

WET OVER DRY

The opposite approach to WET-IN-WET, painting wet over dry means applying fresh paint over a previously dried color. This method is used in GLAZING, and for rendering precise or strongly modeled forms.

Oil

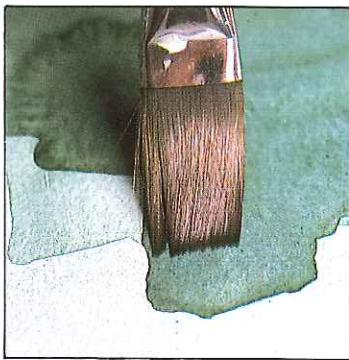
Exciting results can be achieved by SCUMBLING or DRYBRUSHING over a dry passage of IMPASTO. Because the wet paint is of a fairly stiff consistency, it catches only the raised points of the dried underlayer, and this lends it a three-dimensional appearance. Similarly, a glaze of diluted color will settle into the crevices of the dried underlayer, creating a random pattern of dark lines.

Wet over dry is a time-consuming method in oils, because each layer must be completely dry before the next one is applied if cracking is to be prevented. In this case, time can be saved by working on two paintings simultaneously.

Watercolor

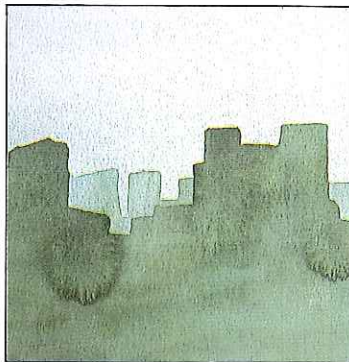
In watercolor, a combination of wet-in-wet and wet over dry passages is always effective, especially in flower painting. Wet-in-wet washes capture the delicacy of leaves and petals in the initial stages, and then further washes, applied over the dried underlayer, add form and definition.

Depending on the wetness of the initial wash and the type of paper used, watercolor can take anything up to 15 minutes to dry thoroughly, so the technique does require a little patience; if the overlayer is applied too soon, the colors turn muddy and the crispness and definition are lost.



Wet over dry • Watercolor

1 The artist applies a flat wash of Hooker's green. When this is completely dry he overlaps it with another wash of the same color to achieve a layered effect. The overlapped wash creates a darker tone. To produce a still darker tone, add a third layer.



2 This simple image shows how building up overlapping washes, from light to dark, creates a convincing impression of aerial perspective; the lighter tones look farther away. It is most important to allow each color layer to dry before applying the next one; otherwise the characteristic clarity and transparency of the medium is lost. Remember also that the fewer the overlaid washes, the cleaner and brighter the result. Watercolor tends to become "muddy" with too many superimposed washes.

Acrylic

Painting wet over dry in acrylics presents no problems, because the paint dries so quickly. In addition, the paint is insoluble once dry, even when diluted to the consistency of watercolor. This means that a wet overwash won't dissolve a dry underlayer, as sometimes happens with traditional watercolor.



Wet over dry • Acrylics

If you wish to paint wet-in-wet over a dry underlayer of paint, simply brush water or medium over the dry paint; the next layer of color can then be softly blended into the wetness.