

HOW TO BE YOUR OWN PROBLEM SOLVER

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

PAPER

Is it right for the subject and style?
Does it feel good to lay paint on?
Is it too smooth/too bumpy?

PALETTE

Are you happy with the colours?
Are they too bright? Too muted?
Have you started with the three primaries?
Have you used enough paint? Enough water?
Are you happy with the consistency?

BRUSH

Is the brush well loaded with paint?
Is it the right size for the amount of paint you want to lay?

HAND

Are you being too heavy handed?
Are you laying too many fiddly strokes?
Do you leave the paint alone once it's on the paper?
Are your shoulders tense?
Are you gripping the brush too tightly?

EYE

Have you studied your subject carefully before beginning?
Are you happy with the drawing you've made?
Have you thought about the format of the picture?
If working from a photo, have you allowed for the way photos dull colour?

MIND

Are you happy with the subject? Why does it interest you?
Have you thought about what kind of painting you want to make?
Have you thought about what parts will be trickiest? (and how to tackle them?)

WHERE THE ANSWERS LIE...

Experiment with different types of paper.
The looser the painting, the rougher the paper can be.

If your colours look muddy, stick to the three primaries. Experiment with colour mixes so you know what each of your primaries will do when mixed.
Too thin? Add more paint.
Too thick? Add more water.

Take note of how the paint feels when you lay it on – rich and creamy is good, thin and scratchy is not.

A light touch works best – it's easy to over-brush especially if you're trying too hard. Relax, enjoy! Don't rush. Touch the paper as little as you need to then watch to see what happens.

Don't start before you've thought about what you're doing. Experiment with little sketches first. Think about the light source, think about which are the lightest areas of the paper. Even simple pictures need a bit of thought.

A traditional pretty picture doesn't necessarily make a good composition. Broaden your mind, try different subjects. Don't work only from photos – get out there and observe and sketch! (even if it's just from your car)