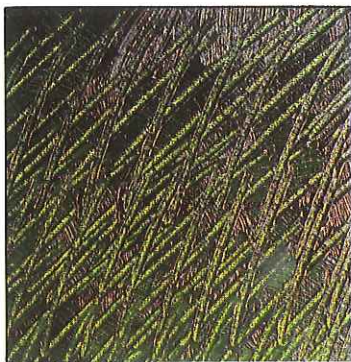


## SGRAFFITO

The word “sgraffito” is derived from the Italian word *graffiare*, meaning “to scratch,” and refers to a method of scratching or scraping through a layer of paint to expose the color or colors underneath. In this way, highlights can be added to a painting, and texture is created.

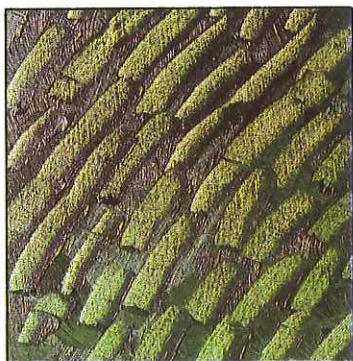
Any sharp instrument can be used for sgraffito — knives, razor blades, scraperboard tools, the end of a brush handle, the edge of an old credit card, or simply your fingernail. In addition, sandpaper is useful for scraping away areas of paint to reveal some of the color underneath.

Sgraffito can be used with any medium, including pastel, and on wet or dry paint, depending on the effect desired. For example, the texture of grass or the grain of wood can be scratched into a layer of dried color, using a sharp point; while a layer of paint is still wet, you can create soft highlights by scraping into it with a blunt knife or popsicle stick.

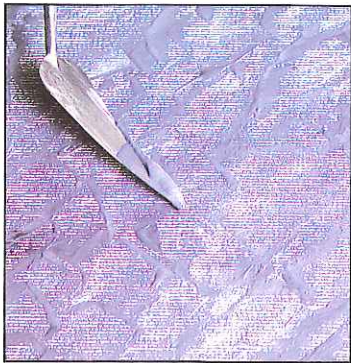


### Scratched textures • Opaque media

**1** Apply a layer of thick paint, straight from the tube or diluted with just a little medium. While it is still wet, “draw” lines into the paint with the end of the brush handle or the handle of a knife.



**2** Experiment with different scraping tools to discover the variety of textures and patterns that can be achieved. Here, a trowel-shaped painting knife was used to make broad marks.



**3** A more delicate texture is obtained by applying a thin layer of paint and then using the edge of a painting knife to scrape off some of the paint right down to the canvas.



**2** Apply a second coat, this time in a different tone or color, and smooth the paint out.



### Two-tone effects

**1** Use a painting knife to apply a textured undercoat of thick, gummy paint, then allow it to dry.



**3** While the top layer is still wet, scratch into it to expose the dried underlayer. Use the end of a brush handle, a knife, a stick or any sharp instrument which gives you the effect you want.

### Scratched texture • Water media

Although the method should be used with caution, you can create delicate linear effects in a watercolor wash by scratching into dried paint with a sharp point.



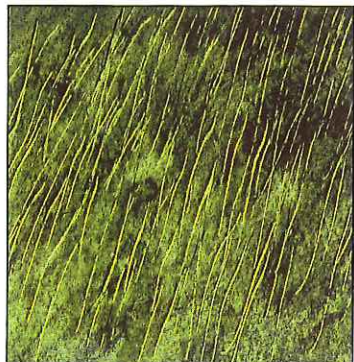
### Scratching with a blade

Use a razor blade or scalpel where you want sharp, clean lines. Move the blade in one direction only — scratching back and forth damages the surface of the paper. Use fast, light strokes and do not press too hard.



### Thumbnail

**1** While a wash is still damp you can scratch out delicate lines with your thumbnail, using a quick flicking movement.



