

Botanical Illustration

Apple Worksheet



In this exercise you will paint an apple, but the principles described below apply to all rounded forms. An apple often has an underlying colour and requires some blending between colours, it can have stronger highlights, reflected light because of its shiny surface. Sometimes apples have small lighter spots. This one doesn't but if yours does, you can use masking fluid for this purpose. Simply paint it on after the first wash is dry and remove at the end.

There are a number of key principles and terms to consider, please take time to read this introduction and keep for reference:

1. Form
2. Tone
3. Highlights
4. Reflected light and disappearing edges
5. Colour
6. Detail

Form is the shape of the object. The best way of understanding the form of a rounded object is to make a **cross-contour drawing**. Cross contour lines are those that follow the shape of the object across its surface, a bit like the longitude and latitude lines on a globe but of course they are not actually visible on the object. If you trace an outline drawing and add them they will help you to understand the form. Often painting in the direction of the lines will help you to achieve the desired shape.

Tone and light value is created from the effect of light and shade on an object, to put it simply it is how light or dark a colour is. Tones are used to create three-dimensional form in a two-dimensional work, in artwork we have to use the tones well and sometimes exaggerate them to achieve a believable 3D form. On the shade side of an object the darkest part is never hard against the edge, but sits slightly inside the edge, the edge is generally lighter and softer, and this gives the impression of recession as the object moves away. Rounded objects usually have areas of lighting that can be broken down into: highlight, mid-tones, **form shadow** and reflected light.

Highlights occur where the light hits the subject, they are usually not completely white but have a pale blue colour around them. Any high light value blue colour can be used to paint this colour, such as Cerulean blue, Manganese Blue, Cobalt or Verditer. If you paint the area for the highlight with clean water and then paint around it with a dilute wash of pale blue to achieve a soft edge of blue around the white of the highlight this will push the highlight forward.

Reflected Light is the area of light that sits underneath the form shadow, it occurs where light bounces back onto the subject, either off the surface that the fruit sits on or from other fruit which are in close proximity. You can enhance the effect of reflected light by placing the fruit on a shiny surface. Remember that reflected light is always darker than the brightest highlight. Cobalt Violet and Purple Magenta as well as light blues can all be used to paint a light wash to create reflected light, this colour must be preserved and not painted over or the effect is lost.

Disappearing Edges. This is a technique in which the edges of a rounded object are painted in paler tones to give the impression of distance because the edges are further away from the viewer. This approach is similar to painting reflected light. This effect is achieved by painting the first pale wash right up to the outer edges, then subsequent washes are kept away from the edges (more layers of paint are nearer to the centre).

Colour. As already explained, the paler washes are applied first. Then use warmer transparent colours nearer to the middle of the subject to bring forward the part of the subject that is nearer to you, I sometimes refer to this as the 'hot spot' where colours are stronger and most saturated. Keep in mind that warmer shades generally bring things forward and cooler colours recede (although you will find exceptions to this). Work with brushstrokes that follow the contour of the surface, in the same directions as the contour lines but ensure that you are blending them to create a smooth finish. A damp short flat or filbert is useful for this purpose.

Detail. The marks, blemishes, spots and any other details are added at the very end using a detail brush, such as a size 1 or 2 miniature. You may also need to tidy up some edges and a short synthetic flat brush.

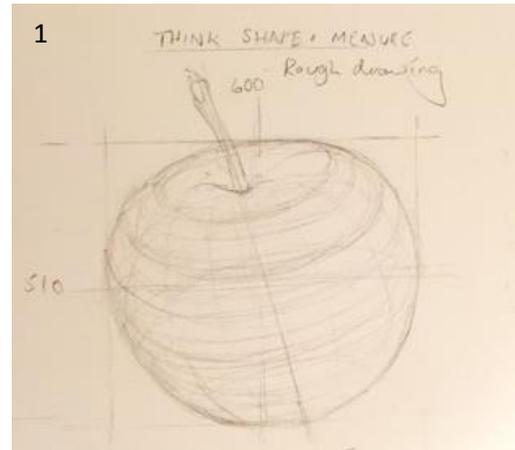
Drawing and Painting: Apples

Before you start. Make sure that the lighting is good. Use a lamp at one side of the subject to create light and shade. Here the lamp is positioned upper front left.

