

Gouache and Ink Resist

I have been having a lot of fun lately using a painting process that involves a lot of risk and a definite learning curve. The idea behind it is that you use India ink over a mask created with gouache. Then you wash the painting off, leaving the India ink where there was no gouache and white paper where the gouache prevented the ink from touching the paper. Confused yet?

Here is how it works:

1. Select an image you would like to work with. Images that work well are ones that have a strong graphic pattern which will benefit from the black.
2. Select a high quality paper which will withstand a lot of water. Don't skimp here and use student grade paper. I use 140 lb Cold Pressed Arches watercolour paper. The texture of the cold pressed surface enhances some of the effects I can create.
3. Transfer your image to your paper using whatever method you like.
4. Next, I like to trace over my drawing with a permanent black pen. Be careful here because the majority of pens are not permanent and will run when you apply water. The two pens that I trust are the Pigma Micron pen (which has Archival ink) and the Pentel Pocket Brush Pen with India Ink cartridges. Using a dip pen with India ink will work also. Make sure you give this stage lots of time to dry before proceeding.



5. Now I apply the white gouache as a mask. Everywhere on the piece that I DON'T want to become black must be covered with gouache. Some people use coloured gouache but much of the colour will be lost in step 6. Using a variety of brush strokes and techniques will give you different results in the final work. Hence the learning curve.



6. After letting the gouache dry thoroughly, I apply India ink with a wide soft brush (I use a 2 inch soft flat brush). You don't want to play around here. Get a good quantity of ink on in as few brushstrokes as possible. Using too many brushstrokes can start to stir up the gouache and disturb the mask. Now this gets to dry thoroughly. As soon as it is dry, proceed to the next step. If you leave it for days, you will have difficulty in getting the ink to lift.

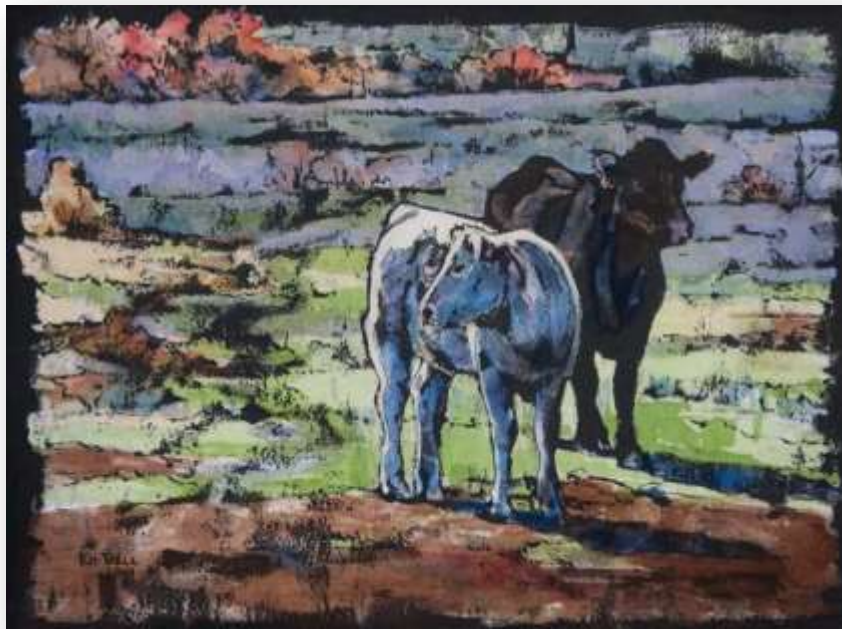


7. Now we take it to the kitchen sink. Put it under running water. You can use your fingers to rub it and loosen up the ink. I use a soft scrub brush. Gradually the gouache will dissolve and lift, taking the ink with it. Where there was no gouache, the ink will remain.



8. Once the scrubbing is completed, pat dry with paper towels and lay flat to dry.

9. Now comes the colour. The image is ready to be developed however you like. I generally use watercolour but you can also use gouache or acrylic. If you need to touch up the black, use your pen from step 4.



Once your painting is complete, can frame it like a watercolour or mount it to cradled panel and varnish it to protect it.