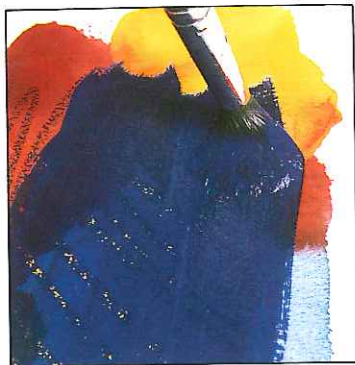
**2** This method is useful for indicating the texture of long grass partially lit by the sun.





### Sandpaper

Where a rugged or weathered texture is needed, try scraping gently with a piece of fine grade sandpaper.



### Scraping with mixed media

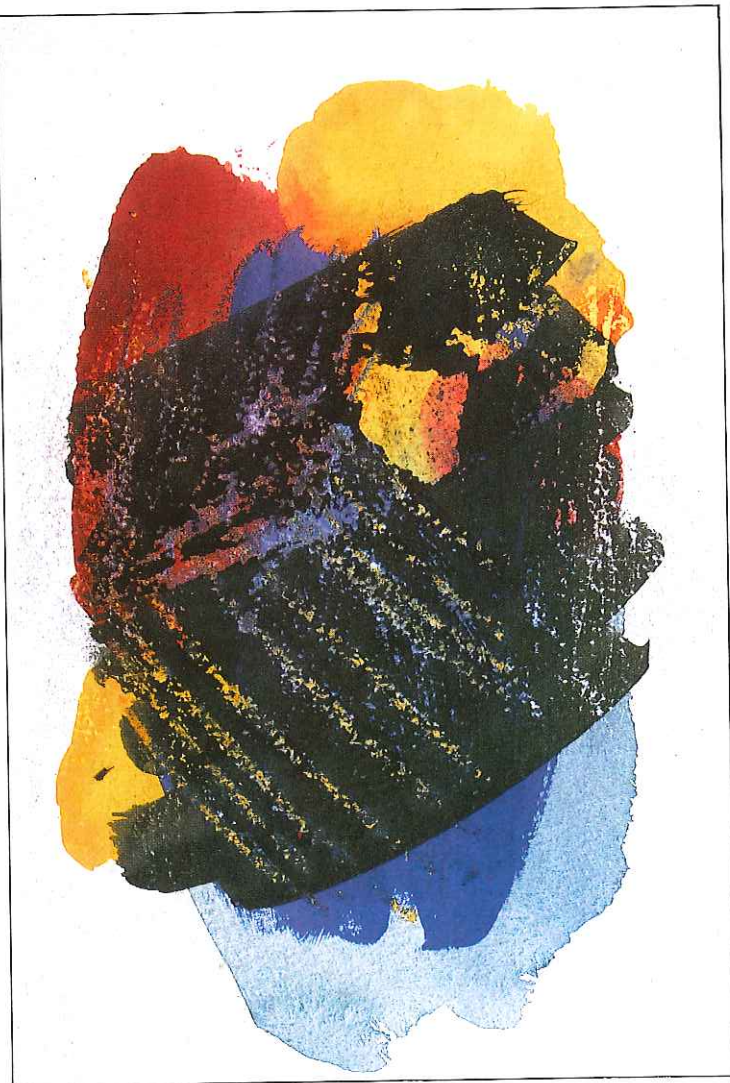
**1** Create an abstract or semi-abstract design by building up layers of contrasting color with different media and then scratching into the various layers. Here the artist makes a design combining oil pastel and watercolor, finishing with a thick layer of gouache.



**2** When the gouache is dry the whole design is covered in a thick coating of black waterproof ink.



**3** When the ink is thoroughly dry, a craft knife blade is used to scrape away some of the ink. Work until part of each layer of the design shows through.



**4** The finished picture. The marks left by the blade have lifted the design out of the flat plane by giving it texture, and in revealing the underlying bright colors have lent the image life.