BLICK® art materials

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Next-Level Tempera Techniques

7 surprising approaches to tempera painting that you'll want to try ASAP!

In upper-level classrooms, art centers, studios, and activity spaces—any place where painting takes place and skills are developed—there are benefits to choosing Blick Premium Tempera as a medium.

Tempera can perform many of the same techniques as watercolor, gouache, and acrylics. It can be thinned to makes washes, layered in transparent glazes, and applied with painting knives and tools. It can even be varnished.

Other benefits to using Blick Premium Tempera:

- It dries quickly—faster than acrylics.
- It is made with lightfast pigments: colors are long-lasting and stay bright.
- It is easier on brushes. If it dries in a brush, it can be easily cleaned with soap and water.
- If it gets on clothing, it is often fully removable.
- It is a natural, safe, allergen-friendly product for almost any painter in any location.

For more information about using, storing, cleaning, and having a great paint experience using Blick Premium Tempera, see our Tempera Paint & Storage Tips.

On the following pages, we list several ways to experiment with the capabilities of tempera by creating a "painting in pieces." Each section features a different technique, then joins together as a whole image.

Preparation for painting

1. Cut watercolor sheets to 11″ x 15″.

2. Select a subject and sketch a pencil drawing on a sheet of watercolor paper. Fill the entire sheet so that the drawing extends to all sides of the paper.

3. Turn the sheet over and, with a ruler, mark lines that divide the sheet into 7 sections. Number each section so it will be easier to reassemble. Cut apart with scissors.

4. Select 3-4 colors of Premium Tempera to use, including white and two mid to deep colors. The techniques that will be practiced here are not focused on color, so a limited palette of harmonious colors is all that is needed.

Materials (required)

Blick Premium Tempera, assorted colors and sizes (00011-), share 3-4 colors across class, including White (00011-1006)

Strathmore 400 Watercolor Paper, 140-lb (300 gsm) cold press, 22″ x 15″ (10007-1008)

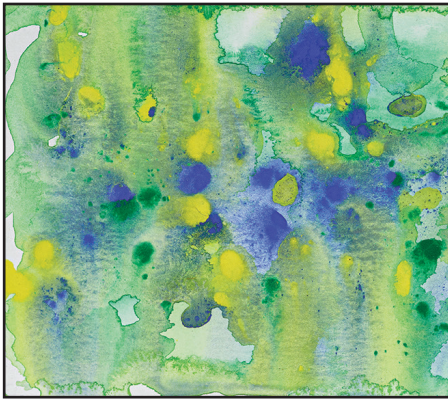Blick Scholastic Golden Taklon Brush, round, size 10 (05858-1010); need one per student

Blick Studio Drawing Pencil, 6H (22220-2062); need one per student

Richeson 7-Well Flower Palette (03067-1007); need one per student

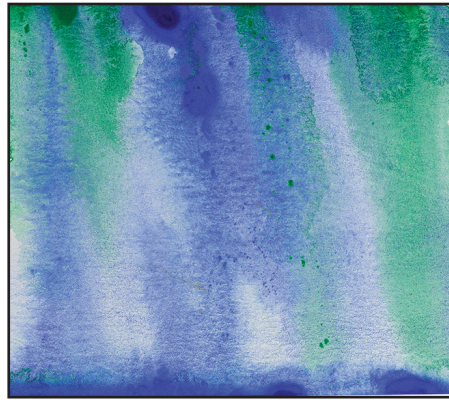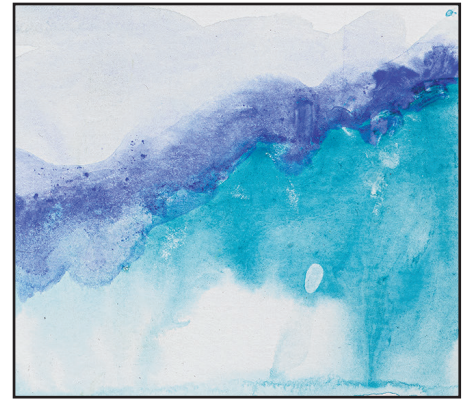### Materials (optional)

Listed with each technique

Bursts of Color

Linear Flow

Soft Edges

1 Wet on Wet

This popular watercolor technique can be employed with premium tempera as well. Paper is covered first with clear water or color that has been thinned with water to make it fluid so it flows across the page. Paint that is applied over the wet layer will spread, creating soft, blurred edges. The results are often unpredictable. Drops of color will spread out and bloom. Tilting the paper can control the direction of the flow. Adjusting the amount of water mixed into the paint will produce a wide variety of results and determine color lightness, transparency, and intensity.

