

Chapter 11

Visual Lesson Plans

Word is a symbol...Words symbolize only concepts...how should a word-symbol correspond to that innermost nature of which we and the world are images? Nietzsche

The visual lesson plans is something I had started to develop in the last two years to assist my students to better understand the process and techniques of painting. When developing the visual lesson plans, I revisit how I frame Nietzsche's comparative quote of the two symbol systems that dominate our being and external co-existence and communication within the world of other beings. I am simplifying Nietzsche's question to both my understanding and to my needs as a visual artist and a visual art instructor.

The constructed question asks whether or not two symbol systems can be equal in translatable meaning. What is the relationship between descriptive word objectives and visual learning product outcomes? Subjectivism would be required to fill the void between the mismatch of the two symbol systems, defeating the purpose and function of objectives. When a visual outcome is required then the objective should be constructed and stated visually. Using the landscape paintings in Chapter 8 as an example, if an administrator were to view the visual lesson plans and the student outcomes they could see in a moment's glance, without words, that the objectives had been met and learning had occurred. At a glance, both administrator and instructor could tell, without the subjectivism caused by the ambiguity of words, the degree of student understanding of the required learning objectives.

Communication is effectively conducted in the visual symbol system regarding the outcome of a visual objective. The inability to construct an age-appropriate visual lesson plan translates into the inability of the instructor to effectively teach at the assigned level. Art teachers are mandated to teach the visual symbol and notation system and their work expresses their literacy and ability to teach within the visual system. The visual lesson plan is for academic learning that must be an integral part of any program within a scholastic institution. However, as illustrated in Chapter 7, there is also a place and need for learning that excludes the barriers created by objectives where process itself becomes the learning objective.

The implementation of the visual lesson plans were a result of teaching experience and observable student production practices. If my students were given paint and told to paint, they would proceed to paint like elementary students with subject first, background painted around subject, and use of bright colors. I have a photograph I keep in my art room of student work from a previous art teacher. In the photograph are two beaming art students standing in front of their art exhibit of paintings with stereotypical palm trees next to yellow sandy beaches with stereotypically brightly colored umbrellas and beach balls next to a bright blue ocean and sky. They are paintings one could easily find in any elementary school. Without instruction, I am positive that my Studio Art and Art Academy students would produce similar results.

When students are presented with a visual objective, there is less confusion about what the visual outcome should be. The students can see the sequential visual instructions and have a better understanding to achieve the standards and objects they must accomplish. When a visual lesson plan is

assigned to several students, the results will vary, depending upon each student's learned abilities and unpracticed skill deficiencies. Seeing is the most effective form of instruction and learning visually intelligent students. Their production outcome will visually illustrate their ability to understand and interpret what they see and will become the means of assessment to determine their visual intelligence.

The following two examples of a landscape and still life are prototypes of lessons I intend to develop for my students and possibly for another book of the "how to" variety that will have visual lessons for students. In Chapter 8, I had shown and discussed some outcomes from students working from what I term visual lesson plans. For students with a high visual intelligence, the outcomes were very successful: The students fully understood the technique and sequential steps and processes of watercolor painting.

A student lacking the visual intelligence necessary for visual learning had tried a visual lesson plan and was not able to achieve a successful outcome. The student had difficulties in understanding other drawing mediums and had shown only a modest improvement in her skill and learning ability over the four-year course of study. It was not surprising that the student had failed. The same student had also struggled with Studio Art projects that other students without Art Academy training were capable of accomplishing with a much higher level of success. Why this person had struggled and failed when other students with the same instruction and learning opportunities succeeded demonstrates that an art teacher cannot make an artist out of whomever he chooses or whomever wants to be. An art teacher can only instruct, inform, and work to improve the artist seeking instruction. Not everyone can be an artist. Everyone must find their element, as author Ken Robinson suggests in his book *Finding Your Element*. Everyone must operate within the characteristics and strengths of their intelligence that Howard Gardner describes in his book *Multiple Intelligences*. The lesson plans I offer are for visual learners and the lesson plans are only a learning foundation. The visual learner will continue to learn from hours of practiced experience combined with searching, reading, and obtaining more quality instruction.

Materials



59 d Lemon	59 a Yellow	69 Indian Yellow	59 b Orange	58 Vermillion	55 Permanent Red	34 Carmine	109 Violet
120 Ultramarine	108 a Cobalt Blue	117 Prussian Blue	127 Turquoise Blue	130 a Blue Green	135 a French Green	155 Yellow Green	168 Green Oxide of Chromium, mat
192 Raw Umber	194 Vandyke Brown	190 Burnt Sienna	42 Indian Red	80 Yellow Ochre	41 Flesh Colour	23 Payne's Grey	11 Lamp Black

The color chart above is included in the Pelikan 24 watercolor paint set. The paint set should come packaged with the colors in the same order as the paint chart. The colors are in order from left to right on the chart and in the paint trays pictured above.

