

Glaze Painting

In painting, the term “glaze; refers to a thin, translucent layer of paint.

They are most often used as a means by which the artist can provide depth and realism to a painting. The method originated in the renaissance with the development of oil paints and oil painting during that time.

Oil paints were able to be diluted with various solvents, which made them translucent (able to see through them). By building up layers of translucent paint artists were able to make images with greater depth, with much greater realism than was previously possible.

It is by this means that the “Old Masters” of the renaissance were able to made such beautiful and realistically convincing paintings.



Leonardo da Vinci - Lady with an Ermine - 1489



Pre oil painting – fresco painting (watercolour on wet plaster) - 13th century



Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610), *Still Life with Fruit on a Stone Ledge*, c. 1603, oil on canvas - 87.2 x 135.4 cm, Courtesy of the Antonius Group, on loan to The College of William & Mary, Muscarelle Museum of Art - Williamsburg, Virginia

As great a change that the development of oil paint was to art, there are/were problems with the method; Oil paint dries very slowly - many days for even a thin layer, and as it was necessary for each layer to be completely dry before the next could be applied it (to avoid cracking) is a very slow process.

With the advent of acrylic paints in the 1950's this problem was solved. Like oil paint, acrylics can be used thickly or in thin washes; but unlike oils, they dry very quickly and repeated layer of colour can be built up without any danger of cracking.

Acrylics, then, can achieve all that oil paint can, but much more quickly and with less risk.

The Procedure

- Apply a good, even coat of *gesso* onto your canvas paintboard/support – let dry completely. Apply both vertically and horizontally.
- “Tone” the canvas board with a very thin wash of raw or burnt umber, well diluted with water. This sets the tone for the whole painting and softens the stark white of the canvas.
- Create your still life photographic reference. Set up a still life situation that you find visually pleasing – use at least 3 objects. Bring in objects from home if those supplied do not interest you. “Light” them in such a way to provide an image of good ‘depth’ and interest.

- Photograph the work – with the developed print, I will make a transparency.
- Project the transparency onto the prepared paintboard and with a pencil draw out the edges of the form – you can certainly draw out your image “freehand” but the intent of the assignment is to learn how to paint in this method.

- Using thin black paint and a small brush paint out the basic outlines of the objects, let dry completely

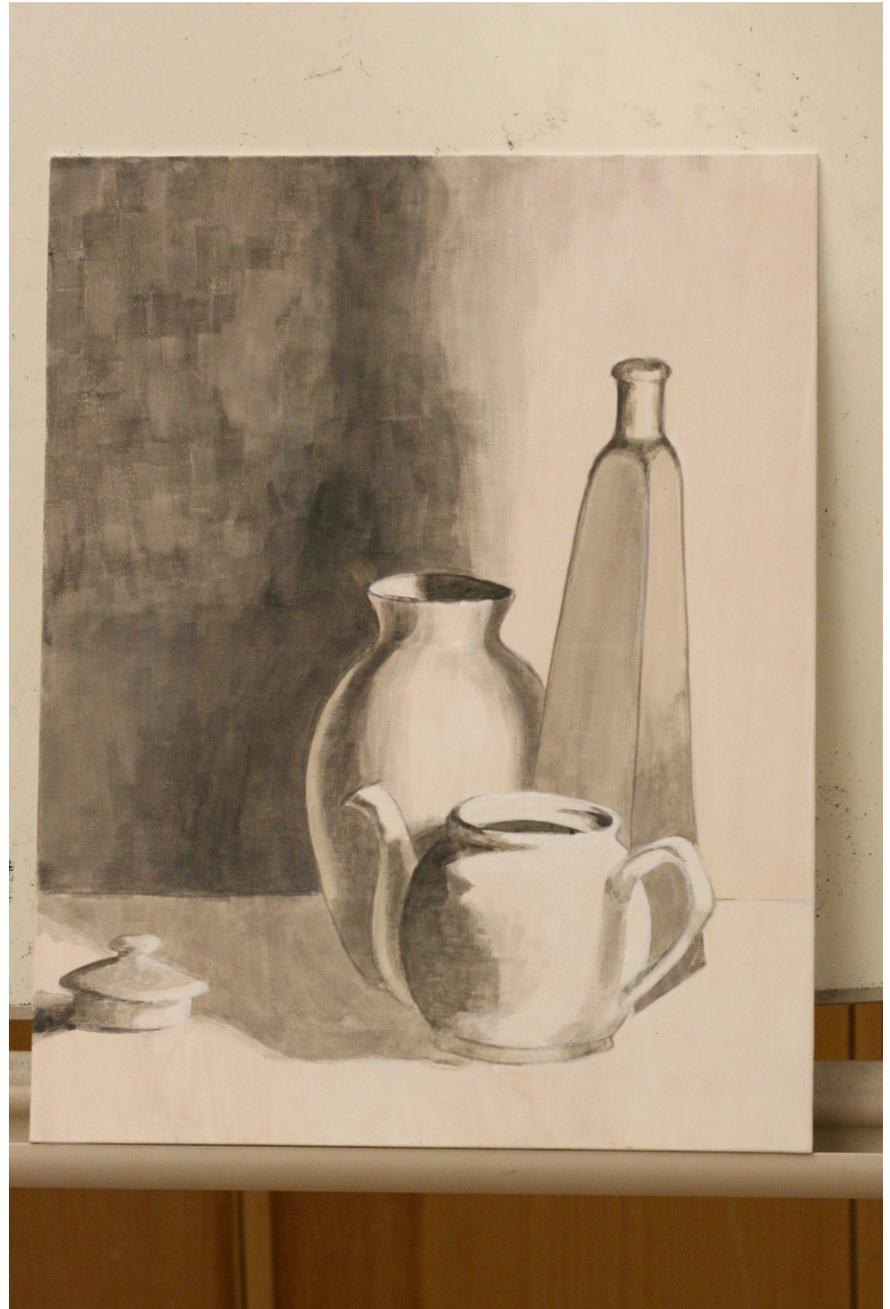
-“Block in” the lightest areas of the painting with thin white paint and a large (no. 10 or so) brush over the entire painting. Let dry completely.

