



Peacock Butterfly on Primrose

Miniature painting step by step

Following on from the fascinating profile of **Tracy Hall** last month, we now bring you this wonderful set of instructions showing you how you can create your very own miniature watercolour masterpiece.

You will need:

- Surface - Saunders Waterford Hot Pressed Watercolour Board or similar smooth paper
- Paints - Winsor Newton Artists' Water Colours:
 - Burnt Sienna, French Ultramarine, Alizarin Crimson, Transparent Yellow, Yellow Ochre, Cadmium Red, Prussian Blue, Titanium White
- Brushes - Rosemary and Co. Series 33, Kolinsky Sable in sizes 1 and 10/0
- Misc - sharp pencil, magnifying glass, piece of kitchen roll



Step 1

A square 2" x 2" (50mm x 50mm) is marked out on the chosen surface and using a sharp pencil the plant and butterfly are lightly drawn in. (I've made the lines darker here so they will show up better).



Step 2

Wash over the leaves with transparent yellow using a No.1 brush, then switch to a 10/0 brush and, adding a little Prussian Blue to make a green, carefully begin to add veining and structure.

Mix Yellow Ochre with a little Alizarin Crimson to pick out the central vein and add mottled areas to the outer edges of the leaves.



Step 3

Continue to build up the leaves and stems in the same way, gradually building the layers of colour and varying the mixes to give slightly different greens, and begin to draw in the background.



Step 4

Using a No.1 brush, start working on the background, initially blocking in areas of colour using various combinations of Burnt Sienna, French Ultramarine, Alizarin Crimson and Yellow Ochre.



Step 5

Continue to build up the background until it's completely blocked in, varying the colours as you work to give interest.



Step 6

Paint in the butterfly using a 10/0 brush. Cadmium Red is used for the main areas on the wings and while this is still damp it's merged into Burnt Sienna at the tips, being careful to avoid the areas of white.

Black is mixed from Burnt Sienna and French Ultramarine, and Prussian Blue mixed with a little Titanium White is used for the blue highlights.



Step 7

Return to the background and gradually add depth and details using Burnt Sienna and French Ultramarine to paint negatively around the leaves and twigs etc.

Mix up a green from Transparent Yellow and a little Prussian Blue and add a touch of Titanium White to make it opaque. Use this to put in some blades of grass and mix up an opaque brown to add some extra twigs.

When these are dry, glaze over them with Burnt Sienna to push them back slightly.



Step 8

Add the final details to the butterfly, except the antennae.

Mix up French Ultramarine, Alizarin Crimson and a touch of Yellow Ochre to create a shadow mix to use thinly on each petal to give form to the flowers.

When this is completely dry, use an eraser to gently rub out all of the pencil lines on the painting.



Top Tips

Check your progress in a mirror, especially the drawing stage - it's surprising what you can see from a different perspective.

Roll your brush gently on kitchen roll to bring to a point and remove excess paint.

Don't press too hard when drawing; the pencil lines are only intended as a guide when you apply paint and you want to avoid damaging the paper.

Play around with combining elements from different photographs. Three were used to compose this painting.

Use a magnifying glass or reading glasses to help you see the detail better as you work.



Step 9

Using a thin glaze of Transparent Yellow, paint in each petal.

When this has dried, add a tiny touch of Cadmium Red to the yellow to paint in the darker base of each petal.

When this is dry add the thin lines using the same mixture.

Finally, with a steady hand, add the antennae to the butterfly.

INFORMATION

To see more of Tracy's stunning miniatures visit:

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