Color Temperature

Each color has a temperature distinction of either warm or cold. Knowledge of color temperature is critical to understanding color mixing. Mixing two colors of the same temperature (warm to warm; cold to cold) results in maintaining a higher (brighter) **chroma**. Mixing two colors of opposite temperature (warm to cold) results in a lower (duller) chroma, which bears muted, grayer, or more neutral colors. For example, if you mixed the warm colors of yellow or Indian yellow with warm cobalt blue, you would get a brighter, higher chroma green than if you mixed yellow or Indian yellow with the cold ultramarine blue, which would appear to be a duller, neutral green. The rule for mixing and maintaining higher chroma colors requires mixing either warm to warm or cold to cold temperature colors. For muted, neutral, low chroma colors, mix warm to cold temperature colors. When mixing, it is always important to begin with the lightest color first and gradually add in the darker color. Mixing this way will save both time and paint.

Yellow: If the color yellow looks slightly green, it is considered cold. If it looks slightly orange, it is considered warm.

Orange: All oranges are warm, and are warmer with a higher yellow content.

Red: Red becomes warmer as it becomes more orange; it becomes cooler as it becomes visibly closer to the color purple.

Violet: The redder the violet appears the warmer it is and the bluer it appears the colder it is.

Blue: The more violet the blue appears the cooler it is. The greener the blue appears, the warmer it is.

Green: The bluer the green, the cooler it is; the more yellow the green, the warmer it is.

Brown: All browns are warm, but some are less warm than others. Raw umber, in this set, is the warmer of the two browns, while the Vandyke brown is warm, but not as warm as the raw umber. The Vandyke brown can be mixed with both warm and cold temperature colors without causing graying of colors. Indian red is cool but can be mixed with warm colors with little to no graying.



Gray & black: Cool grays and blacks appear bluer while warm grays and blacks lean towards the browns.

	Cold
Violet	Cold
Ultramarine	Cold
Cobalt Blue	Warm
Prussian Blue	Warm
Turquoise Blue	Warm
Blue-Green	Cold
French Green	Warm
Yellow-Green	Warm
Green Oxide	Warm
Vandyke Brown	Warm
Raw Umber	Warm
Burnt Sienna	Warm
Indian Red	Cool
Yellow Ochre	Warm
Flesh	Warm
Payne's Gray	Cool
Lamp Black	Warm

Brushes

Brushes come in a variety of sizes and shapes, with a variety of bristle types and price ranges. Paint and brushes are the primary tools for painting, and the quality of both greatly affects the outcome of a

painting. Cheap brushes are usually too limp, don't hold their shape, and wear out quickly, while quality brushes hold their shape, have good resistance, and last much longer than less expensive brushes. The same is true for paint. Quality paint has more pigment and less filler than less expensive hobby paints, giving the artist a wider range of transparency, opacity, and higher intensity of chroma. Quality paint sets also last much longer than the inexpensive sets. Quality outcomes are best obtained by using quality materials. There are a number of synthetic bristle brushes that work just fine compared to the best and most expensive sable brushes. Practiced experience will best inform the artist which brushes work best. The brushes on the left are the ones I use while preparing what I term visual lesson plans for my students. The brushes are all called rounds, determined by their round cylinder shape that ends in a point. In some cases, it might be preferable to have a flat for large washes. For this purpose I use the large red brush on the end. The sizes from left to right are: 0, 4, 2/0, 2, 4, and 20/0 liner, 8 and 20. Instead of using negative numbers in brush sizes the number of zeros is increased. The 2/0 means double 0, which is the next size smaller than the 0. The 20/0 liner brush is very thin and long for producing very fine lines. The length is necessary to pick up enough water and paint to produce very fine marks in a painting.

Palette



For transparent watercolor washes, I find it is best to use a palette like the round one pictured on the left. It has recessed wells for mixing washes to insure that the transparency and color remains consistent while painting. The palette on the right has shallow recessed areas either for mixing the paint with other colors or for thinning it with water during the painting process.

Paper

Once again, the only way to achieve quality results is by selecting quality materials. This is especially true with watercolor paper. Anything listed as student quality should be avoided. It is inexpensive, but the paper fibers break down quickly and the surface of the paper starts wearing away, creating a worn out mess. You can get watercolor paper in single sheets, pads, or blocks. I recommend the blocks, which eliminate the necessity of stretching the paper on a solid surface. While painting, the watercolor paper remains on the block and is removed from it when the painting is completed, leaving the next sheet on the block ready for the next painting. Arches watercolor block is a high quality watercolor paper on a block pad that comes in a rough and fine texture. The rough is generally used for landscape, and the fine for still life and portraiture painting. The blocks come in a variety of sizes, but I usually have my students work on the smaller sizes of 7"x10", 9"x12" or 10 1/4"x14 1/8".