Stage 1. Form and Tone

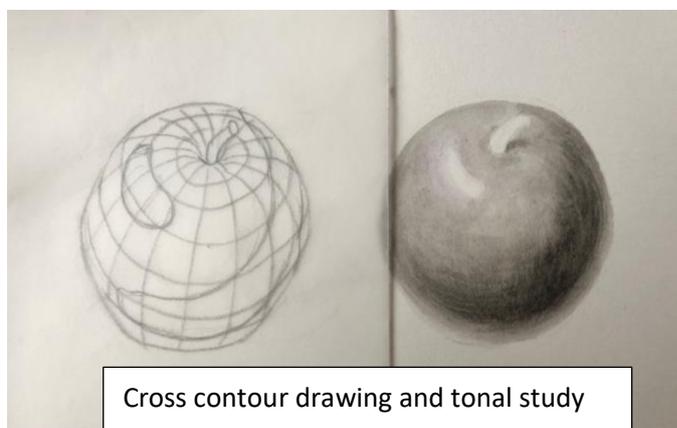
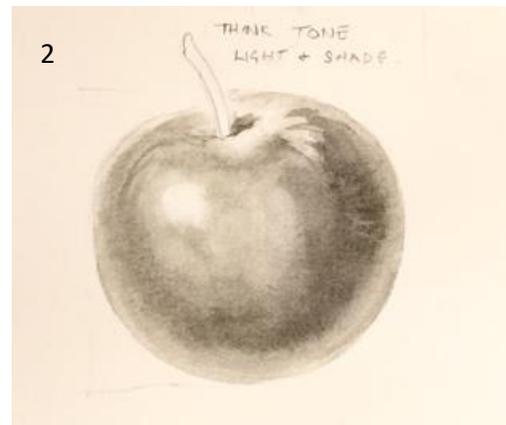
Step 1. Observe: Think Shape, Measure and Draw

- The first task when painting any subject is to observe and gather as much information as possible.
- Take measurements of the subject. Height, width and widest point of the fruit are the most important measurements.
- Mark out the basic measurements within a box shape.
- Make an outline drawing
- Make a rough 'cross-contour' drawing of the subject within the box. You can also plot the highlight and form shadow on the cross-contour drawing
- When you are happy with the drawing, transfer it to the watercolour paper, using tracing paper



Step 2. Think about and understand the tonal values (light and shade)

- Make a quick monochrome study of the subject. Transfer the outline to your sketchbook or watercolour paper. Begin with the light wash of black or any dark single colour, leave only the centre of the brightest highlight white. If necessary add more mid tone, keeping away from the outer edges and finally the darker form shadow, again keeping clear of the edge beneath it.



Cross contour drawing and tonal study

Stage 2. Painting

Step 1. Work out the colours: Make colour notes and work out all of the colour mixes to be used, paint colour swatches. Here I use manganese blue and quinacridone magenta for the reflected light, which is a violet colour, also a touch of the manganese blue can be used around the highlight. Transparent yellow and manganese blue for the underlying colour. Scarlet lake and permanent carmine for the reds (warm and cooler red). For the darkest shade I use a mix Permanent Carmine, Indanthrene Blue and Transparent Yellow.

I paint swatches of each colour and write down all of the colours used in the mixes.



Step 2. First Wash: Wet the surface of the area to be painted with clean water using a size 5-7 brush. Leave the centre of the bright highlight clear of water.

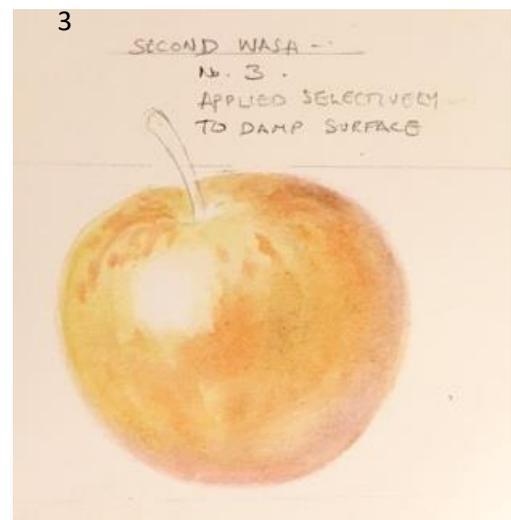
Apply a wash of the violet mix just at the lower right-hand side. Switch to the underlying yellow mix and paint the rest of the surface, leaving the brightest highlight clear of paint. Some blue can be added around the highlight but care needs to be taken here not to create green, so I decided to add this later.

