

Watercolour Lockdown 2020 Worksheet 4

Skies

Just walking around and looking at the watercolours on our walls (not mine!) there are so many different skies. Colours vary, clouds and mood are all dictated by the sky. My favourite large watercolour does not have any sky painted, it is just the white of the paper. We read it as as sky because of where it is!

Invariably it is the first bit we paint and we fuss over it. In fact it should be laid down and left. The mistake is to worry about the sky. The eye will not notice it once the painting is complete; it purely acts as a base - like pastry in a pie, it is the topping you will notice.

I have made a poor video of me painting the sky as a graduated wash, but I found it hard to keep the phone on what I was doing!! Anyway for those who have not painted with me, it gives you an idea. You can see better demo's on Youtube!

Graduated wash:

Firstly you need a wash, a mixture that is runny and not too dark. If you are using two colours have them both mixed before you start.

Have your board/paper on an angle so you allow gravity to help. If right handed work from off the paper on the left and finish the stroke off the paper to the right. I usually suggest tape around the edge to give a border, so cover the tape.

Start each new row so you catch the bottom of the pervious row and be firm and swift once the brush is loaded.

You can lighten the sky as you go down the page. You may find it helps to wet/dampen the paper first.

Leave it to dry or work on the lower half if a landscape.

This is all in the video.



Clouds:

I do not generally make clouds for my paintings but Youtube has many ways you can do this. Basically if you study the sky you will notice that generally clouds are rounded at the top and lighter and have a straighter edge along the bottom where they are darker.

I prefer to allow a random effect for clouds and if I want specific clouds I will dab with a tissue to create soft edges.

Colours:

Skies can be anything you like! Interest is gained from perhaps a blue with a burnt Sienna, or a purple with an orange etc. Careful of adding a yellow to a blue! They are lighter at the horizon. If they meet the sea, the sea is darker, if buildings, the same. Look outside and see or copy skies from paintings around your home. I always feel a sky is better when it has a bit of interest and not a clear bright blue. However, a simple sky is best if your subject is busy.

The first wash (right) is a graduated wash, the dry bits where the brush was losing its load of paint but I left the effect, and carried on down introducing a new colour for the future landscape!

Below are 2 with random strokes for future landscapes. The one on the left I sprayed with water which created the feel of rain (chance!)