Landscape general comments: The bold print represents the location where the colors are applied, and underlined words represent colors to be used. The forward slash (/) is used to mean that the colors

listed are mixed together and the mixture ends with a semicolon. There is a color chart provided that shows what the mix of colors, transparency, and opacity should look like.

In contrast to the mixed colors on the color chart, the colors seen on the finished painting are noticeably less intense. A watercolor is a painting of built-up transparent layers, with each successive layer adding to the overall opacity or intensity of color of the area being painted. The finished painting is a cumulative effect of layered, complex colors. The camera is not going to be able to capture the true color or the layers of a painting, therefore color mixtures by students will never look exactly as the example, nor should they. The colors listed are suggestions that will require adjustments to make the colors maintain their form and proper space in the composition. As a rule, the background should be transparent and muted or bluish to visually recede. Warm and cold colors often are mixed together to mute and neutralize colors, allowing the colors to recede and maintain their correct visual position in the background. As the painting progresses from the background to the foreground, colors will gradually become brighter and more opaque as well as have greater contrast in light and dark values. Brighter or higher chroma colors can be achieved by using fewer combinations of colors, by the mixing of warm to warm and cold to cold color combinations, and by the addition of successive layering of transparent colors. Since the whiteness of the paper creates the lightness of a color, the lighter areas are the first transparently painted layers of an object or subject, followed by the addition of darker colors to create the light/dark value transitions that constructs visual form. Brighter colors and higher value contrasts will optically advance and should be used only in the foreground.

Landscape

The sky is painted by the wet on wet technique while most of the trees are painted with the scumbling and wash techniques. The grasses in the foreground are painted with overlapping lines. These techniques are demonstrated in the Pelikan transparent watercolor booklet that comes with the set. Initial results for the beginning painter may be less than successful. Keep in mind that watercolor is a difficult and unforgiving medium and it will take many hours of practice to achieve a successful painting. If the first painting does not work out then I would advise taking what was learned from the failed attempt and begin the same painting again until reaching a satisfactory conclusion. Failure is often one of the best teachers. Restarting a failed painting is the best way to learn from mistakes and to build the necessary skills and techniques for watercolor painting. Practice is the most significant way to improve skill and production knowledge.



1. Drawing

The first step is to draw the landscape with a pencil very lightly on watercolor paper. Another alternative is to draw it on a light bond paper and transfer the drawing onto the watercolor paper with pencil. The pencil drawing on the left is very light and can be easily erased after the first layers of watercolor have been applied.



2. Sky: Vandyke brown/burnt sienna; cobalt blue

Wet-on-wet: Water is brushed on the entire surface of the sky, including over the trees. While the paper is saturated with water, the transparent mixture of brown and cobalt blue is very transparently and unevenly painted into the sky. Colors appear blotchy and bleed into soft edges because of the water on the paper. The sky colors will flow only where there is water and will stop at a dry edge.

3. Sky: cobalt blue

Wet –on-wet: Repeat the process of step one with cobalt blue





4. Sky: cobalt blue

Wet-on-wet: more blue is added to the top of the sky, creating deeper, less transparent blues. With watercolor, it is important to build up several layers of transparent paint, rather than use a single, less transparent application. The soft edges of the wet-on-wet technique create a cloudy, atmospheric sky. The paint and water do most of the work; the artist just responds to what appears on paper.



5. Background trees: green oxide/violet

Use the mixture above and apply a transparent, muted, gray-green to the painting when the surface is dry or near dry.

6. Background trees: raw umber/ green oxide/violet

Use a scumbling technique by using the side of the brush on a dry surface to get an uneven pattern on the paper's surface.





7. Background trees: cobalt

Transparent blue is painted over the background trees. The lighter and grayer-blue the trees are, the more they will recede in the picture plane.



8. Middle ground trees: raw umber/blue green; oxide green/cobalt blue/burnt sienna (gray)

Colors are still muted, but applied with slightly less transparency, creating more contrast. Steps 8, 9, and 10 are applied when the paper is dry.

9. Middle ground trees: raw umber/green oxide/violet





10. Middle ground trees: orange/raw umber; orange/ raw umber/yellow

Warmer yellows that create more contrast and slightly higher chroma are applied over steps 8 and 9 to the middle ground trees.

The lighter values of the middle-ground trees are transparently added on the right.



11. Middle ground trees: green oxide/violet

12. Middle ground trees: green oxide/blue green; green oxide/violet/raw umber; blue green/raw umber





13. Middle ground trees: Indian yellow/orange/raw umber; green oxide/Indian yellow/burnt sienna/Indian red; plus more orange to both mixes

These transparent colors are added to the middle ground trees on the right. The leafless tree has been added to the left.