This technique can be used to create background effects, soft focus, clouds, or subtle color blends.

Process

1. Pour a small amount of paint into a palette well and add water using a brush. Mix so that paint is well blended and has a fluid consistency. Repeat with one or two other colors or color mixtures.

2. Choose one paper section, as created in the preparation section (see page 1). For this technique, it is best to choose a section that contains the majority of the image background.

3. Clean the brush and apply clear water in broad, sweeping strokes across the paper.

4. **Create bursts of color**. Dip the tip of the brush in the fluid paint and touch it to the wet paper. Observe the way the paint moves in a circular bloom. Repeat by touching the brush around the paper using multiple colors.

5. **Create linear flow.** Reload the brush with color. Holding the piece of paper vertically, position the brush on the top edge and pull back so that the paint flows in linear drips.

6. **Create soft edges**. As color starts to dry on the page and reaches a point where it is damp rather than wet, develop the pencil drawing created during the preparation for painting. Allow colors to flow and blend.

7. It's okay for this portion of the painting to look blurry. Allow to dry, and, if desired, the painting can be further developed in a second layer using the same technique.

Optional Materials for this Technique
Blick Scholastic Golden Taklon Flat Wash Brush, 3/4" (05859-4034)

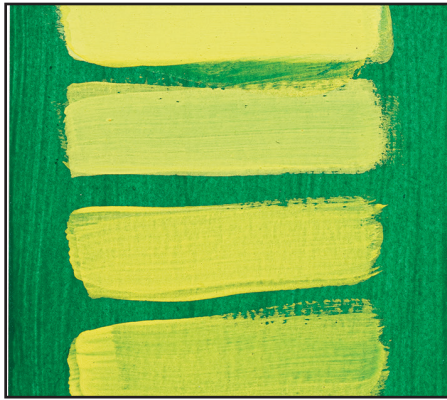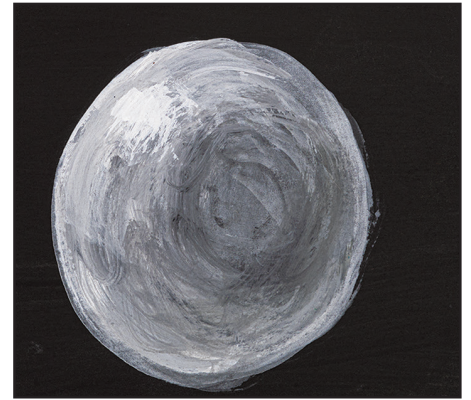*See page 1 for Required Materials list*
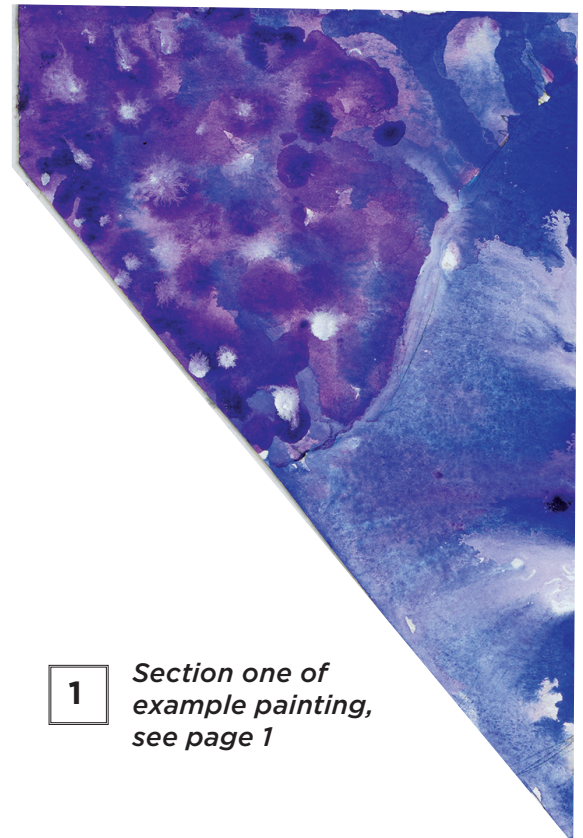
1 *Section one of example painting, see page 1*

White over Deep Color

Yellow over Deep Color

Shading

2 Light Over Dark

Because Blick Premium Tempera is so opaque, light colors can be applied over deep colors, producing high-contrast effects. This tecnique is similar to drawing on dark paper with white pencils or pastels.

