

## GLAZING

Glazing is a technique most often associated with oil painting, but can also be used with acrylics, egg tempera, watercolor, and inks. It is a system in which thin, transparent washes of color are laid on successive layers of dried colors, such as many sheets of colored tissue paper. Each glaze qualifies earlier ones, and the result is rich, transparent and glowing.

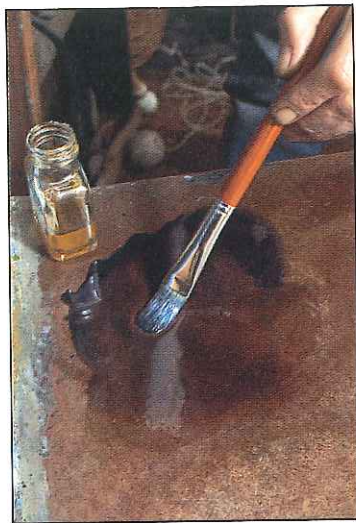
The reason for this is that a glaze, being transparent, allows light to pass through it and be reflected back off the underlying color. The colors thus combine optically — in the viewer's eye — and take on a resonance impossible to achieve by mixing them physically on the palette.

Glazing requires an understanding of how different colors react with each other; it is worthwhile experimenting on pieces of scrap canvas, board, or paper, depending on the medium you are using.

### Oil

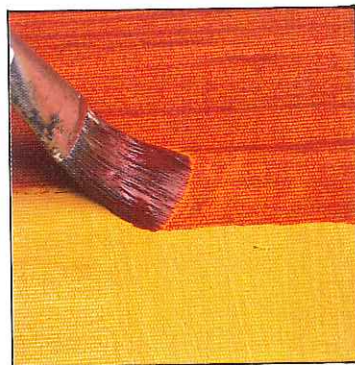
Paint for glazing should be thinned with a glazing medium which contains special film-forming ingredients that impart a soft luster to the paint surface. For best results, use a ready-made medium that contains beeswax — linseed oil is not ideal for glazes because it tends to move about after it has been applied.

Do not dilute the paint with turpentine alone — this makes the color go flat and dull, and sometimes results in a cracked surface. For best results, apply the glaze with a large, flat, soft-haired brush. Position the canvas or board at an angle of about 15 degrees rather than vertically.



### Glazing • Oil

**1** Mix the color on your palette, then add an equal quantity of medium. The paint should have a thin but oily consistency. Beware of overthinning!



**2** Apply the glaze in a thin layer over a light ground. The color appears bright because of light reflecting back off the canvas. Lay the canvas flat to prevent drips and runs.



**3** Allow each layer to dry fully before adding more glaze. This example shows how the color underneath glows through the glaze, giving the paint a three-dimensional quality.



### Oil • Glazing to modify tone

If you are unhappy with a certain color or tone, adjust it by glazing over it. A glaze will soften contrast and help to unify disparate tones, although it will not obscure the form beneath it. Shadow areas, in particular, appear more luminous when deepened with a dark glaze.



1 Apply the glaze in a thin layer over the dried underpainting so that it forms a transparent film.



2 The colors underneath glow through the glaze, but the hues are modified.

### Oil • Glazing over impasto

Glazing can be used to enhance impasto. The thinned color settles in the crevices, accentuating the craggy texture of the paint.



1 Lay thick paint with a knife or brush, creating a coarse, craggy texture. Leave until the surface has dried out.



2 Mix a thin glaze, and brush it lightly over the impasto.



3 Let the impasto settle into the textural surface and leave it to dry before applying the next layer of paint.



## Tempera

Egg tempera is ideal for glazing, because like acrylic, it dries quickly and any number of coats can be laid one on top of the other.

In tempera, most glazing is done with egg glair (white of egg) or oil. The glaze is applied in small areas because large areas are difficult to cover evenly with such a fast-drying medium. An entire painting can be glazed, however, if the surface is dampened first by spraying it with water from an atomizer. This delays the drying process, allowing the paint to flow easily and without streaking.

## Acrylic

Thinned down with medium, acrylic paints are especially suitable for the glazing technique. They dry within minutes and are waterproof when dry, allowing the artist to build up several glazes within a short space of time, with no risk of the colors muddying.

A small amount of acrylic medium is added to the paint on the palette by dripping it into a hollow made in a blob of paint and mixing it thoroughly with a wet brush or palette knife. A little water added in the same way further dilutes the paint. A very watered color may need some gloss or matte medium added to it to maintain the paint's adhesive properties.

As with oils, glazing in acrylic can be used to modify tones or enhance impastoed passages.



### Glazing • Acrylics

**1** When applied in transparent glazes, acrylic seems to transmit light from within. To make the glaze, mix a small amount of color with a lot of medium. Acrylic mediums are white and milky in appearance when wet, but they dry clear. Apply the paint with a soft brush. Allow a few minutes for each glaze to dry before applying the next one. Glazes may be laid in smooth layers over a stained or painted area, but can also be applied thickly, showing brushmarks.



**2** A more transparent glaze can be achieved by adding extra matte medium to the pigment.

## Watercolor

The glazing technique is used to great effect in watercolor, particularly when conveying the illusion of atmosphere, space, and light in landscapes.

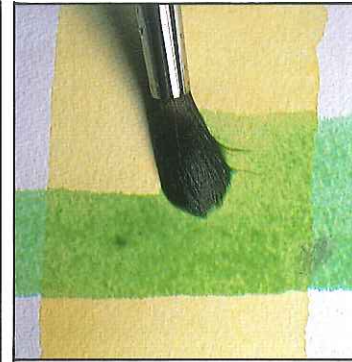
Some watercolor pigments are more opaque than others — the earth colors and cadmiums, for example — and these do not work well in glazes. Stick to the truly transparent colors which allow the light to reflect up off the white paper through the colors.

Do not apply more than two or three layers when glazing in watercolor — any more and the delicate, transparent nature of the medium is lessened.

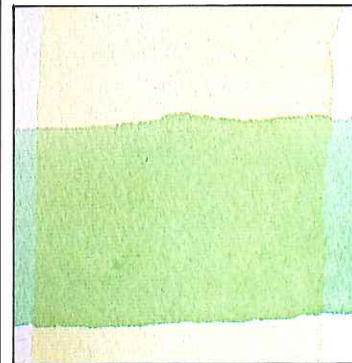


### Glazing • Watercolor

**1** Lay the palest color first, so that the light can reflect off the white paper.



**2** It is vital to allow one glaze of color to dry bone hard before applying the next one; otherwise the clarity of the glaze is lost as the two colors mix and become muddy.



**3** Here the artist applies a thin wash of Hooker's green over the first color. Where the two washes cross over each other, a third hue is produced.