14. Middle ground trees: Green oxide



15. Middle ground trees: blue green; raw umber/Indian yellow/orange



16. Middle ground trees: blue green; raw umber/Indian yellow/orange



17. Middle ground trees: blue green; raw umber/Indian yellow/orange



18. Middle ground trees: blue green; blue green/#8 gray mix; #8 gray mix; orange/burnt sienna/raw umber



19. Same as 17

In steps 13 through 18, the transparent layers are applied to the middle ground trees. The applied, transparent, layers have created a greater contrast and a higher chroma than the background trees. The first steps in 13 are now only visible in the lightest areas of the trees, and the additional layers create deeper, darker tones.



20. Same as 17

21. Same as 17





22. Middle ground trees: blue green; green oxide/Indian yellow; Indian yellow/orange/raw umber

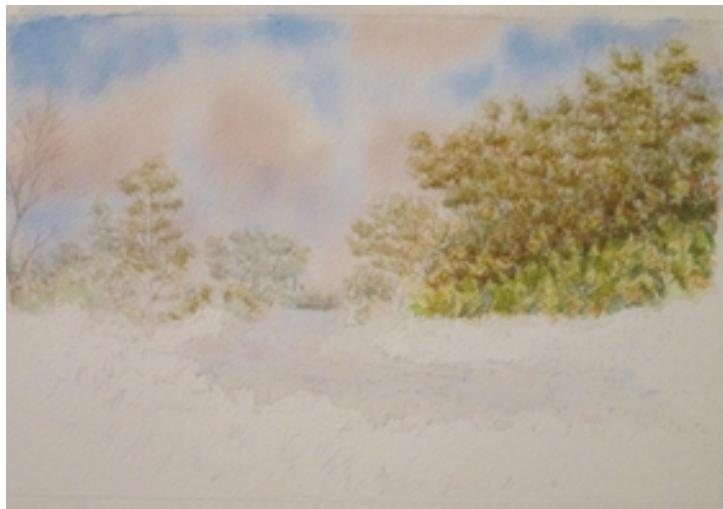


23. Middle ground trees: Indian yellow/green oxide/blue green; green oxide/Indian yellow;

The lighter values of the smaller trees and shrubs are painted in the middle ground



