of my teaching style, and provide you with some tips to carry forwards. Welcome, and thank you for being here. I can't wait to paint with you.




LET'S START BOTANICAL ART

OUR COMMUNITY

Often people think of artists as working in solitude - and although this is the case a lot of the time (and sometimes, honestly, it's what draws us to it!) it doesn't have to be.

Art classes are a wonderful way to meet people, share thoughts and ideas, and encourage one another to keep pursuing our botanical art aspirations. I love hosting workshops and painting with you. There are also more and more botanical art groups popping up around the country (and world) which is wonderful.



 LINK TO:
BOTANICAL ART WORKSHOPS

Participating in a local art group or joining workshops isn't always possible, though, and I'd like to create a tight-knit community of like-minded people who connect from afar. If you download my eBook *Let's Start Botanical Art* you have access to a members only Facebook group. For the time being, though, join me over on my own social media pages for more tips and inspiration.



FACEBOOK

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INSTAGRAM

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CHAPTER ONE

1

SET UP & MATERIALS

WINSOR & NEWTON
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watercolour™

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INTRODUCTION, SET-UP & MATERIALS

Thank you so much for downloading this free tutorial on how to paint a pansy flower! I'm so happy that you're here. I'm going to take you through a step-by-step process to create a lovely watercolour painting of your own.

Let's have a little chat before we get started...

In this tutorial, we are going to be working from a photograph. A disclaimer here, this is not how I usually work! I usually paint from a live specimen wherever possible. However, for the purpose of teaching in this setting, photographs can be a very useful aid.

I have provided you with an equipment list including the exact paints I found to work perfectly for this pansy. We are using just three pigments to create this painting - a lesson in working with a limited palette! If you have paints of your own and are not keen to purchase more to match these, that's okay! You can add in an extra step into the process - colour matching - to find your own perfect palette with the paints you own. The steps that we take will be the same.

SETTING UP

A good set up makes a huge difference to the outcome of your painting. Make sure you have good light to work in (preferably natural), a comfortable chair to ensure your posture is correct, and limited distractions! The only thing left now is to pop the kettle on, and get your materials out!



INTRODUCTION, SET-UP & MATERIALS

This is your reference photo. Feel free to print it out, screenshot it or transfer it to another device in order to keep it close to hand as reference as you paint.



SHOPPING LIST

- Arches 300gsm Hot Pressed Watercolour Paper *
- Ply board/drawing board
- Ceramic palette/plate
- 2 Water Jars
- Rosemary & Co Series 307 (synthetic) - Sizes 4, 2, 0
- Rosemary & Co Shiraz Short Flat, Size 1
- Faber Castell Kneadable Eraser
- Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolour Paints
 - Permanent Rose
 - French Ultramarine
 - Windsor Lemon
- Kitchen Roll

Near alternatives can of course, be substituted. I would always recommend, however, using professional watercolour paints, a hot pressed watercolour paper and brushes designed for watercolour painting for botanical art (you will achieve more refined colours, finer details and better brush control). You will end up with an exceptionally improved result with just these non-negotiables!

These three paints form part of my *limited palette*. 95% of the time I can create any colour I need from just six paints. You can hear more about this in my eBook *Let's Start Botanical Art*.

* I prefer to stretch my watercolour paper onto my plyboard. This gives an infinitely better surface to paint on. If you'd like to read how I do this, head over to my [blog](#).



CHAPTER TWO

2

DRAWING

DRAWING

Great... now we're set up, we can start with the first part of the creation of your pansy painting - the drawing!

The drawing is the most important part of your painting... it's important to get it right! No matter how fabulous your painting skills are, you will never be able out-paint a distorted drawing. It's well worth spending some time on this stage.

I always draw onto cartridge paper rather than onto watercolour paper. There are a few reasons I do this:

- 1. I will forever have my drawing as a record. I can refer back to it in the future, even paint it again if necessary, years down the line!*
- 2. I can keep referring to the detail I have captured in my drawing whilst I'm painting - if my only drawing is on the watercolour paper, I may lose this reference when lots of layers of paint are laid down.*
- 3. My watercolour paper is protected - harsh rubbing out can damage the paper surface, ruining the appearance and making it difficult to paint on.*

CHOOSING YOUR SIZE

In traditional botanical illustration, we depict subjects as accurately as we can, this includes size. If we alter the size, a scale is drawn beside to indicate this (i.e. magnified x2). For the purpose of this exercise, however, feel free to experiment with any size you prefer.



DRAWING

A NOTE ON DRAWING

If possible, draw your pansy from the photograph without tracing.

Use a ruler and/or dividers as if you are drawing from a live specimen! It'll only enhance your drawing skills. Another trick is to draw a grid over a printed photograph (say, with 2cm x 2cm squares), and draw this same grid on your drawing paper. You can then translate what you see in a square of the photograph into the corresponding square on your paper.