- With a very thin back wash paint in the basic darkest areas.



With thicker white paint
- paint in the strongest
highlight areas.

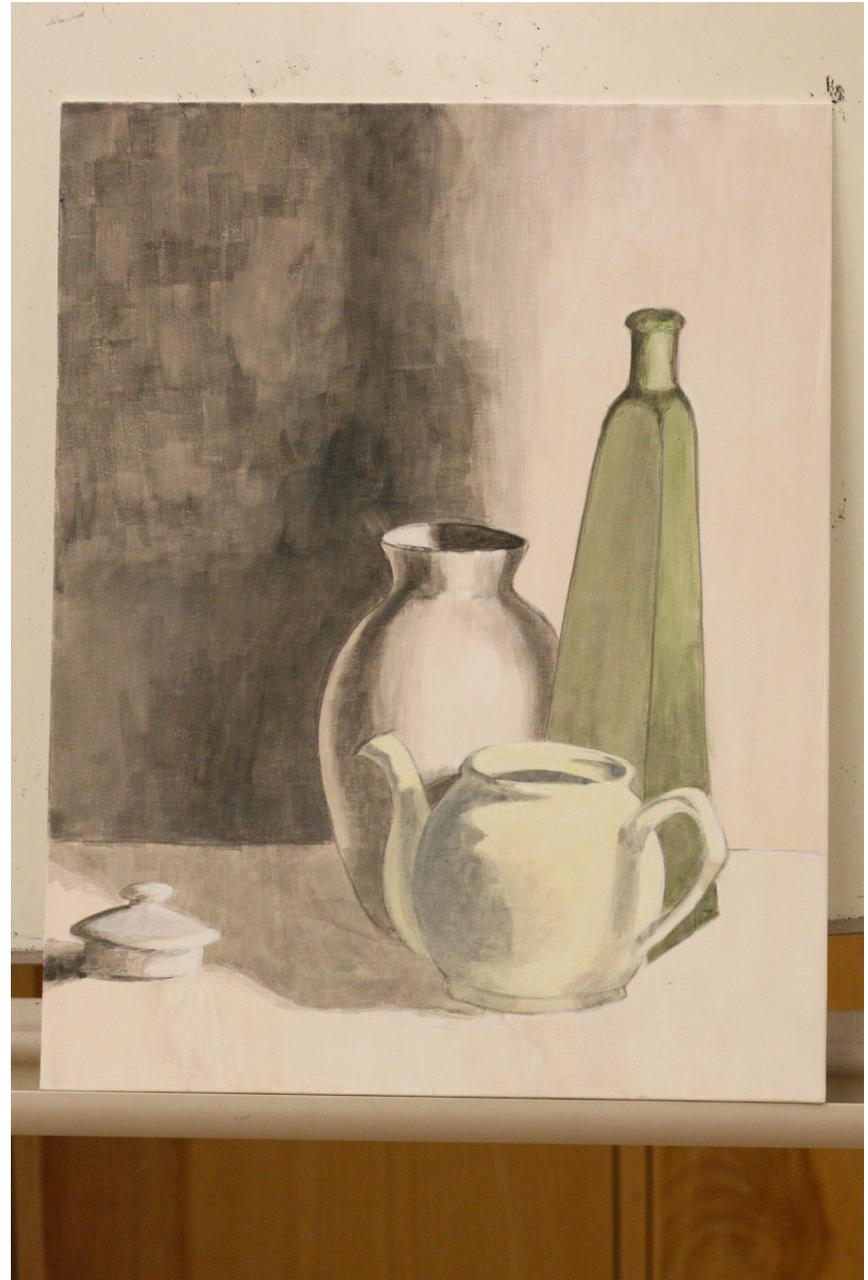
You should now have a
basic painting with a
good range of tones,
from black to white as
your underpainting.



Now you can begin to apply colour to your completed underpainting.

- With a very thin mix of acrylic paint you can begin to paint over the underpainting with colour.

- Be sure your underpainting is completely dry, or you will take off some of the underpainting in the process.



Applying thin washes of colour paint over the completed underpainting.



-To complete the painting, add thicker paint on top of the earlier wash painted areas.

- This is termed painting **THICK OVER THIN** – that is, beginning with light washes to progressively build up subtle layers of colour and then to paint in small areas of detail with thicker, less transparent paint.