24. Middle ground trees: orange; Indian yellow/green oxide



25. Middle ground trees: blue green/ #8 gray, green oxide



26. Middle ground trees: raw umber/orange; Indian red/green oxide



27. Same as 26

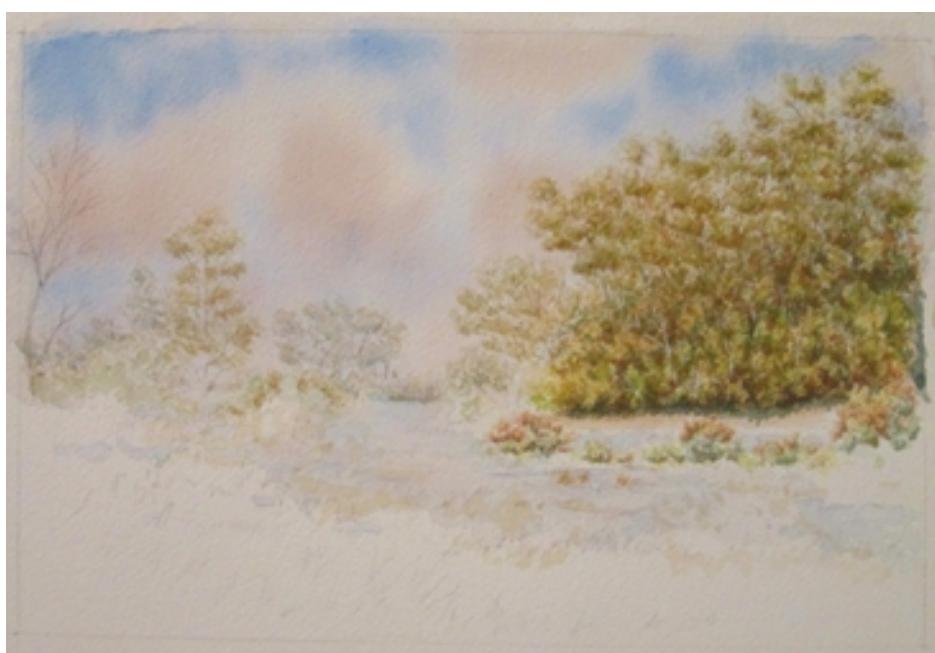


28. Island and foreground drawing in transparent orange/raw umber;

River drawn in with transparent cobalt blue



29. Island shrubs: yellow/green oxide; burnt sienna; green oxide



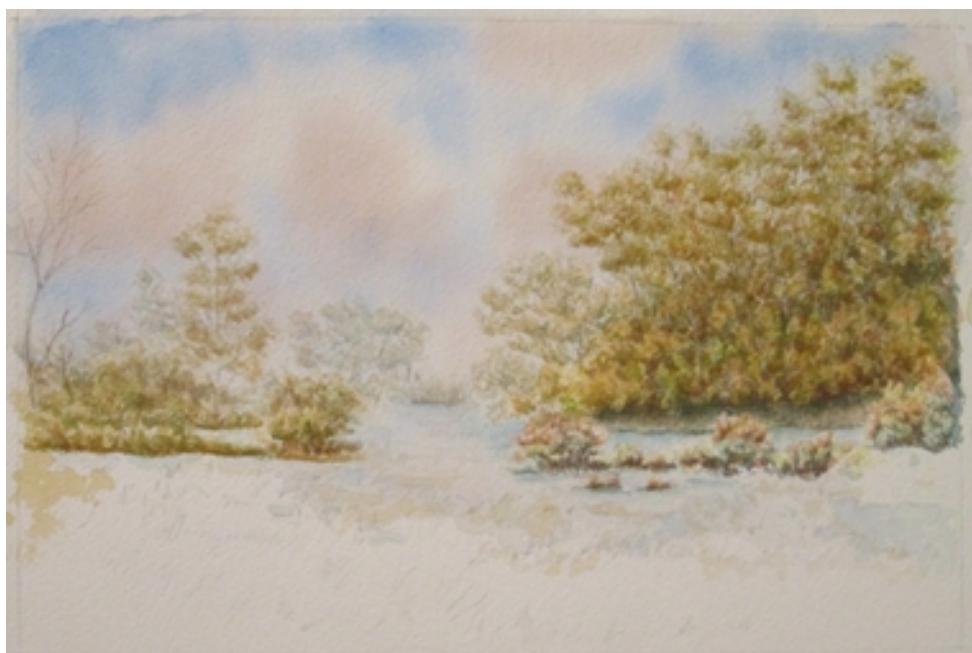
30. Island shrubs and middle ground tree line ground shadow: burnt sienna/orange; green oxide/ blue green/violet



31. Right middle ground shore line, shadows on island, right middle and island water line:
green oxide/burnt sienna;
Vandyke brown; cobalt blue/blue
green; green oxide/violet/Indian
red



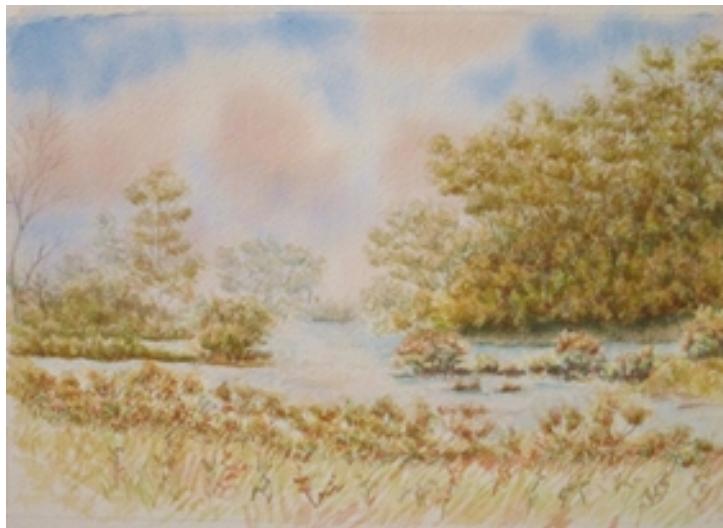
32. Right and left middle ground:
orange/raw umber; green oxide/ violet;
transparent burnt sienna



33. Left middle ground: burnt
sienna;
Indian
yellow/green
oxide; green
oxide/violet;
orange/raw
umber



34. Middle ground left, right and island; oxide green/cobalt blue/burnt sienna (gray) raw umber/green oxide/violet; orange/raw umber; orange/ raw umber/yellow; Indian red/green oxide



35. Foreground; orange/yellow ochre; Indian red/green oxide; green oxide/cobalt blue/burnt sienna (gray)

36. Foreground, right island; green oxide/yellow ochre; yellow ochre/orange; green oxide/yellow ochre/French green; burnt sienna; Vandyke brown;



37. Foreground; yellow; cobalt blue/blue green; orange; French green/yellow ochre; yellow ochre/burnt sienna;



38. Foreground, right island; blue green/Indian red; raw umber/yellow ochre; oxide green; burnt sienna;



39. Foreground, water around island and right middle ground trees; yellow ochre; orange; burnt sienna; blue green/cobalt blue

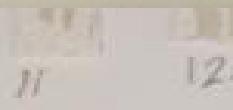


40. Darken shadows in foreground, lighten shadows on island* and add transparent yellow ochre to background trees; raw umber gouache*; green oxide/yellow ochre/zinc white gouache; raw umber gouache/zinc white gouache; blue green/Vandyke Brown/black; green oxide/yellow ochre;

*The gouache colors are opaque and are used to lighten the shadows on the right island. It is best to use these colors sparingly, and only for correction. There will be a visible difference between the two mediums. It is possible to use both the watercolor medium and gouache mediums together in the same painting, providing they are used throughout the entire painting. Since they are used in small, isolated areas of the painting for corrections, any overuse will be noticeable and the difference between the two mediums will distract from the unity of the painting.