Once you have your drawing on cartridge paper, we are going to transfer this onto our watercolour paper. Let me show you how.

CHAPTER THREE

3

TRANSFERRING

DAL

ACID
FREE

Gr
Track

- Papier calque
- Transparent
- Papel de calca
- Carta trasparen

Smooth – Cartrid

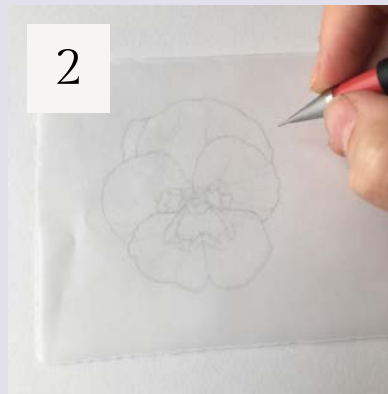
Papier dessin – lisse

TRANSFERRING

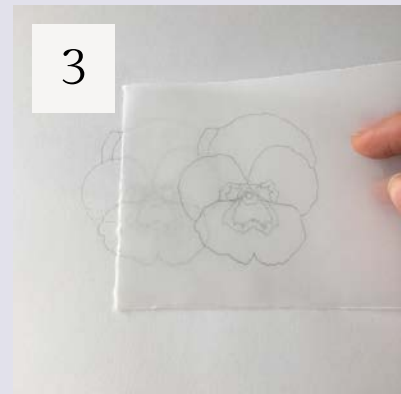
Transferring your drawing onto watercolour paper is an easy process. It becomes more time consuming when creating a larger illustration, but I find the process to be quite mindful and relaxing!



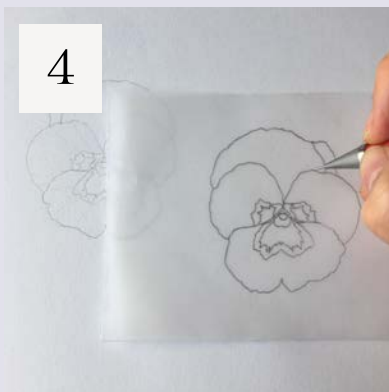
Using the photograph as reference, make an accurate line drawing of the pansy flower on your cartridge (drawing) paper. Try to capture as much detail as possible.



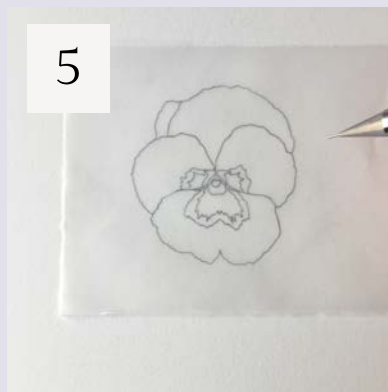
Lay a piece of tracing paper over the top, and trace the main outline of your drawing. Try to be as accurate as you can.



You will end up with a tracing that looks like this.



Turn your tracing paper over, and retrace over the back of your first tracing. Again, try to be as accurate as possible.



Turn your tracing back the right way, and lay it on your watercolour paper. Retrace one final time, imprinting the graphite onto the watercolour paper.



The result should be a soft line drawing on your paper. Gently remove some of the excess pencil with a rubber to achieve a faint line.

Congratulations! You've now got yourself a lovely soft drawing on your watercolour paper, as well as your beautifully crafted pencil drawing on your cartridge paper to act as your reference along with the photograph. We can now move on to painting.

A watercolor palette with various shades of blue and purple, and several tubes of Winsor & Newton watercolor paint. The palette is white and contains several washes of color, including a small amount of dark blue, a larger amount of medium blue, and a large amount of light blue. There are also some purple washes. The tubes are white with blue and yellow labels. The text 'CHAPTER FOUR' is written in a black, serif font, arched over the palette. The number '4' is written in a large, black, serif font in the center of the palette. The word 'PAINTING' is written in a black, serif font, arched below the palette.

CHAPTER FOUR

4

PAINTING

PAINTING

BEFORE WE START PAINTING, I WANT TO TALK A LITTLE ABOUT TECHNIQUE...

The technique that we are going to use in this painting may not be one that you have come across before. Often, when using watercolours (with botanical art or otherwise), washes are applied first to build up colour and tone before details are applied on top. In this tutorial, we are going to *start* by applying the detail within the petals. We are then going to apply our washes on top of these.

Including a paint with some staining properties (in this case, Permanent Rose) means that the colour doesn't lift off when washes are applied. Pretty amazing! Bear this in mind if you are using different colours to the ones listed. If you'd prefer, you could try running through this whole technique using just one petal first, to get a feel for things. Then, when you are confident with that, you can move on to painting your whole pansy.

