

Studio Saturdays: Acrylic Wash Paintings

Rollins
Museum
of Art

St. John's Sunset by Monte Olinger



Monte Olinger

St. John's Sunset

2012

Acrylic wash and mixed media on canvas

LIST OF MATERIALS

- 1 Sheet of Watercolor Paper
- Foam Tray
- Sponge Brush
- Bowl of Water
- 4 Different Colored Paints
- 1 Sheet of Paper Towel

Monte Olinger is an ambidextrous painter who uses his work to express himself and as a form of art therapy. If someone is ambidextrous, that means that they can write, or paint, with both hands. Shortly after Olinger received his master's degree in Interior Design, he began to suffer from a movement disorder called dystonia, a condition which causes the muscles in your body to contract involuntarily, or without you telling them to. These contractions can cause your body to make repetitive or twisting movements, often keeping your body in uncomfortable positions until your muscles relax. As someone who grew up surrounded by art and who painted throughout his life, it was natural for Olinger to turn to painting to help him process his feelings towards his condition and find comfort in making art, a practice called art therapy.

Art therapy uses art, and the process of making it, to help people connect with their emotions, build self-esteem, and exercise their creativity. Olinger's use of an acrylic wash in St. John's Sunset allows the colors to blend and flow through the work, making it easier for Olinger to loosen his movements and not get too stressed about where his colors settle on the paper.

For today's craft, we'll be making our own Olinger-inspired acrylic wash paintings! This process is all about relaxing your control over your painting and experimenting with your water to see how your colors will blend. I'm going to try and follow Olinger's painting, but feel free to paint however you would like! Make sure you place protective or waterproof material underneath your painting before you start in case your water bleeds through the paper and remember that there are no mistakes in art! If you'd like, you can use this craft to connect to yourself and reflect on how you're feeling.

THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

- 1) How does the water change the colors?
- 2) Do you have an image in mind? Once you finish, see if your image changed while you worked on it.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. First, we will learn how to make color washes.
2. Start by applying dabs of paint onto your foam tray. Keep them as far apart as possible because we are going to be adding water, which will make them spread.
3. Take your sponge brush and soak it in clean water. Let it drip over each dab of paint until there is enough of each color for the size of paper you are using.
4. When you have added water to all your colors, mix them up with your brush. Make sure to clean your brush between mixes so that your colors don't get muddy. You can always make more paint wash later if you run out, so keep some more clean water close by.
5. Before you start painting, you can either plan how you'd like your image to look, or you can choose to let yourself be spontaneous and make it up as you go along based on how you're feeling as you paint. I'm going to take the second approach and let how I'm feeling tell me how to paint and how much water to use to let my colors blend.
6. Now it's time to start creating! While you're painting, practice your close observation skills to see how the water carries the paint across the paper, and how colors mix to make new colors.