Below are the color mixtures and combinations used in each step. The step color chart also indicates the transparency or opacity of the colors used.

Still life watercolor color steps



1-2 Drawing: Background: cobalt blue; violet; carmine;

Apply all three colors separately, but simultaneously. The surface of the paper is saturated with water except in the areas of the still life objects and table. The saturated paper will yield the wet on wet technique of soft transitions in the wet areas of the paper and will create a hard edge-line against the dry paper shapes of the still life objects.

3. Background, table top, shaded chalice bowl, chalice stem, shaded side of apples and grapes: green oxide;



4. Back of table top, background and all objects except light side of chalice bowl: yellow ochre/raw umber;





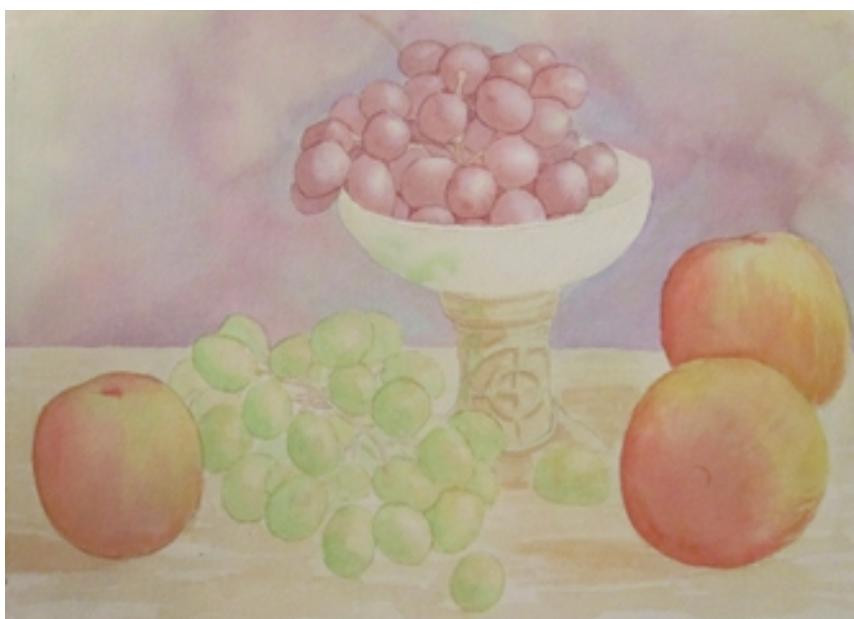
5. Grapes: violet; Indian red;

Paint each grape individually, beginning with transparent violet. While the surface is still wet, bleed Indian red into the shaded areas of each grape.



6. Green grapes: yellow ochre/raw umber; yellow green;

Paint each grape individually with yellow ochre/raw umber mix; while still wet, bleed in yellow green on shaded side of grapes.



7. Apples: yellow ochre/raw umber; yellow green;

Paint each apple separately using yellow ochre/raw umber mix; bleed in yellow green while still wet.

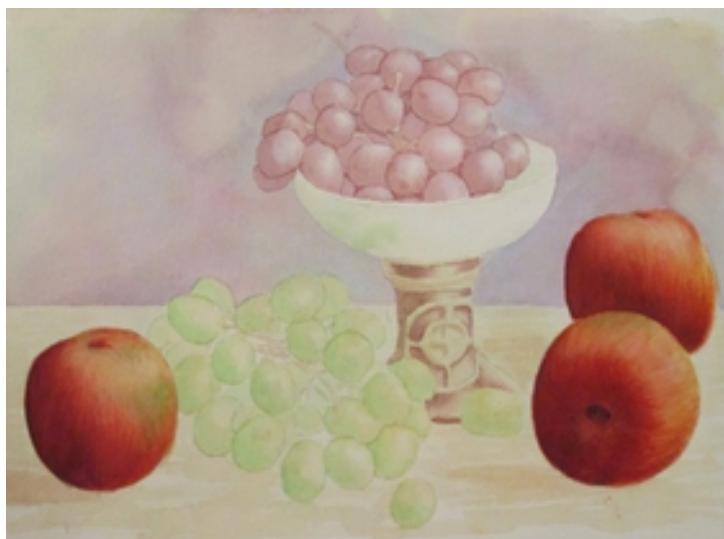
Table top: yellow ochre/raw umber;