I refer to a few different techniques in these next steps. For those of you for whom these techniques are new, below is a summary of the techniques mentioned. If you'd like to see these techniques demonstrated, I'd really recommend you reach for *Let's Start Botanical Art* where I include comprehensive video demonstrations of all watercolour techniques used in botanical art!

WET-ON-WET

Lay down a layer of clean water onto the area you'll be applying paint. Then, drop your colour onto the damp paper before it dries. This process can be repeated a number of times to build up depth of colour and tone.

WET-ON-DRY

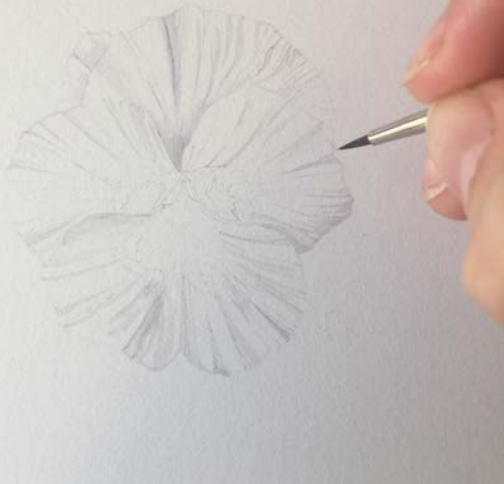
Load your brush and apply paint directly to the paper. You can use a clean damp brush to blend this wash after it's applied.

WEAK vs STRONG WASH

A weak wash is one with more water and less paint. It will give you a lighter colour on the paper. A strong wash has more paint and less water.

PAINTING

1



First, mix a **botanical grey** using a mix of all three of your paints. Three primary colours mixed will make a lovely natural grey. Use this and your small brush to add in fine details of shadows; the crinkles of the petals and shadows of petals overlapping one another. Don't be afraid to go quite dark with these where required- they look harsh now, but will look delicate in the finished petal.

2



Mix two weak washes of **Permanent Rose** and **French Ultramarine**; one that's more blue, and one more purple. Using a wet-on-wet technique, apply these mixes to the light purple areas of your petals. Leave some paper white where light catches - this makes your painting glow. You can repeat this step to achieve colours you are happy with. Make sure to let each layer dry completely before applying the next.

3



Next mix a very dilute wash of Winsor Lemon. Apply this using a wet-on-dry technique to the pale markings on the petal.

4



Mix **Permanent Rose** and **French Ultramarine** to form a strong dark mix to match the centre of the pansy. You can apply this using a wet-on-wet or wet-on-dry technique (whichever you prefer) - but try to capture the purple 'bleeding' into the pale yellow markings.

PAINTING

5



Using a stronger mix of **Winsor Lemon**, and a wet-on-dry technique, paint in the centre of the pansy. To create a darker shade to indicate shadow, add a small amount of **Permanent Rose** to the yellow. This is useful at the top of the yellow centre where very little light will be reaching.

6



Complete the centre of the pansy with some further details - use a mix of **Winsor Lemon** and **French Ultramarine** to add in the hint of green in the centre. Use your botanical grey mix to add small lines to create the "fluffiness" (lateral hairs) of the edges of the two side petals.

7



Using your strong mix of **Permanent Rose** and **French Ultramarine**, draw in the dark veins emerging from the centre of each petal.

8



Finally, review your pansy. Notice if the petals need further wet-on-wet washes. I did one further layer of washes, particularly focussing on the areas highlighted with the arrows.

And there you have it, your pansy is complete!

FINAL THOUGHTS

If you feel comfortable, I'd love it if you'd share your pansy with me - the easiest way is to tag me on a post on social media. You can find me at @helencousinsbotanics. If you'd rather share privately, then you can always send me a private message or email, I'd love to hear from you!



On the next page I describe the different ways that you can move on after completing these guides. Continue learning with me, and challenge yourself with new projects and new ways to learn.

I look forward to painting with you again soon.

Helen x

SO, WHERE NEXT?

When you finish a project, it can be hard to know what to paint next. Keep your momentum up and try not to leave it too long without a brush in your hand!

To keep you inspired, I'd really recommend you take a look at [Let's Start Botanical Art](#). This guide contains *everything* you need to know about starting botanical art.

Over 82 pages of written descriptions alongside video demonstrations, I will guide you through your next project and help you to improve your skills and confidence in botanical art.



CLICK ME

ALTERNATIVELY...

Why not come and paint with me in person?

I host a number of workshops throughout the year. These are either one-day or three-day courses and are open to any level of experience. A lovely opportunity to spend time doing what with love with likeminded people. I'd love to see you there.

SAVE YOUR SEAT