This section of the painting will be **monotone**—just white over one color.

Process

1.   Choose a piece of the sectioned drawing as created in the preparation stage one page 1. Select a deep color (dark blue, dark green, brown, violet) and, without adding water, coat the entire piece and allow to dry.

Note: Don't use black as the background color because it will hide the pencil drawing beneath. For the same reason, it's best not to second-coat the deep color chosen.

2.   Use white paint and a small brush to define highlights within the painting. Initial applications of white will not be fully opaque. Add a second coat when dry to develop the brightest highlights.

3.   Shading can be developed further by adding small amounts of water to the white paint to develop more transparency and lighter hues.

4.   Some colors of paint are more transparent.

TIP: When painting with light colors over dark, opacity can be increased by mixing a very small amount of white with it. Add small amounts at a time to make sure the color doesn't shift to a pastel tint.

Optional Materials for this Technique
Blick Scholastic Golden Taklon Round, size 4
(05858-1004)

See page 1 for Required Materials list

2 *Section two of example painting, see page 1*
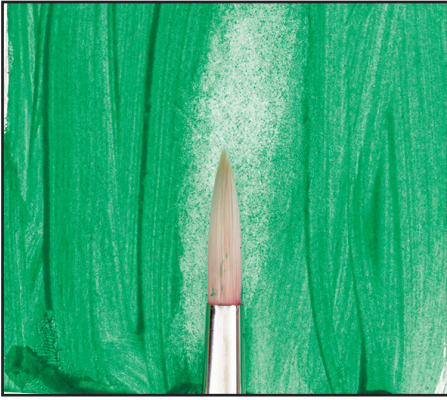
Lifting wet paint

Lifting dry paint with brush
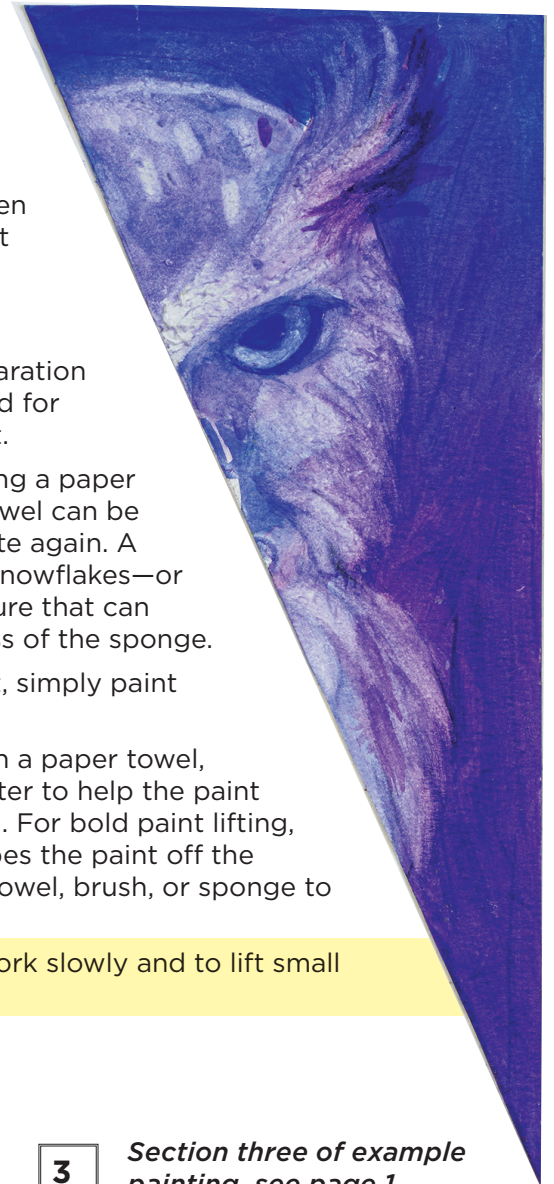

Lifting dry paint with scrubber

3 Lifting

Lifting, or removing paint from the surface, is a technique that can be used to fix mistakes, soften edges, strengthen highlights, or tone down colors that are too intense. It is also used to create special effects and interesting textures. Lifting is important to watercolor painting because it's difficult to control white areas. When working with Premium Tempera, it's an important skill to practice—it could rescue a painting.