Chalice: yellow ochre/raw umber; yellow green



8. Apples: Indian yellow;
Permanent red;

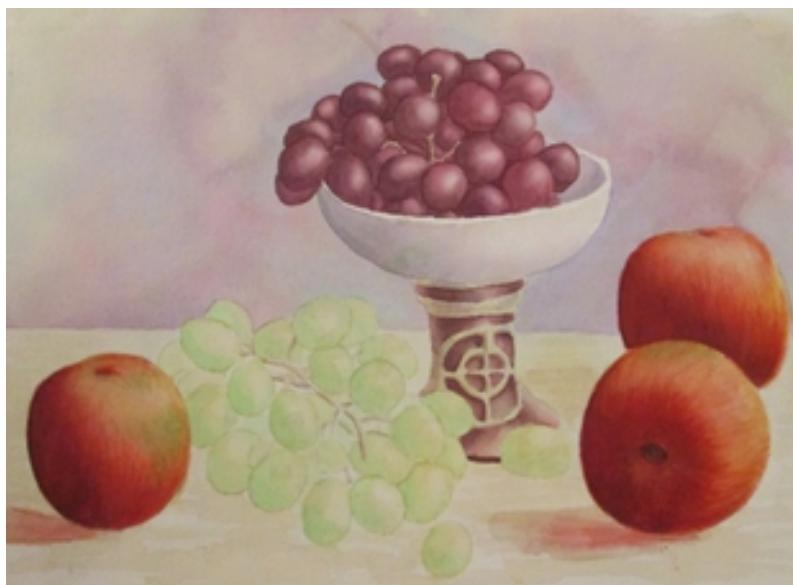
_Use the wet-on-wet technique, starting with Indian yellow and adding permanent red while the yellow is still wet.



9. Apples: black;

Apply black twice to shaded side of the apples. Permanent red: Apply wet-on-wet to the shaded side of the apples 3 times; apply 4 times wet-to-dry, using brush stroke to create striations in the apple.

Apples: yellow green;



10. Grapes, chalice: blue
green/carmine;

Use the same combination color mixture diluted to a transparent wash to add shadows on the bowl of the chalice.

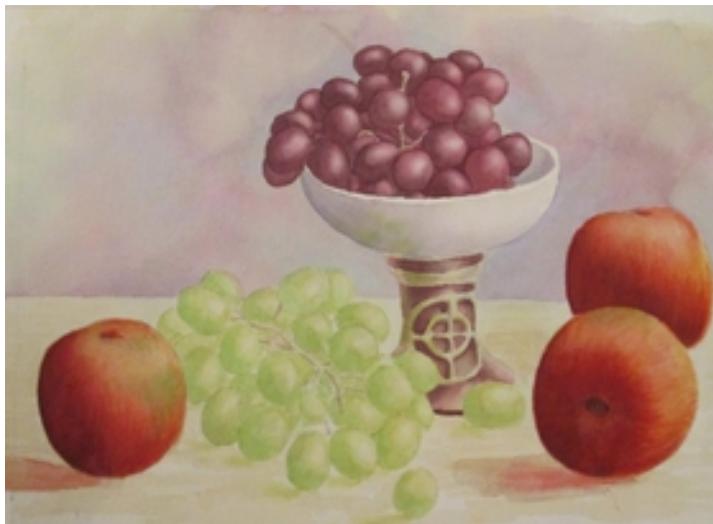
Chalice stem: Black/permanent red;

Grapes and chalice stem: carmine;

Chalice bowl: carmine/blue green;

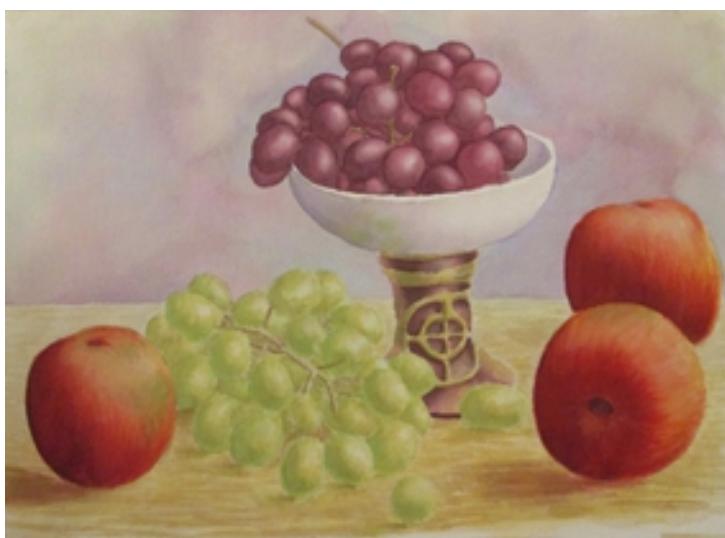
Chalice stem: Vandyke brown;

