

Acrylic Painting

History, Tools, and Techniques

Learning Goals:

- The history of acrylic paint
- Compare acrylics vs. oils
- brushes and basic techniques
- grisaille paintings
- Examine Renaissance acrylic paintings and understand basic acrylic techniques
- Choose a Renaissance painting and replicate it on a canvas in grisaille style.

By Marcine Linder

The History of Acrylic Paint



Acrylic paints were first invented in Germany in the early 1900's. In the 1950's, the water-based acrylics (the kind we will be using) were developed.

The History of Acrylic Paint



*Paul Jenkins, 1979
Acrylic and
silkscreen on
canvas, 40 X
40" (101.60 x
101.60 cm.)*

By Andy Warhol

They became popular in the 1960's when pop artists used them, such as Andy Warhol.

The History of Acrylic Paint

Other art styles that explored this medium were photorealism (left) and Op Art (right).



*New Shoes for H 1973-4 By Don Eddy
Acrylic on canvas, 44 X 48"*



*Intrinsic Harmony, 1965 by Richard Anuszkiewicz
Acrylic on Canvas*

Acrylic Paint Basics



Acrylics are water-soluble, non-toxic, easy to clean, and dry quickly.

Acrylic Paint Basics



They can be diluted with water and painted so they are transparent (light shows through).

Acrylic Paint Basics



They can be used opaque (no light shows through) either through thick paint application or by adding white.

Acrylic Paint Basics



Acrylic paints are made from pigment, water and an acrylic binder, which forms a hard, clear film as the water evaporates.

It is this transparent film, reflecting light from the pigment inside it, that gives acrylic colour its brilliance.

Acrylic Paint Basics



Acrylic can produce both the soft effects of watercolor paint and sharp effects of layered oil paint.

Acrylic Paint Basics



Acrylics can be used in mixed media works, such as collage.

Its versatility lends itself to experimentation and innovation.

Acrylic does have some limitations. Its quick-drying plasticity discourages blending and wet-on-wet techniques.

Acrylic Paint Basics

OIL PAINT

- .Dries very slowly (can take weeks, even months to dry)
- .Easy to blend for smooth shading effects because of its slow drying time
- .Lends itself to greater textural possibilities because of its slow drying time
- .Clean-up is complicated, time consuming
- .Toxic substances are used for clean-up and may also be part of the paint's composition

ACRYLIC PAINT

- .Dries very quickly (anywhere from a minute to an hour)
- .Can be a challenge to blend because of its quick drying time
- .Can be a challenge to create textural effects with because of its quick drying time
- .Can be used to create both opaque and transparent effects
- .Non-toxic, and easy to clean with water (unless the paint has dried solid)