Process

1. Choose a piece of the sectioned drawing as created in the preparation stage one page 1. Select a deep color (probably the same color used for technique #2) and coat the piece without adding water to the paint.

2. **Lifting wet paint**: While the paint is wet, experiment with dabbing a paper towel, cotton swab, or sponge at the color. Observe how a paper towel can be used to blot and wipe paint away so that the paper is visible as white again. A cotton swab lifts small circles - useful for creating starry skies and snowflakes—or wipe lines of paint away. Lifting with a sponge creates a rough texture that can represent stone or highlights on water, depending on the coarseness of the sponge.

3. If the lifting of the wet paint does not provide the desired effect, simply paint again with another coat and allow to dry.

4. **Lifting dry paint**: Dry paint can be also be lifted by dabbing with a paper towel, swab, or sponge, but it will be necessary to use these tools with water to help the paint release from the paper. A wet paintbrush is perfect for gentle lifting. For bold paint lifting, a special brush is available. A scrubber brush is very stiff, so it scrapes the paint off the paper, much like using sandpaper. Use it along with a damp paper towel, brush, or sponge to lift away any "crumbles" produced.

**TIP:** Lifting paint can also lift the surface of the paper. It's best to work slowly and to lift small amounts at a time.

Optional Materials for this Technique
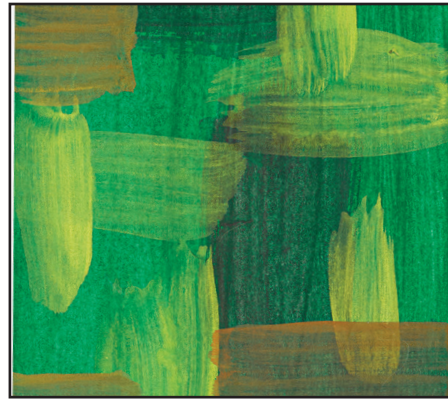
Blick Scholastic Wonder White Scrubber Brush, size 8 (06711-1008)

Creativity Street Art and Craft Swabs, pkg of 100 (61792-1100)

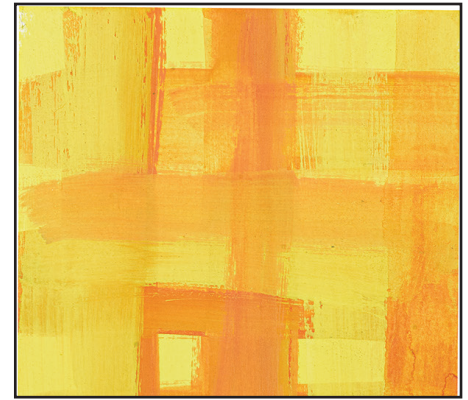Royal and Langnickel Economy Elephant Ear Sponge, size 2, 2.5" - 3" (32904-1025)

See page 1 for Required Materials list

3 *Section three of example painting, see page 1*
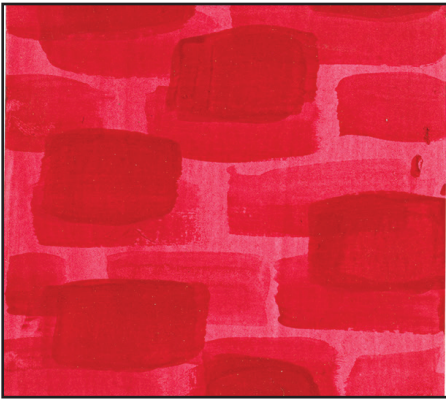
Glazing to deepen values

Glazing to adjust color

Layering semi-transparent color

4 & 5 Glazing and Layering

Glazing and layering paint are similar terms. In this case, the difference between the two is simply the opacity of the paint.

<u>Glazing</u> is an essential watercolor painting technique. Because watercolor is usually very transparent, colors are brushed over one another to modify their appearance. Glazing produces new colors and deepens values. Usually, watercolor glazes are done in thin layers to avoid disturbing layers beneath.

The opacity of premium tempera colors can be reduced by the addition of water so that glazing techniques can be employed.

