

Gouache for Beginners



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Painting Texture with Highlights

STRAWBERRY

During this project you'll encounter a number of different textures all contained in one object (the strawberry). You'll see the way light reacts differently on the fleshy surface of the berry as opposed to the small seeds and the less shiny leaves. Because the surface of the berry is pocked with those tiny seeds, the light reflects differently off the areas with direct lighting, as opposed to the places receiving only a small amount of reflected light. The strong highlights you'll be able to achieve are a great example of how highlights can give so much dimension to a subject.

1 As you begin drawing your berry, don't worry about adding any details within the berry itself. All the seeds and shifts in shadow will be addressed with the paint, so there's no need to spend time on an overly complicated underdrawing.

2 Lay down the flat color in the background, as well as a slightly graded color in the shadow. To avoid streaks, make sure you have an ample amount of creamy paint mixed for at least one coat, possibly two.

When moving on to the shadow use a slightly darker color the closer you are to the underside of the strawberry. A very deep blue works well here. While the paint is still wet, you can add a bit of

turquoise to your shadow color, blending it out to the edges of the shadow.

BRUSHES: No. 6 or No. 8 filbert or flat

Tip

You can soften the edges of your shadow by wetting a smaller brush (a No. 1 round works well for this) and running it along the edge of the shadow and the background, which will slightly blend the colors.



REFERENCE PHOTO



1



2

- 3** With a clean, wet brush, add a stripe of yellow-orange to the section of the berry with the most direct light in the reference photo. (You will blend this with red, so it won't end up this yellow.) Around that stripe of yellow add some bright red, bringing it all the way to the left-hand edge of the berry. After rinsing your brush, soften the edges of your red, blending it into the yellow.

BRUSHES: No. 4 or 6 filbert

- 4** Using a deeper crimson, paint along the entire edge of the part you just painted, extending the right edge slightly. Next, with a very dark crimson mixed with deep violet (and a small amount of black), fill in the remainder of the right-hand side of the berry.

BRUSHES: No. 4 or 6 filbert

- 5** The addition of the seeds will really start bringing your berry to life. Pay attention to how the yellow of the seeds in the direct light is so much brighter than the seeds in the shadow, which are closer to a greenish/ochre than a traditional yellow.

I like to pick a line of seeds toward the center of the berry to start painting first, because the rest of the rows will be easier to base off this one. The line of seeds moves diagonally up the berry from left to right. Finish one row completely, even though you'll need to switch between light and dark coloring for the seeds. When moving on to the next rows, stagger the seeds so they're placed between each of the seeds on the next line. Continue until the berry is covered.

BRUSH: No. 1 round

- 6** With a slightly darker color than the bright red on the lit part of the berry, outline the seeds. It's not necessary to do ALL of them, but outline the majority. In the shadowed part of the berry you'll need to mix an even darker shade of crimson, including more violet and/or black.

BRUSH: No. 1 round



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7



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7 You'll be working on the leaves for the next two steps. I find it helpful to block in the lighter greens before I move on to the darker ones so I don't go too dark too fast. It's easier to make greens darker than to make them lighter. This is because greens tend to be a bit more transparent than other colors, so if you want a bright green it's best to get those down directly on the white of your paper.

BRUSHES: No. 1 round and No. 4 filbert

8 Working from lighter to darker green, continue filling in the leaves, blending the darks into the lights. When you're satisfied with the look of your leaves, you can add a bit of white to your light green to add the highlights. Notice how much more minty this color of green is.

BRUSHES: No. 1 round and No. 4 filbert

9 You've made it to the most fun step: highlights and reflected light. If you've ever wanted to feel like a magician, invite someone to watch you complete this step, because they'll definitely "oooo" and "ahhh" over how magical it seems.

Starting with the reflected light, mix a dark pink color for your highlight on the underside of the berry. Observe the reference photo to see the areas most affected by the reflected light. Being careful to not paint up to the very edge of the seeds, make a diamond shape around the seeds, following the lines of the rows you created in step 5.

Now that you've achieved the reflected light, finish off with the bright white in the hot direct light on top of the berry. Again, make those diamond shapes follow the lines of the rows of seeds. Notice that the farther away you move from that spot of direct light, the less fully the highlight surrounds the seed in that diamond shape. In fact, it will begin to make only half of a diamond. This tiny highlight on the side of the seeds will still add a lot of dimension to your painting, so be sure not to overlook it.

Congrats! You've painted a dimensional strawberry!

BRUSH: No. 1 round