Try to keep the outer edges soft, but if they do form, soften with a damp filbert brush.



Step 3. Second Wash: When dry, wet again with the wash brush but be more **selective in the application** and **do not work right up to the outer edge**, the brush slightly dry and soften into the outer edge so that it is just damp rather than wet. Start to add the red darker colours. This layer should be more selective in application but still relatively light, paint with a slightly more concentrated and creamy mix of colour.

You will see that the warmer concentrated scarlet is found nearer to the centre of the fruit. Stay away from the highlight though and the also the outer edge, particularly on the lower right-hand side, where the reflected light is found. You can see some of the pattern emerging too and this is created by working in the direction of the pattern with the downward contour.

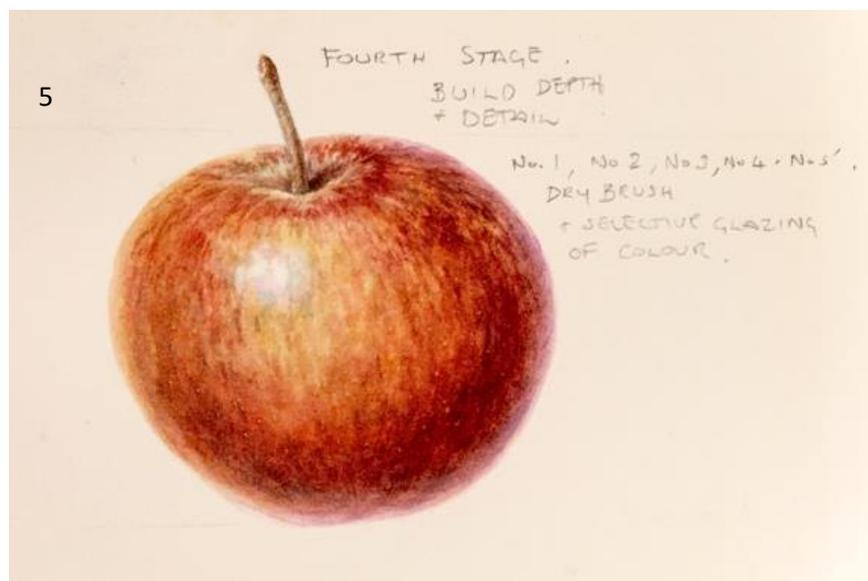


Step 4. Third Wash and Form Shadow: As before, wet the area that you intend to work on and apply the darker shade mix of the red to create a form shadow. This is an 'arc' shaped, area that sits on the shade side of the subject, it does not meet the outer edge but sits above it, so that the violet reflected light is preserved.

Use the natural contour of the shape and paint using the contours to create form. Soften any edges using a damp filbert brush



Step 5. Fourth Stage: Build Depth, Colour and detail: Switch to a smaller brush, such as a size 2 miniature, and start to build pattern, colour and detail. Deepen the form shadow and add the pattern and a glaze of the scarlet lake near to the centre. I added a small pale wash of the manganese blue around the highlight to push it forward. I mixed a brown for the stalk and around the top of the apple, for this I used the same three colours as the red shade colour by altering the ratio of yellow and blue this creates a brown, instead of red. I also added a cast shadow from the stalk using a blue/ violet mix using the violet from the initial mix with a touch of indanthrene blue added to make it darker. This was painted on the dry surface at the end.



Exercise: You should follow this tutorial, start by making a contour drawing, a tonal study and a final painting using these steps for guidance. All apples are different and may require different colour mixes. Some have small distinct spots. You can use masking fluid for this if you wish, which can be applied after the underlying wash once it is completely dry and remove after the 3rd or final stage of the painting.