<u>Layering</u> is usually employed with semi-transparent colors (such as acrylics or oils straight from the tube) or opaque watercolor (gouache). When layering, care must be taken to start with a thin layer of color and increase the consistency (thick over thin).

Process

1.   Choose a piece of the sectioned drawing as created in the preparation stage one page 1.

2.   Select a color of premium tempera to use as the first layer. Glazing works best when working from light to dark, but any color can be reduced in transparency so that it appears light on the paper. Put a small amount of tempera in a palette well and add clear water a brush load at a time until the paint becomes fluid.

3.   Rinse brush. Do not blot it, keep plenty of water in the brush and dip the tip in the fluid tempera. Apply a wash or thin layer of paint to the paper section and wait a few minutes for it to dry.

4.   Blot the brush so that it absorbs more of the fluid color. Work on the details of the image by painting a second and third layer. As the paint layers, it will appear darker. This section of the painting will appear monotone.

5.   On another section of the painting, experiment with glazing different colors in layers to adjust and change the colors beneath. Observe new colors that are formed by glazing.

6.   Add a final layer defining details with premium tempera in it's original state, straight from the bottle. In the example image, this layer created loose, feather-like strokes.
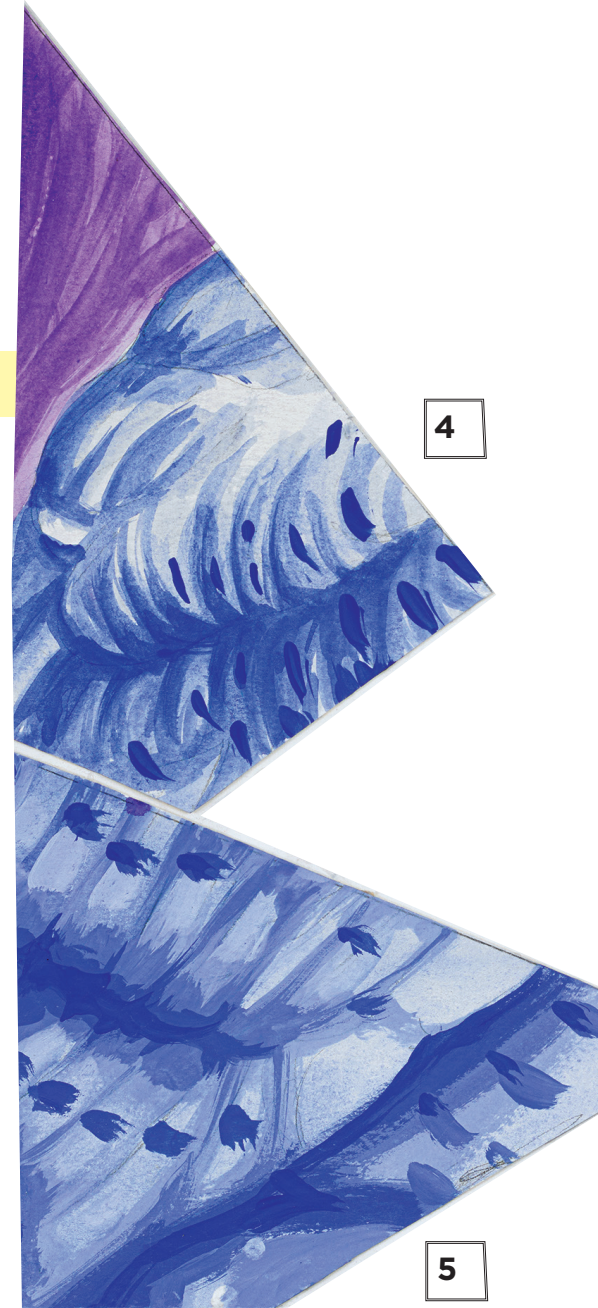
Section four and five of example painting, see page 1

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Applying with a painting knife

Scraping with a painting tool

Experimenting with other tools

6 | Painting Tools

Tempera paint is self-leveling. Even the heavy body of premium tempera paint will flatten and form a smooth surface.

However, texture and special effects can be achieved using painting tools that are often used for acrylic and oil painting.

A plastic painting knife is an inexpensive tool that can be used to smooth, lift, dab, and shape textures into paint.

Flexible-tip "shaper" tools are designed to gently lift and form lines and patterns.

