

Fairy Tale #5: Mixed Media



The Twelve Brothers

For this lesson, we will take our figure-drawing exercises from the last lesson and re-render them in watercolor, acrylic, and pencil (with a special appearance by Mapquest and Symbols)!

Your assignment this month is to complete three illustrations, with the general mandate of finding an illustration style you like and “modeling” your illustrations after that style.

In the videos and this PDF, I based my illustrations on Indian Miniature paintings, which tend to be oriented vertically, incorporate a flat perspective and have complicated compositions. But I wanted to mention now that you are free to choose an illustration style of your choice if you are not inspired by the Indian Miniatures!

This month I'll show you how to achieve the soft effect below using watercolors, white acrylic paint, and pencil. The techniques this month are meant to add to your growing mixed-media toolbox; again, feel free also to render your illustrations in the media of your choice!



Let's get started!



Symbols

But first, a word about symbols!

Symbols in illustration are visual images that convey ideas or beliefs.

Symbols are powerful things. Joseph Campbell writes, “A symbol is an energy evoking, and directing, agent.”

As you work on your illustrations this month, think about adding symbols to your paintings to add another layer of depth and story to your work.

As illustrators we don’t only illustrate a specific moment in time, but we also endeavor to tell a bigger story in each painting.



Mixed-Media Technique

Watercolor, dry-brush acrylic, pencil on paper.

I love the way this easy technique results in such a soft, delicate palette.

SUPPLIES

- 3 pieces of watercolor paper (about 7"x10")
- Small watercolor set
- watercolor brushes (a selection of round and flat brushes, smaller sizes)
- white gesso or white acrylic paint
- pencil (I will be using both a 2B and a softer, blacker 8B)
- painter's tape

STEP 1: Draw in Your Composition





Using a pencil on your watercolor paper, draw a box with the size you would like your finished illustrations. (I like to cut a piece of card stock the correct size and then just trace around it to create my box).

Optional: For a deckled edge, tear painter's tape in half lengthwise and run along the border. Then, do a light pencil sketch of your illustration. Erasing encouraged to get it just how you like it!

For compositional help, look to the illustration style you have chosen and spend some time just noting the different compositional elements that appeal to you.

Once you've done that, try THIS!



MapQuest or Google Earth Images...

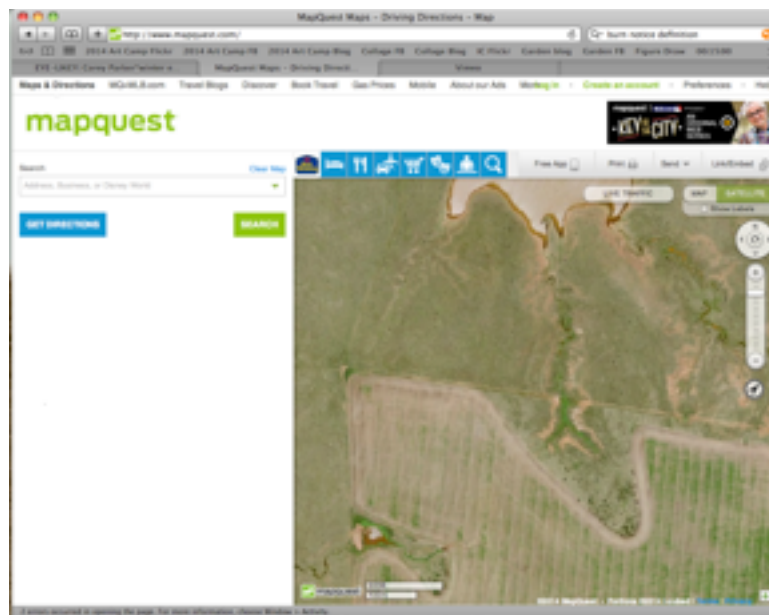
Let them help you with compositions!

I'm not sure what made me think of using the images from Mapquest as inspiration for my compositions, but I've found them to be an excellent starting point to work from, as it's much easier for me to "find" a nice composition than for me to come up with one out thin air! (It's kind of like "blob hunting" for animals, but in this case it's "design hunting" for compositions!)

Here's how to do it:

Go to www.mapquest.com or <https://maps.google.com/> and click on a rural or farming area nearest your hometown. Rural areas tend to be a great source of textures and patterns, due to the different crops, roads, lakes, and other interesting geographical elements.

You will need to click the "satellite" view and then un-click the box that says "show labels."





When you find designs that are pleasing to you, take a screen capture (on the Mac it's **shift-command-3** or **shift-command-4**).

Keep your screen-capture library handy as you begin your illustrations. (Alternatively, you can record found compositions in your sketchbooks.)

For example,

This Mapquest image was used as an inspiration for my composition:



STEP 2: Add a Layer of Watercolor

Paint in a very light layer of watercolor. You are just trying to add tints of color at this point.

Remember to use lots of water! The paint should be very wet going on to the paper. Let dry completely.





STEP 3: Dry Brush Acrylic Layer



Add a dry-brushed layer of white acrylic paint or white gesso over all (or most) of your areas. You are going for a “stuccoed” look.

Tips:

- Make sure your brush is as dry as possible. You might need to wipe out excess water.
- Just lift a tiny bit of paint onto your brush each time.
- When you first begin, use very light pressure. As the paint moves off the brush, you can press harder until you run out.
- Vary the direction that you lay down the paint to avoid striping.



STEP 4: Add More Watercolor Layers if Necessary

This is the time to add another layer to darken areas, or to add details such as clothing, foliage, etc.

STEP 5: Add Pencil



Use a mechanical pencil to restate your lines, as well as add shading. Use a blacker pencil (I used an 8B) to add even darker shading. Take your finger and rub it across select areas to create the soft look, above.

Here is a chart of the layers, illustrated here with 6 different colors of watercolor (Note: the scan is slightly darker than the original so you can see the pencil difference):



And here are some of my finished illustrations with this technique for “The Twelve Brothers.”



"But she said 'Go forth into the forest with thy eleven brothers, and let one sit constantly on the highest tree which can be found.'"



“Dear mother, weep not, I will go and seek my brothers.”



**“Then the King came by and was so charmed with her beauty
that he called to ask her if she would be his wife.”**



“Then the wedding was solemnized with great magnificence and rejoicing, but the bride neither spoke nor smiled.”



RECAP

So your assignment is to do at least three scenes from “The Twelve Brothers,” paying particular attention to body language and symbols.

Model your illustrations after a style you admire, or try the Indian Miniatures! Here is a link of images for your research:

http://www.google.com/search?q=indian+miniature+painting&client=safari&rls=en&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=9GHbU_-HDMHKigKCj4CAAw&ved=0CB4QsAQ&biw=1105&bih=735

And finally, try the dry brush technique or render the illustrations in the media of your choice.

Have fun, and we’ll see you next time!