Cast apple shadows on table:
permanent red;



11. Green grapes, chalice bowl and stem and cast shadows on table: yellow green/flesh/Indian yellow;

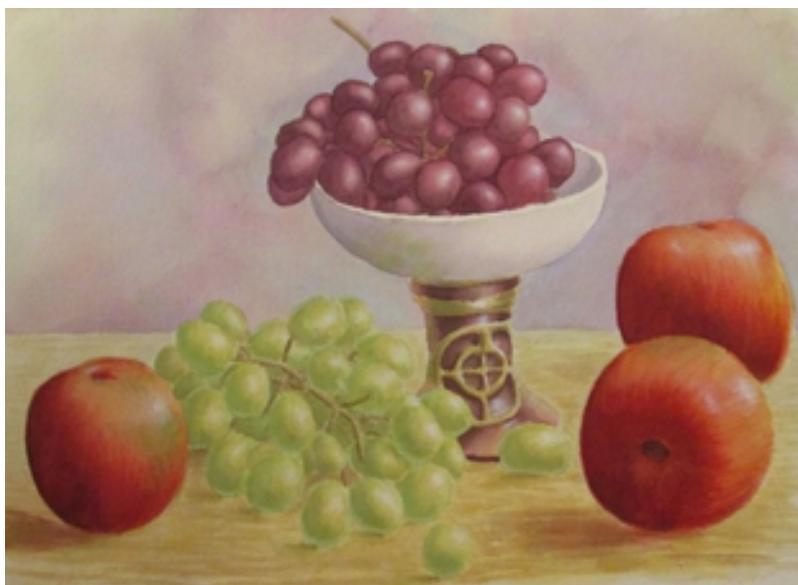
Grapes, chalice stem table top: Indian Yellow/flesh;



12. Green grapes shadow, cast apple shadow, shadow on yellow ornamental design on chalice stem: green oxide/raw umber;

Shadowed areas of chalice stem, apple cast shadows on table: Vandyke brown/blue green/carmine;

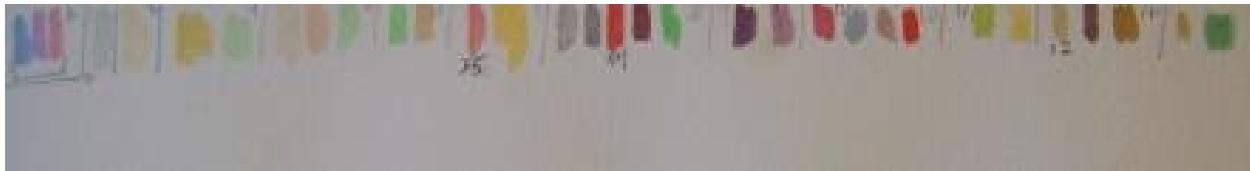
Shadow on ornamental design on chalice and table top: raw umber;



13. Chalice stem and table top: raw umber;

Shading on green grapes and chalice stem: green oxide;

Color step chart for still life painting



Summary

When students are assigned a landscape or still life painting, they are given the original source material, which is usually a printed image of a landscape painting or a photograph of the still life objects. Students are required to work on their paintings in class and at home during scheduled practice hours. The photographs are a convenient, portable solution for their scheduled production time and location. However, color is best seen and understood from the direct observation of the source material and not through photographic color.

The visual lesson plans are made for and only assigned to the advanced Art Academy class students in their junior and senior year, after they have successfully completed a two-year drawing program. The delivery system for the assignment is a combination of the visual steps viewable on a computer and the actual assignment objective painting that was constructed by the steps illustrated through computer images. The students bring in their USB flash drive and I load a folder with the information provided above onto their flash drive. While painting during class time, the students view the production steps on a computer screen. The original painting and the painted step color chart is available to view as well, to match color and transparency. The actual colors in the painting and color chart will be more accurate and informative than what can be translated and pictured on the computer screen. When the students work on their paintings at home, they can insert the flash drive into their computer and continue to follow the recommended steps while they paint.

The step instructions offer the students a painting technique guide to better inform them of the complexities of color and watercolor painting. Ultimately, the lesson plans must be viewed as merely a guide, with visual suggestions. Each individual student artist will have a different interpretation and understanding of the visual information provided. The students' skill level will be based upon their visual intelligence, which affects what their eyes can see and what the response combination of brain and hand can produce. The visual lesson plans, if practiced over time, will create the memory in both mind and hands, which is necessary to become a well-informed painter capable of effectively translating what the eyes or the mind's eye sees. Ideas are only formed and expressed through productive thinking and the visual lesson plans are a model for productive thinking that will support creative thinking in future developmental stages of the student artist.