Other readily-available and very ordinary tools can be applied for special effects. Try plastic eating utensils, a wooden craft stick, sponges, or even the round end of a paintbrush.

Process

1. Choose a piece of the sectioned drawing as created in the preparation stage one page 1. Squeeze premium tempera from the bottle onto a flat palette or piece of palette paper (not a palette with wells).

2. Use a painting knife to lift paint onto the paper section. Lift using the under side of the knife (refer to image above).

3. Try the following painting knife techniques:

   • **Sweep the paint** across large areas, using a motion as if buttering a piece of bread.

   • **Use just the tip of the knife** and apply the paint using dabbing motions.

   • **Scrape into the paint** to reveal the paper below. Use the tip or sides of the knife.

   • **Load multiple colors** on the knife and blend on the paper

4. Use a paint shaper tool with a soft, flexible tip to work patterns into the paint, blend, and drag through color.

5. Experiment with other objects, such as a plastic fork, to see what textures can be created.
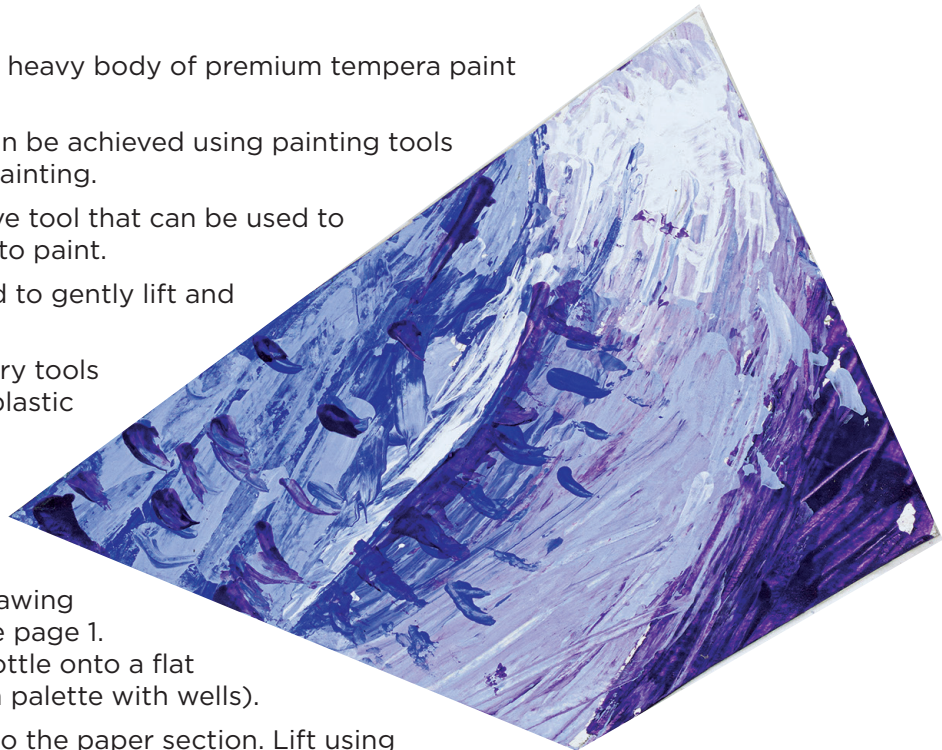
6 *Section six of example painting, see page 1*

Optional Materials for this Technique
Blick Studio Disposable Palette Paper, pad of 50 sheets, 9" x 12" (03063-2023)
Richeson Plastic Painting Knife, trowel offset (03105-0000)
Kids' Colour Shapers, set of 5 (04935-0601)

See page 1 for Required Materials list

Applying Oil Pastel

Covering with Tempera Paint

Removing from resist area

7 | Oil Pastel Resist

Using <u>resist</u> is another technique often used in watercolor or ink painting. A wax crayon, oil pastel, or special quick-drying fluid is applied to places where you'd like the page to remain light. Next, paint is applied over the product that "resists" absorbing the color.

The product may be left as part of the painting or, in some circumstances it is removed.

With the opacity, staining, and covering power of premium tempera, some traditional methods of using resist aren't as successful.

This process is a way to reclaim white areas quickly and easily, without disturbing surrounding areas of color.
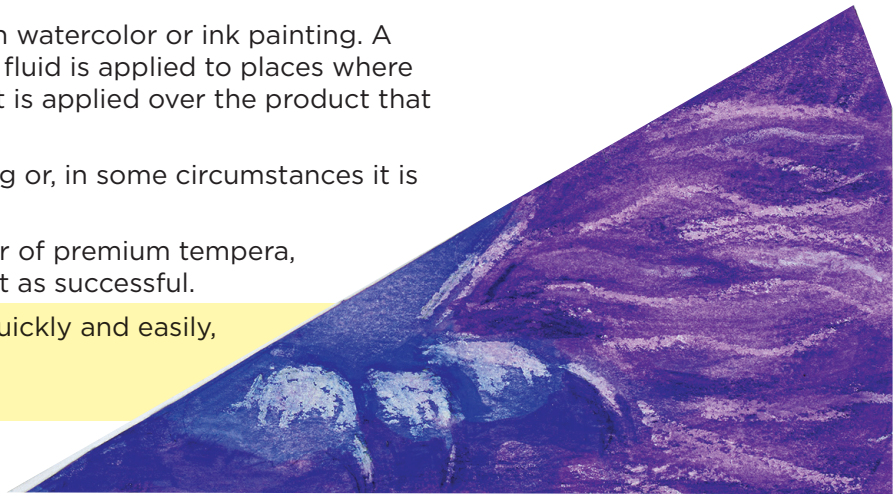
Process

1. Choose a piece of the sectioned drawing as created in the preparation stage one page 1. This should be the last remaining section of the painting.

2. Apply a white oil pastel to the areas that will be white or the lightest colored area.

3. Paint premium tempera full-strength from the bottle over the entire paper section. Notice that the oil pastel does not appear to resist: the color covers it. Allow a few minutes for paint to start drying.

4. Dampen a paper towel with water (not too wet), then dab it lightly over the area where the oil pastel was applied. It will have a slight, raised texture so it should be easy to find.

The paint will lift away quickly and easily from the oil pastel surface.

5. As an alternative, a small, wet brush can be used to lift paint away from the oil pastel. This will allow for fine details. Also, a flat or pointed tool can be used to scratch the paint away from the soft oil pastel for bright white lines.

7 | *Section seven of example painting, see page 1*

Optional Materials for this Technique

Sakura Cray-Pas Expressionist Oil Pastels, white (20012-1000)

Creativity Street Natural Wood Sticks, pkg of 100 (64329-1001)

See page 1 for Required Materials list

Varnishing

Blick Premium Tempera is made with lightfast pigments and will not fade over time. However, sealing finished premium tempera paintings will make them more durable and help protect them from damage caused by water or abrasion.

Premium tempera, especially when used in a very fluid, wet state, can cause paper to curl and buckle. Although this will typically flatten back out as the paper dries, a coat of varnish will make sure that the paper lies perfectly flat again.

Tempera is formulated to dry with a very matte finish. It's the distinctive look of a tempera painting. However, a clear coat may be preffered to enrich colors with a gloss or satin sheen.

Process

1. Make certain that tempera painting is completely dry.

2. For best results, use varnish full-strength. Do not add water.

3. Brush over painting lightly with a soft brush. Do not use heavy pressure, drag, or agitate the painting surface with the brush.

Comparison of tempera surface (left) and varnished surface (right)

Optional Materials for this Technique

Blick Essentials Value Foam Brush, 2″ (06027-1002)

Blick Matte Acrylic Varnish, 8-oz, Matte (00727-1035) or Gloss Finish (00727-1045)

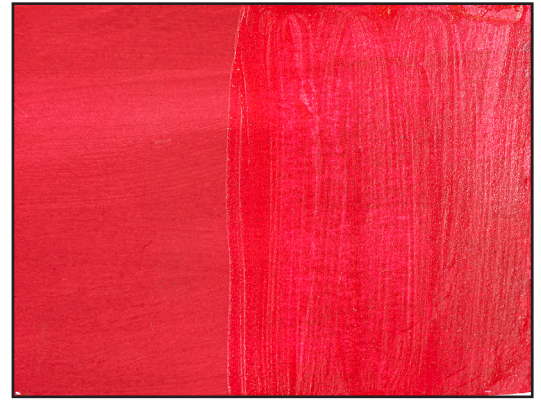*See page 1 for Required Materials list*

Finishing

Glue pieces of the finished painting in place on a piece of matboard. Allow space between pieces or place right next to one another.

NOTE: Paper will curl when wet, but will flatten out as paint dries.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.